



PERSPECTIVES



by **Rinaldo S. Brutoco**

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Escaping Minority Rule *A Plea for "One 'Man', One Vote"*

What do people, especially the news media, mean by "Minority Rule"? Let's be clear that it doesn't mean "Minority Government," a term used to describe how a national political party (e.g., United Kingdom, France, Israel, etc.) can govern without an absolute majority vote. A Minority Government in a multi-party system is allowed to form coalitions that permit the selected party to rule with the consent of the majority of the total coalition. When a Minority Government falls below its ability to wield a majority vote on a particular bill, the opposition can call for a "No Confidence" vote and force a general election to see if a majority party can emerge or if the recipients of a majority of votes can form a new coalition and govern.

Minority Rule refers to something radically different, and something the US needs desperately to reconsider. Through a variety of measures, the American political system has evolved so that a minority of voters can, and in recent decades has, run the various states and Federal government without receiving a majority of the vote. To all of you reading this who were raised thinking the US is a democracy: bad news. It isn't! We are technically a "democratic republic" which means we democratically elect individuals (Presidential electors in our case) who in turn elect some of our top government officials.

The electoral delegation system has its benefits, but it is clear that the negative effects badly outweigh the benefits. The experience of this election "season" requires us to ask again if we desire to live in a country with "one 'man', one vote." This phrase, which now includes women and non-whites, reflects what the Founders drafted into the Constitution precisely with the intention of creating Minority Rule.

The Founders wanted to create a governmental system that permitted only white, male landowners to vote on the ridiculous premise that only white, male landowners would know how to best exercise their civic franchise. That's classic. And, as we have learned, is totally based upon failed logic. Doubtless, the Founders would make different choices today.

From today's perspective looking back on the historic voting rights movements that enfranchised women and Black voters, it is clear we should want every citizen to cast a ballot and move toward a true democracy. From a 2020 perspective, the idea of not letting Blacks or women participate in our democracy is, to most but not all, a farcical notion.

Why? Because fundamentally, we collectively believe (even if many prominent politicians do not) that all adults should be entitled to participate in the democratic process that determines how we all shall live. We are all entitled to have our democratically cast votes determine who will lead the country. We want every citizen to have the real belief that their vote counts equal to that of every other "man."

It is shocking that the Republicans have won the popular vote only once in the past 20 years but have nonetheless won the White House for 12 of those years. This is the result of the Electoral College system, which even casual observers believe has created major distortions in our political system.

Initially a system of electors could be justified by the physical distance that results would have to travel by horseback between election day and the day the electors meet (today as I write) to confirm the presidential election, but the deeper reason the Electoral College was created was to enshrine so much power in the slave owning states that they would be willing to sign the original Articles of Confederation.

Yes, because of slavery and the desire to placate the southern states who practiced it, we are cursed with an Electoral College to this day. This despite the observation that 2020 was the fourth presidential election in a row, and the seventh out of the past eight, where the Republican candidate received far fewer votes than the Democratic candidate. The presidency is the only office in America where the winner often does not receive the most votes! Four years ago, Hillary Clinton beat Donald Trump by over 3,000,000 votes but lost the Electoral College because of the votes of a mere 70,000+ folks scattered amongst three states.

This year President-Elect Biden received over 7,000,000 more votes, and a commanding victory in electoral votes, than Trump. To put this in an historical perspective, Trump was defeated more soundly than any incumbent since Franklin D. Roosevelt pushed Herbert Hoover out of office. Yet Trump is crusading to overturn the election in the courts, including the Supreme Court. More recently he has been personally threatening and cajoling state legislatures and government officials in at least three states to overturn their state's election results.

Frankly, this shameful attempt to overturn the presidential election violates our core national political principals. It has been an attempt to "install" Trump for a second term despite his loss. Had he succeeded fascism would have triumphed, and it would have been the end of our Constitutional democracy. In the words of the Pennsylvania Attorney General: "Trump's attempts amount to sedition by lawsuit."

Clearly, the Electoral College must be abolished to liberate the Presidential election so that the candidate with the most votes always wins, regardless of where those votes were cast. That way we'll know the projectable winner within a day of the election, thereby ending all the foolishness that the delay caused this year. My vote in California must have the same weight as one cast in

Wisconsin or Georgia. The Founders could never have foreseen the travesty experienced with the Electoral College and, without a

doubt would overturn it if they had seen the reality of fascism arising out of the confusion it has sewn.

Fortunately, a movement exists to reform the Electoral College without requiring a Constitutional amendment: The National Popular Vote bill, now passed by states holding 196 electoral votes. When states holding an additional 74 electoral votes adopt the bill it will require those states, acting in concert as the majority of the Electoral College, to vote for the candidate with the most votes regardless of which states they originated from. Stay tuned. Major change is possible before 2024!

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