How US elections work: This is how the Electoral College works



Unlike most of the world's democracies, in the US the president is not elected by popular vote. Is that how it works.

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Unlike what happens in most of the world's democracies, in the United States citizens do not directly elect their president but rather the people who will vote on their behalf. This is known as the Electoral College .

This Tuesday, November 3, Americans will vote between giving a second four-year term to Republican Donald Trump or passing

the White House to Democrat Joe Biden.

The Electoral College system was devised by the founding fathers of the American Union and determines that 538 electors or delegates' (corresponding to the 435 members of the House of Representatives, the 100 members of the Senate and the three delegates from the District of Columbia) they vote for the president.

The total of these 538 voting states is distributed among the 50 states of the northern country according to their population. Each of these representatives casts an electoral vote that must be for the most voted candidate in each state. However, in the special case of Nebraska and Maine, the vote is distributed according to the percentage of votes obtained by the candidates.

Once the vote is cast, the representative of each state issues a certificate declaring the candidate the winner. The names of these voters are included in the Electoral College and it is sent to Congress and the Archives of the Nation for an official record.

Members of the Electoral College will cast their votes separately for the president and vice president on December 14, 2020. These votes are sent to the president of the Senate and the president of the country.

Finally, these electoral votes are counted in a joint session of Congress on January 6 and chaired by the country's vice president, -in this case Mike Pence-, who officially announces who has been elected president and vice president of the United States.

The winning candidate will be sworn in on January 20, 2021.

The magic number: 270

For a candidate to be elected as president he needs to obtain at least 270 electoral votes. If neither of the two contenders gets that figure, Congress will be the one who chooses the president and vice president.

The House of Representatives would designate the president from among the three most voted candidates in which each state delegation has the right to a vote. For its part, the Senate would appoint the vice president.

It should be noted that this situation has not occurred since 1825 in the election of John Quincy Adams.

Popular vote against collegiate vote

This whole process means that the candidate with the most votes may not be the one chosen to be president.

In 2000, Republican George W. Bush was elected by 271 votes after the Supreme Court awarded him Florida voters by only 573 votes, although Al Gore had obtained more popular votes.

We even saw this scenario in 2016 when Donald Trump was elected by collegiate voters even though his rival Hillary Clinton had more popular votes.

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