



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 07, 2004

Dump The Electoral College

by Michael in New York on [11/07/2004 12:01:00 AM](#)

The New York Times calls for **dumping the electoral college**. Maybe it will resonate with Bush because he came within 150,000 votes in Ohio of winning the popular vote comfortably but watching another man become President. Since he is also on his way out, no one could accuse Bush of partisanship or trying to gain undue advantage. In fact, he's the perfect person to push for this, since Bush has been on both sides of the issue.

That reform -- I believe it would be a constitutional amendment -- would fly through both Houses and the States as long as it's unencumbered by any other addendums. It would end the absurd practice of politicians running for President ignoring 3/4s of the population to focus on folks in a minority of states. Smaller states with fewer voters would still have the leverage of two senators. And since political ads would now be national buys, they'd still be able to get sick of all that campaigning in Iowa. And naturally it would be a great encouragement for civic duty since people living anywhere in the country -- Texas or California (red or blue) -- would know that their vote really did matter.

Other common sense reforms are desperately needed:

1. Optical scanners have the highest accuracy and lowest default rates of any machines. But choosing one system nationally might be tricky. Let's stick with this, at the very least: **it must be against federal law for votes to be cast on machines that don't produce a paper trail and don't provide for a recount**. That paper trail must be available for the voter to verify before leaving the booth. **It must also be against federal law for a state to provide different voting machines in different counties**. One standard must apply to all voters. Cheaper, older machines tend to be located in poor neighborhoods and have a much higher reject rate, disenfranchising those voters. Your ability to vote and the likelihood of your vote being valid should not depend on what neighborhood you live in.

2. All **voters must provide some form of state or federal id**. (Copy of birth certificate, driver's license, state id, passport, voter registration card, Social Security card, Medicare card, Veteran's card, welfare card, etc.) It need not have a photo. If a voter does not have that, proof of residence -- a cable or phone or electric bill -- will allow them to vote if they swear to their identity. If they don't have that, the voter will be given a provisional ballot and ten days to meet those standards set out above. I voted in New York City and I came with a driver's license (which had a different address than where I am registered), a voter's registration card, a cable and electric bill

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