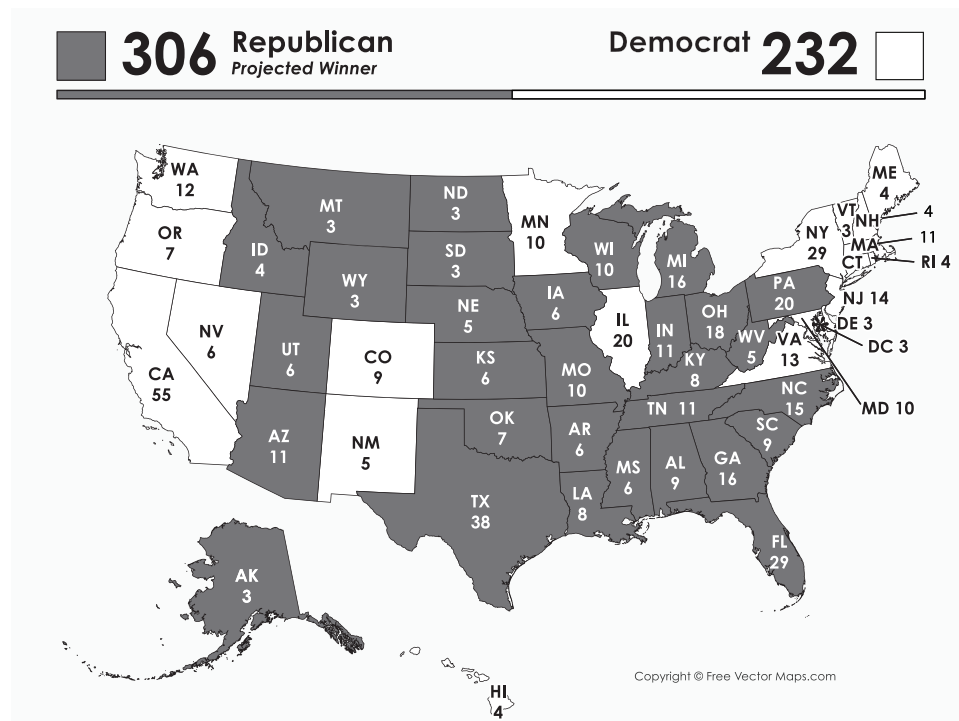# What Is the Electoral College?

Many people were surprised when Donald Trump was elected President in 2016. That's because more people voted for Hillary Clinton—two million more, in fact.
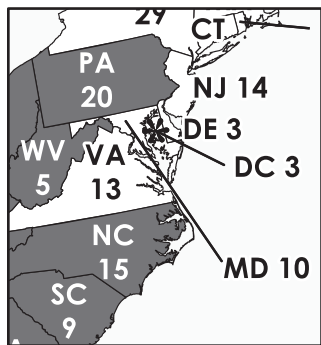
So how did Clinton lose if so many more people voted for her? Because in America, a candidate doesn't need to get the most regular votes to win. A candidate needs the most Electoral votes to win.

Have you heard of the Electoral College? It is not a school but the system we use to elect the President. It was set up by the Founding Fathers who made the first laws for our country. They felt that this system would protect voters from being tricked by Presidential candidates during their campaigns.

2017 Electoral College Votes

306 Republican *Projected Winner*   Democrat **232**

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What Is the Electoral College?

Each state is assigned a certain number of Electoral votes depending on how many U.S. Senators and Representatives it has. Each state elects two U.S. Senators to represent it in the Senate. Each state elects a certain number of U.S. Representatives to represent it in the House of Representatives. The number of Representatives a state has depends on the number of people living in that state.

Each state gets one Electoral vote for each of its Senators and Representatives. Each state starts with two Electoral votes, one for each of its Senators. After that, the number of Electoral votes a state gets depends on the number of Representatives it has. States with more people have more Representatives. That means they also get more Electoral votes. States with less people have less.

Let's look at Maryland. Maryland has two Senators and eight Representatives. That's a total of 10 Electoral votes. First, everyone in Maryland votes. Then, the state counts its votes. The candidate with the most votes wins Maryland and its 10 Electoral votes.

After the election, all the states count their votes. They announce which candidate won in which states. Then they add up all the Electoral Votes. The candidate with the most Electoral votes wins.

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