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By:  Reynolds H.C.R. No. 149

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, In a democratic election, the candidate who receives the most votes should win; and

WHEREAS, That elementary principle has been undermined in the United States, where in two out of the last five elections, the Electoral College has awarded the presidency to the candidate who was rejected by the majority of voters; in the most recent presidential election, the winning candidate received nearly 3 million fewer votes than the losing candidate, who won a wider margin of the popular vote than 10 past presidents; and

WHEREAS, Candidates with the least votes also won the presidential election three times in the 19th century, and such a result is likely to happen again in the near future, thanks to an antiquated mechanism that subverts the will of the people; a vestige of the days when only white male landowners had a voice in political life, the Electoral College was written into the U.S. Constitution in the course of heated negotiations between more heavily populated northern states and more rural southern states; designed to protect the power of the elite and the influence of slave states, the college is a complicated system under which citizens mark their ballots for presidential candidates, but in reality, their votes are cast for a slate of electors in their respective states, who are actually entrusted with the task of choosing the president; and

WHEREAS, Because the college allocates electors based on each state's representation in Congress, it distorts the outcome of presidential campaigns; residents of smaller states have a larger voice in the results, and today, Wyoming voters exert almost four times as much influence as do California voters; moreover, 48 states and the District of Columbia award electoral votes on a winner-take-all basis, so that it makes no difference whether a candidate wins a state by a vast or minuscule margin; it is technically possible for a candidate to gain the presidency with only about 23 percent of the national popular vote; moreover, tens of millions of voters are effectively disenfranchised in states with a heavy partisan lean, and turnout can be depressed among citizens who believe that their vote is wasted; and

WHEREAS, From its inception, the Electoral College has been a source of contention, and over the past two centuries, legislators have proposed more than 700 constitutional amendments to reform or eliminate it; public support for the system has waxed and waned, but for decades, the majority of Americans have expressed opposition to it; and

WHEREAS, The Electoral College is a discredited 18th-century relic that violates the principle of one person, one vote; the nation's highest office should be awarded on the same basis as every other elected position in our democracy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to pass a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College and creating a system for the direct election of presidents by popular vote; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.