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Fact Sheet: Electoral College Timeline

Contested Election Timeline

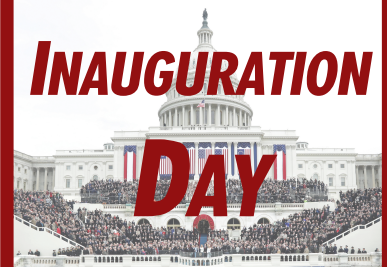
State party organizations each nominate a slate of Electoral College delegates.

Safe Harbor Deadline

If an outcome is contested in a state, the dispute must be settled and the Governor must certify the results by this date. If the state meets this deadline, the decision cannot be challenged by Congress. If the state doesn't meet the deadline, Congress can contest the state's delegates.

The safe harbor deadline was established in the Electoral Count Act of 1887 and upheld in Bush v. Gore (2000).

Results from the states' Electoral College meetings must be delivered to designated officials, including the Vice President and the Archivist of the United States.



November 3

December 14

January 6

August

December 8

December 23

January 20

When voters cast a ballot for a presidential candidate, they are actually voting for a slate of Electoral College delegates.



Election Day

The Electoral College meets separately in each state capital to cast their votes for the President and Vice President.

The U.S. House and Senate meet to count electors and declare a winner.

(See our Electoral College Vote-Counting one-pager.)

"The Electoral College is the only function of our national government that is performed outside of Washington, D.C. The President is elected by electors chosen in their states according to their own state's election laws, who meet and cast their ballots in their own state capitals."

Phyllis Schlafly, December 2000 Phyllis Schlafly Report