



## McConnell open to changing how Congress certifies presidential elections

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Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said he would consider changes to the way Congress certifies presidential elections, telling reporters in the Capitol Wednesday the system might need reform.

“It’s worth discussing,” the Kentucky Republican said.

Lawmakers in both parties are eyeing legislation that would change the ease with which lawmakers can object to presidential election results following last year’s riot at the U.S Capitol on Jan. 6, the day both the House and Senate met to certify President Joe Biden’s victory under the Electoral Count Act.

Eight Republican senators and 139 GOP House lawmakers objected to Biden’s victory in various states, slowing the certification process significantly. On the same day, rioters interrupted the lengthy process by storming the Capitol after violently pushing past police and security barriers. They sent lawmakers running for safety and left the Capitol in chaos for hours.

The elector objections and riot are now frequently linked by Democrats, who accuse the GOP of fueling the rioters and trying to overthrow an election, though a small handful of Democrats have objected to GOP presidential victories in recent decades.

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, recently urged Republicans to endorse reforming the Electoral Count Act, calling the law a mess of ambiguities and contradictions that exceeds the constitutional powers of the House and Senate and “opens the door for Congress to effectively decide the results of an election, something the Framers specifically rejected at the Constitutional Convention.”

The law leaves open questions about the role of the vice president, who oversees the electoral count. Former President Donald Trump pressured then-Vice President Mike Pence to contest Biden's victory, although Pence did not follow through with Trump's request.

McConnell didn’t point to any specific legislation, but his comments open the door to a bipartisan agreement at some point in the future.

Reforming the act is likely to pick up momentum as the 2024 presidential election approaches.

McConnell and Republicans unanimously oppose the current effort by Senate Democrats to pass a separate bill that would overhaul elections and claw back GOP state voter integrity laws.

Democrats are mulling a vote to eliminate the long-standing filibuster in order to circumvent GOP opposition to the bill, which they say will increase access to the polls and prevent red states from imposing laws they say will make it harder for people to vote.