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Don't mess with a good thing

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Cato's John Samples says [there's no need](#) [2] to get rid of the Electoral College:

In the current system, the most influential state is the state that casts the electoral votes that put a candidate into the Oval Office. In 2000, that state was Florida. In 2004, Ohio. This is not terribly surprising; both have significant populations. Larger states have more electoral votes and thus are more likely, all things being equal, to cast the deciding vote.

Since the 1980s, several studies have confirmed this. In actual operation, the most influential states in selecting the president are likely to have large populations. State legislatures in large states have reasons to support the Electoral College.

Aren't states solidly in the Democratic or Republican column ignored by presidential candidates? A recent study in the *American Economic Review* showed that about 40 percent of the states in the future would receive more attention from candidates under direct election; slightly less than 40 percent would receive less attention; and about 20 percent would receive the same.

Critics also say the Electoral College distorts democracy and majority rule. In theory, the framers of the Constitution are guilty as charged; the Electoral College is not direct majority rule. The status quo does not depart from the preferences of the entire electorate. Yale professor David Mayhew looked at presidential elections back to 1948 and found on average no difference in the Democratic Party's vote share in the general population and in the decisive state in the Electoral College.

For example, John Kerry received 48.8 percent of the vote of the entire electorate and 48.9 percent of the vote in Ohio, the state that gave George W. Bush the presidency in 2004.

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