

BOB DOLE
1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

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AGRICULTURE
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

DISTRICT OFFICE:
101 FEDERAL BUILDING
GREAT BEND, KANSAS 67330
AREA CODE 316
SW 3-5423

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

COUNTIES:		
BARTON	HODGEMAN	RAWL
CHEYENNE	JEWELL	REPU
CLARK	KEARNY	ROOK
CLOUD	KIOWA	RUSH
DECATUR	LANE	RUSSELL
EDWARDS	LINCOLN	SALIP
ELLIS	LOGAN	SCOT
ELLSWORTH	MADE	SEW
FINNEY	MITCHELL	SHEP
FORD	MORTON	SHEP
GOVE	NESS	SMI
GRAHAM	NORTON	STAI
GRANT	OSBORNE	STAI
GRAY	OTTAWA	STE
GREELEY	PAWNEE	THE
HAMILTON	PHILLIPS	TREX
HASKELL	PRATT	WALL

CONGRESSMAN DOLE REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON

FOR RELEASE: WEEK OF MAY 22, 1967

THE CASE FOR A CHANGE IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

For many years there has been increasing popular sentiment favoring abolition of the present Electoral College system of electing our Presidents and changing it to more nearly reflect the direct will of the people.

As another Presidential election approaches, many students of government feel there is a real possibility the next Presidential election could be decided by the House of Representatives, particularly in view of threats of a third party candidate.

Constitutional Provisions

Article II, Section 1, of the United States Constitution prescribes that the winner in a Presidential election must have an absolute majority of the votes in the Electoral College--270 of the 538 members. If no candidate receives this absolute majority, a startling procedure is followed. The 435 members of the House of Representatives "shall immediately chuse by Ballot" the new President. However, the members of the House do not vote to decide the Presidency as individuals; the fifty states vote as single states, each having one vote.

This system is the epitome of all malapportionment because Nevada's vote equals California's; Alaska's that of New York. Concern about this situation has triggered hearings currently under way to change the Constitution to amend or abolish the Electoral College. Yet it is questionable whether this effort will succeed and virtually certain no change will occur before the next election.

Reform Attempts

Hardly a year has passed in the past 180 or so, when one or more bills were not introduced to reform the Electoral College. They have had little success because there is a subtle power balance built into the system between small and large states so that it is almost impossible to change it when only 13 states voting "no" can block adoption of a Constitutional amendment.

Some argue that the Electoral College has its merits. It gives great weight to the large states under the "winner-take-all system." Big states, under this argument, need something to balance the advantages the small states have in getting two senators, regardless of population.

Curiously enough, there is nothing in the Constitution to support the "winner-take-all system." There is nothing about political parties either. It is all part of the unwritten constitution, where custom and precedent have the force of law.

It is a critical situation for a democracy in time of international crisis for nobody to know who the next president will be. Yet in 1968 if Republican and Democrat strengths are anywhere near balanced, the vote will go into the House. Then the vote of Vermont will count as much as California's.