NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE FOR PRESIDENT OCTOBER 2019

- QUESTIONNAIRE -

Fielded by: Nielsen Scarborough Fielding Dates: September 19 – October 1, 2019

Sample Size: 2,410 registered voters Margin of Error: +/- 2.0%

We are going to look at a proposal for modifying the system that the United States uses for electing Presidents.

As you may know, the US Constitution specifies that the President will be chosen by the "electors" in what is called the Electoral College based on a majority vote. Here is some background on how this works.

Each state is allowed a certain number of electors equal to the number of representatives it has in the House of Representatives plus two for its Senators.

The Constitution allows each state to decide how to select their electors and what instructions to give to the electors. Historically, this has been done in numerous ways. Sometimes the state legislature or the governor of the state would choose the electors and tell them how to vote.

The Electoral College meets after voters go to the polls on Election Day.

Currently, nearly all states use a system in which there is a statewide vote and the party of the winning candidate chooses the electors. That way the electors are committed to vote for the candidate that got the most votes *in their state*.

As you may know, there has been some controversy because, with this system, the Electoral College sometimes does not elect the candidate who won the most votes nationwide. This has happened five times—two times this century and three times earlier. That is one out of every twelve presidential elections.

This has happened because nearly all states choose their electors on a winner-take-all basis, irrespective of the size of the margin of victory. Suppose Candidate A wins by a large margin of voters in some states, while Candidate B wins by only a small margin, but in states that together have more electoral votes. In that case, Candidate A would win more voters nationwide, while Candidate B would nonetheless win in the Electoral College. There is a proposal to change this. It goes like this:

States would agree to select electors who have been chosen by the party of the Presidential candidate who wins the most votes *in the whole country*. Then the candidate who wins the most votes nationwide would win in the Electoral College. This would be fully permitted under the Constitution. Here is an argument in favor of that proposal:

Q15. A basic principle of democracy is that every citizen should have a vote and every vote should have equal influence on the outcome of an election. That is only fair. And that is how every other election in the US is run. But in the system for electing the President, sometimes a candidate with the most votes does not win, which means that votes in some

states count more than votes in other states. This is not fair and is inconsistent with democratic principles. We should make sure that every vote counts equally, and the candidate with the most votes wins.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	44.0%	22.0%	66.0%	10.6%	22.2%	32.8%	1.3%
GOP	21.4%	19.8%	41.2%	14.6%	43.4%	58.0%	0.8%
Dem.	66.1%	21.6%	87.7%	6.7%	4.1%	10.8%	1.4%
Indep.	39.8%	27.7%	67.5%	11.6%	18.8%	30.4%	2.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	42.3%	22.5%	64.8%	10.5%	23.5%	34.0%	1.2%
Red	40.6%	21.0%	61.6%	12.7%	25.0%	37.7%	0.6%
Somewhat red	35.9%	24.4%	60.3%	9.9%	28.7%	38.6%	1.2%
Somewhat blue	41.3%	21.7%	63.0%	13.3%	23.0%	36.3%	0.6%
Blue	53.2%	22.9%	76.1%	8.8%	13.5%	22.3%	1.6%
Very blue	53.8%	19.4%	73.2%	8.2%	16.0%	24.2%	2.6%

Here is a counter argument:

Q16. The US system was developed based on the idea that the states would make important decisions like who should be president. States are meant to choose electors who represent the views in their state. Imagine that you and a clear majority of voters in your state went for one candidate, but the national vote went for a different candidate. This proposal says that your state's electors should contradict the preferences of you and the majority of the people in your state. This would undermine the whole notion that the electors should represent the state.

	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Ref /
	convincing	convincing	convincing	unconvincing	unconvincing	unconvincing	Don't know
National	25.4%	25.4%	50.8%	22.6%	25.8%	48.4%	0.9%
GOP	42.8%	23.5%	66.3%	17.8%	15.5%	33.3%	0.3%
Dem.	11.0%	24.3%	35.3%	26.0%	37.0%	63.0%	1.7%
Indep.	21.3%	32.3%	53.6%	24.8%	21.1%	45.9%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	26.4%	25.0%	51.4%	22.1%	25.0%	47.1%	1.4%
Red	26.5%	23.2%	49.7%	22.3%	27.6%	49.9%	0.4%
Somewhat red	32.2%	25.1%	57.3%	21.2%	20.4%	41.6%	1.0%
Somewhat blue	27.7%	26.2%	53.9%	22.1%	23.3%	45.4%	0.7%
Blue	18.5%	26.8%	45.3%	26.3%	27.0%	53.3%	1.5%
Very blue	19.6%	24.9%	44.5%	22.6%	32.2%	54.8%	0.8%

Now, here is an argument in favor of keeping the current system:

Q17. The current system ensures that all parts of the country are involved in selecting the president, and that each candidate incorporates the needs of all regions – urban and rural – into their political platform. If the election depended only on the popular vote, then candidates would limit campaigning and policies to urban areas with large populations and ignore the other areas, especially rural ones. Right now, candidates need electoral votes from different regions and therefore they build campaigns that address the needs of those different communities.

	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Ref /
	convincing	convincing	convincing	unconvincing	unconvincing	unconvincing	Don't know
National	33.0%	31.6%	64.6%	18.0%	15.8%	33.8%	1.6%
GOP	57.5%	25.0%	82.5%	10.8%	5.8%	16.6%	1.0%
Dem.	13.0%	33.9%	46.9%	25.3%	25.9%	51.2%	1.8%
Indep.	27.4%	41.1%	68.5%	15.9%	13.4%	29.3%	2.3%

Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	31.6%	31.7%	63.3%	19.5%	15.7%	35.2%	1.4%
Red	37.0%	32.0%	69.0%	14.3%	15.4%	29.7%	1.3%
Somewhat red	39.7%	32.0%	71.7%	16.7%	9.9%	26.6%	1.6%
Somewhat blue	35.4%	31.7%	67.1%	16.2%	15.3%	31.5%	1.3%
Blue	27.2%	32.5%	59.7%	21.0%	17.4%	38.4%	1.8%
Very blue	24.4%	30.3%	54.7%	20.1%	23.4%	43.5%	1.8%

Here is a counter argument:

Q18. The current system is actually very bad for rural areas, and most states. This is because campaigns are limited to a handful of "battleground states". In 2016, 90% of Presidential campaign stops were made in just 11 states. This means that the large majority of states are ignored, and many of those stats are rural states. Also, the rural areas in big states like California and New York are currently irrelevant because candidates don't need them to win those states. Big cities and rural areas each make up one fifth of the country, so in a system that emphasizes the national vote, candidates would be motivated to go after votes in both areas.

	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Ref /
	convincing	convincing	convincing	unconvincing	unconvincing	unconvincing	Don't know
National	27.8%	35.2%	63.0%	17.9%	17.7%	35.6%	1.4%
GOP	12.0%	28.8%	40.8%	25.8%	32.5%	58.3%	0.9%
Dem.	42.6%	39.4%	82.0%	11.9%	4.6%	16.5%	1.4%
Indep.	26.8%	39.2%	66.0%	14.9%	16.7%	31.6%	2.4%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	27.8%	32.7%	60.5%	19.0%	19.0%	38.0%	1.5%
Red	27.3%	33.0%	60.3%	19.4%	19.1%	38.5%	1.3%
Somewhat red	22.2%	36.0%	58.2%	18.4%	22.2%	40.6%	1.2%
Somewhat blue	26.1%	38.5%	64.6%	16.9%	18.1%	35.0%	0.4%
Blue	34.0%	34.2%	68.2%	18.8%	10.8%	29.6%	2.1%
Very blue	30.8%	37.4%	68.2%	14.3%	15.5%	29.8%	2.0%

Now that you have heard the arguments, here again is the proposal:

States would agree to select electors who have been chosen by the party of the Presidential candidate who wins the most votes *in the whole country*. Then, the candidate who wins the most votes nationwide would win in the Electoral College.

Q19. How acceptable or unacceptable do you find this proposal?

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	5.1	38.9%	14.2%	46.5%	0.4%
GOP	3.2	61.5%	12.4%	26.0%	0.1%
Dem.	6.7	18.7%	13.6%	67.0%	0.7%
Indep.	4.8	37.6%	19.7%	42.2%	0.6%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	4.9	39.6%	14.1%	46.1%	0.2%
Red	4.9	41.6%	14.2%	43.6%	0.6%
Somewhat red	4.7	41.6%	15.9%	41.9%	0.6%
Somewhat blue	4.9	42.5%	13.0%	44.2%	0.3%
Blue	5.6	33.8%	14.4%	51.2%	0.7%
Very blue	5.7	32.1%	13.9%	54.0%	0.0%

As you may know, a number of states have formed a Compact to adopt this proposal, but under certain conditions. They would only be committed to select electors who would vote for the winner of the national vote when states with *more than half of all electors* adopt this Compact on a legally binding basis.

Once this occurs, this Compact would then ensure that the candidate who wins the most votes nationwide would also win more than half of all electors, and thus win the Electoral College.

Currently, states with 196 electoral votes have passed this Compact. So, states with a total of 74 more electoral votes are needed for this proposal to go into effect. In many additional states this proposal has been passed in at least one legislative body.

Q20. How acceptable or unacceptable is it to you for your state to be part of this Compact?

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	4.9	37.3%	19.6%	41.8%	1.4%
GOP	3.0	59.8%	17.2%	22.0%	1.0%
Dem.	6.7	17.9%	19.8%	60.9%	1.3%
Indep.	4.7	34.5%	24.4%	38.8%	2.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	4.6	39.8%	19.4%	39.0%	1.8%
Red	4.8	40.0%	18.8%	40.9%	0.2%
Somewhat red	4.5	42.2%	15.8%	40.9%	1.2%
Somewhat blue	4.7	40.7%	23.1%	36.1%	0.2%
Blue	5.5	26.7%	21.6%	49.0%	2.6%
Very blue	5.4	31.9%	19.4%	46.1%	2.6%

Q21. In conclusion, do you favor or oppose your state being a part of this Compact?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref / DK
National	48.3%	50.1%	1.7%
GOP	22.8%	75.4%	1.8%
Dem.	71.5%	26.6%	1.9%
Indep.	48.2%	50.9%	0.8%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	46.6%	52.6%	0.8%
Red	45.1%	52.8%	2.1%
Somewhat red	46.1%	53.4%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	47.0%	50.7%	2.3%
Blue	56.9%	40.4%	2.7%
Very blue	50.2%	48.6%	1.2%

[Those who responded "oppose" or skipped Q21]

Q21a Do you oppose this idea because:

¹ you think the current Electoral College system is better

² you would prefer to abolish the Electoral College and have the President be elected by a national popular vote

	You think the current Electoral College system is	You would prefer to abolish the Electoral College and have the President be elected	Ref. / Don't
	better	by a national popular vote	know
National	34.6%	15.7%	1.5%
GOP	65.4%	10.9%	0.9%
Dem.	8.7%	17.7%	2.0%
Indep.	28.8%	21.7%	1.2%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	35.6%	16.9%	0.9%
Red	39.1%	13.9%	1.9%
Somewhat red	40.6%	13.0%	0.3%
Somewhat blue	38.2%	12.1%	2.7%
Blue	24.9%	16.1%	2.2%
Very blue	25.4%	23.8%	0.6%

Q22. How much do you think elected officials should listen to and be influenced by the views of the people they represent as a whole?

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	8.8	3.3%	4.1%	92.3%	0.3%
GOP	8.8	2.6%	4.4%	93.0%	0.0%
Dem.	8.9	3.7%	3.2%	92.7%	0.4%
Indep.	8.7	4.0%	5.6%	89.9%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	8.8	4.1%	3.2%	92.6%	0.1%
Red	8.8	3.3%	4.7%	91.9%	0.1%
Somewhat red	8.8	4.2%	3.4%	92.4%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	8.8	2.6%	5.7%	91.3%	0.3%
Blue	8.8	2.9%	3.5%	92.3%	1.3%
Very blue	8.8	2.4%	4.0%	93.6%	0.0%

Q23. How much do you think President Trump listens to and is influenced by the views of the American people as a whole?

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	4.1	52.6%	6.0%	37.4%	4.0%
GOP	7.3	14.6%	6.6%	74.9%	4.0%
Dem.	1.3	86.5%	3.4%	6.7%	3.4%
Indep.	3.7	54.7%	11.3%	28.5%	5.4%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	4.9	43.2%	7.1%	46.2%	3.4%
Red	4.3	49.7%	5.9%	40.3%	4.1%
Somewhat red	4.6	46.7%	6.3%	42.4%	4.6%
Somewhat blue	4.3	48.6%	7.0%	40.5%	3.9%
Blue	3.5	61.7%	4.1%	32.0%	2.2%
Very blue	2.6	68.1%	5.7%	20.6%	5.7%

Q24. If each of the following candidates were to become president how much do you think they would listen to and be influenced by the views of the American people as a whole?

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	4.8	42.0%	12.2%	44.1%	1.7%
GOP	2.5	73.3%	8.2%	16.5%	1.9%
Dem.	6.9	15.5%	11.9%	71.2%	1.4%
Indep.	4.8	36.8%	22.0%	39.2%	2.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	3.9	52.9%	12.4%	32.4%	2.3%
Red	4.6	43.6%	13.6%	41.2%	1.6%
Somewhat red	4.6	45.5%	11.9%	41.2%	1.4%
Somewhat blue	4.7	44.2%	12.0%	41.3%	2.5%
Blue	5.3	36.0%	12.9%	49.7%	1.4%
Very blue	6.1	26.3%	10.8%	61.7%	1.2%

Q25. Please select how favorably or unfavorably you view each of the following candidates for President.

	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Refused /
Joe Biden	unfavorable	unfavorable	Unfavorable	favorable	favorable	Favorable	Don't know
National	31.3%	19.8%	51.1%	28.7%	18.7%	47.4%	1.6%
GOP	55.8%	23.2%	79.0%	17.0%	2.9%	19.9%	1.2%
Dem.	10.6%	15.6%	26.2%	38.1%	34.0%	72.1%	1.7%
Indep.	27.3%	22.5%	49.8%	31.8%	16.3%	48.1%	2.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	42.0%	18.0%	60.0%	21.9%	15.8%	37.7%	2.4%
Red	34.0%	20.9%	54.9%	25.5%	17.6%	43.1%	2.0%
Somewhat red	32.5%	21.7%	54.2%	31.0%	13.3%	44.3%	1.6%
Somewhat blue	33.9%	21.0%	54.9%	26.6%	17.4%	44.0%	0.9%
Blue	21.9%	18.1%	40.0%	38.1%	20.5%	58.6%	1.3%
Very blue	20.3%	18.8%	39.1%	30.9%	28.9%	59.8%	1.0%
	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Refused /
Pete Buttigieg	unfavorable	unfavorable	Unfavorable	favorable	favorable	Favorable	Don't know
National	36.5%	21.4%	57.9%	25.0%	13.7%	38.7%	3.4%
GOP	66.6%	19.9%	86.5%	7.6%	3.1%	10.7%	2.9%
Dem.	11.0%	20.9%	31.9%	39.2%	25.4%	64.6%	3.6%
Indep.	31.6%	26.5%	58.1%	29.3%	8.8%	38.1%	3.8%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	44.4%	16.8%	61.2%	20.4%	14.1%	34.5%	4.3%
Red	37.3%	20.6%	57.9%	26.2%	12.5%	38.7%	3.4%
					10.00/	00 -01	0.00/
Somewhat red	41.4%	21.1%	62.5%	20.9%	12.8%	33.7%	3.8%
Somewhat red Somewhat blue	41.4% 35.6%	21.1% 24.7%	62.5% 60.3%	20.9% 23.8%	12.8% 14.1%	33.7% 37.9%	3.8% 1.9%

	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Refused /
Kamala Harris	unfavorable	unfavorable	Unfavorable	favorable	favorable	Favorable	Don't know
National	42.0%	20.3%	62.3%	26.7%	8.3%	35.0%	2.7%
GOP	76.5%	14.4%	90.9%	6.4%	0.9%	7.3%	1.8%
Dem.	11.5%	23.6%	35.1%	44.7%	16.9%	61.6%	3.3%
Indep.	39.3%	26.1%	65.4%	28.3%	3.3%	31.6%	3.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	47.7%	17.4%	65.1%	22.4%	8.8%	31.2%	3.6%
Red	46.8%	15.2%	62.0%	29.2%	5.8%	35.0%	3.0%
Somewhat red	48.8%	22.8%	71.6%	22.1%	4.0%	26.1%	2.3%
Somewhat blue	41.8%	22.8%	64.6%	25.8%	7.8%	33.6%	1.8%
Blue	33.0%	23.4%	56.4%	30.2%	11.2%	41.4%	2.1%
Very blue	30.8%	20.0%	50.8%	32.5%	13.9%	46.4%	2.8%
	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Refused /
Bernie Sanders	unfavorable	unfavorable	Unfavorable	favorable	favorable	Favorable	Don't know
National	41.5%	17.2%	58.7%	24.2%	15.7%	39.9%	1.5%
GOP	77.1%	11.9%	89.0%	7.9%	1.9%	9.8%	1.2%
Dem.	12.0%	19.5%	31.5%	38.7%	28.1%	66.8%	1.7%
Indep.	33.9%	23.6%	57.5%	24.9%	16.1%	41.0%	1.6%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					_		
Very red	49.9%	11.0%	60.9%	21.9%	15.0%	36.9%	2.2%
Red	44.1%	19.9%	64.0%	19.1%	15.0%	34.1%	1.9%
Somewhat red	48.7%	17.0%	65.7%	19.2%	13.4%	32.6%	1.7%
Somewhat blue	41.5%	18.7%	60.2%	25.9%	13.0%	38.9%	0.8%
Blue	32.3%	19.2%	51.5%	28.5%	19.2%	47.7%	0.8%
Very blue	29.5%	16.7%	46.2%	32.3%	20.1%	52.4%	1.3%
	Very	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Very	Total	Refused /
Elizabeth Warren	unfavorable	unfavorable	Unfavorable	favorable	favorable	Favorable	Don't know
National	38.0%	13.3%	51.3%	24.2%	22.2%	46.4%	2.3%
GOP	74.5%	12.5%	87.0%	8.4%	3.0%	11.4%	1.7%
Dem.	6.7%	10.3%	17.0%	36.4%	44.3%	80.7%	2.3%
Indep.	32.8%	22.8%	55.6%	29.9%	10.8%	40.7%	3.7%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	43.8%	12.5%	56.3%	21.8%	19.0%	40.8%	3.0%
Red	41.1%	11.4%	52.5%	21.3%	23.6%	44.9%	2.7%
Somewhat red	44.9%	15.6%	60.5%	21.7%	15.7%	37.4%	2.2%
Somewhat blue	39.6%	14.1%	53.7%	23.9%	20.5%	44.4%	1.9%
Blue	27.4%	15.3%	42.7%	29.4%	26.0%	55.4%	2.0%
Very blue	28.0%	11.7%	39.7%	28.2%	29.9%	58.1%	2.2%

D4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

	Strongly	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Strongly	Total	Refused /
	approve	approve	Approve	disapprove	disapprove	Disapprove	Don't know
National	26.2%	15.8%	42.0%	8.2%	48.7%	56.9%	1.2%
GOP	57.1%	27.5%	84.6%	6.6%	7.7%	14.3%	1.2%
Dem.	2.2%	2.8%	5.0%	6.2%	88.0%	94.2%	0.9%
Indep.	15.7%	22.0%	37.7%	16.9%	43.7%	60.6%	1.7%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	37.4%	15.2%	52.6%	6.3%	39.4%	45.7%	1.8%
Red	27.4%	18.7%	46.1%	8.1%	45.0%	53.1%	0.8%
Somewhat red	29.9%	18.6%	48.5%	7.9%	41.7%	49.6%	1.9%
Somewhat blue	27.4%	18.9%	46.3%	7.7%	44.6%	52.3%	1.4%
Blue	19.3%	11.6%	30.9%	12.3%	56.0%	68.3%	0.7%
Very blue	12.9%	11.1%	24.0%	7.1%	68.6%	75.7%	0.3%