

We are in mourning for our country. I never thought I would have to experience such shame and disappointment after an election. I really believed that Americans would transcend the deep divisions in the nation and refuse to elect a bigoted, racist, misogynistic demagogue to the highest office in the land. I was wrong.

Does anyone truly believe that if the situation had been reversed--that if Hillary Clinton had won the electoral college contest but had lost the popular vote--that her opponent would have conceded the election in a gracious speech as she did? We are pretty sure--given his statements during the campaign--that this would not have happened. Instead, there may well have been disruption throughout the country and a refusal to accept the results.

In our family, we have people of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, we have immigrants, there are individuals with disabilities, we have gays, some of whom are in long-term relationships, we have other liberals like us, we have fat people, and we have women. All of these groups--and more--were disparaged, marginalized, and ridiculed by the person who will occupy the White House. How can a country of descendants of immigrants from such varied areas of the world and new immigrants, as well, conduct itself with so little regard for human rights and the dignity that each one of us deserves? We cannot find answers to these questions.

That brings us to that peculiar system of electing the chief of the executive branch of the nation. What about this electoral college? The reasons--or excuses--for its establishment in the first place have long been indefensible. And now, with two elections in the last 16 years in which the candidates that received the most votes lost the contest in the electoral college, is it not long past time to change the system?

And, don't we pride ourselves on the "fact" that all of our votes count, that all of us are equal when we enter the voting booth? That is such a sham where Presidential elections are involved. The allocation of electoral college votes destroys the idea that each vote has the same value.

A state has an electoral college total of two votes for its Senators

plus a vote for each Congressional district. So, small or not heavily populated states have fewer votes than large, populous states. This is how that translates into power:

The census of 2010 provides the numbers that are relevant until the next census in 2020. Wyoming, for example, had a population of 563, 626 in that enumeration. The state has three electoral votes. So, each electoral vote was actually "worth" 187,875 votes for President in the general election.

California, our most populous state, had a population of 37,253,956 in 2010. That state has 55 electoral votes. So, each of California's electoral votes was actually "worth" 677,344 votes for President in the general election.

This translates this way: A voter in Wyoming or any other state with three electoral votes has 3.7 times the influence of a voter in California. Here in Michigan, with our 16 electoral votes and a population of 9,883, 640 in 2010, a Wyoming voter had 3.2 times the influence of one of us.

I can't see any possible way this is a fair or equitable system. We tout the mantra of "one person, one vote," but we fail to abide by it. The system needs to be changed.

Further, though, the mood of the country must be changed. There seems to be a deep strain of intolerance in our land, and perhaps, we desperately need to accept people who aren't "just like us." Unless we are Native American, we are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Many of our ancestors were shunned and dismissed when they came to America. The walls then were only in people's minds. We certainly don't need to build physical barriers to compound the problem. So, speak your mind when intolerance is expressed by others, and pin a safety pin to your collar to show like-minded folks that you are a friend.