PeS& to the NEWS

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments recently approved a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution which would eliminate the Electoral College and replace it with a direct popular national election in which the U.S. President would be elected with 40 percent of the vote.

This radical proposal, if adopted, would encourage presidential candidates to gear their time, money, and policies toward the half dozen most populous states where big-city machines could roll up extra millions of votes. The rest of the country would become irrelevant to the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, even though the
policies and tactics involved in securing extra votes in New York City or Washington, D.C. are usually contrary to the best interests of most of the rest of the country.

If the plurality required for the election of a President were reduced from 50 percent to only 40 percent, the system would provide a built-in incentive for many candidates to try for the 40 percent, and conversely an incentive to field straw candidates in order to prevent an unwanted candidate from achieving the 4_0 percent. With many candidates in the ace, no one would receive 40 percent, and the final decision would almost always be thrown into the hands of Con gress.

This would effectively transfer control over the election of the President from the states and the people to the U.S. Congress, which is the exact opposite of the intent of the Founding Fathers.

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This would replace our present separation of powers 1th the Euro pean parliamentary system of government.

The present Electoral College is the only occasion in our po litical process in which 50 percent of the entire nation must agree on something or someone. This provides a basis for the leadership our country needs in time of crisis. Under the poposed constitu tional amendment, we would always have minority Presidents with an in adequate basis of support.

When a candidate wins a lopsided victory, no one demands a vote recount. It is the close elections that cause the problems and for which our system must provide. The Electoral College reduces the problems involved in a close election to a minimum. The Senate has been engaged for months this year in trying to resolve the disputed election for a New Hampshire Senate seat. Just imagine the confusion if we were faced with vote recounts in all 50 states at the same time in order to determine if a presidential candidate got 39,999 percent of the vote or 40 percent. The present Electoral College system ef fectively prevents a contest in more than a couple of states in any given election.

One of the principal purposes of our unique Electoral College is to keep the meddling fingers of Congress out of the election process. The Electoral College is the only function of our-national government that is performed outside of Washington. The President is elected by electors chosen in their states according to state election laws, who meet and cast their ballots in their own state capitols. No Senator, Congressman, or Federal official is permitted to be an elector in the Electoral College.

The Electoral College has served us well for 200 years, and there is every reason to believe it can continue to serve us for the next 200.

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