

An open letter to the members of the Electoral College

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Voters cast their ballots in the Illinois primary in Hinsdale, Ill., on March 18, 2014. (Credit: AP)

Dear Electors,

The Electoral College was created as a fail-safe mechanism to ensure that a person unworthy of the office of the president, regardless of the popular will, would not accede to the highest office in the land. Today, we have not one, but two candidates who are wholly unworthy and ill-suited to that office. Neither Donald Trump nor Hillary Clinton possesses the

skill the office demands, or the character the nation deserves.

Although today the Electoral College is popularly regarded as a rubber stamp of the popular vote, the Framers of the Constitution created the body for very specific reasons. We have now reached a point in our history where it is time to take those reasons seriously.

As Alexander Hamilton wrote of the Electoral College in Federalist 68, the presidential “election should be made by men most capable of analyzing the qualities adapted to the station, and acting under circumstances favorable to deliberation, and to a judicious combination of all the reasons and inducements which were proper to govern their choice. A small number of persons, selected by their fellow-citizens from the general mass, will be most likely to possess the information and discernment requisite to such complicated investigations.”

This can mean only that the Electoral College was designed as a deliberative body meant, in the end, to choose a president for the citizens of the United States, rather than simply to affirm the choice of the voters. Because, as Hamilton wrote, only these electors are equal to the task.

Of course, this has never happened in our history. The Electoral College has heretofore validated the will of the voters because those voters have typically had acceptable, if not praiseworthy, options. But in this election, the two major parties have utterly failed to provide even a marginally acceptable option.

Which brings us back to you.

It is time for you to perform your constitutionally appointed duty, no matter how difficult that task may seem. The American people will go to the polls on November 8 to cast their votes for the president of the United States. But the election of the president won't actually occur until December 19, when the 538 of you — one for each member of Congress, one for each senator, and three representing the District of Columbia — cast your votes.

And on that day, you should vote for someone else.

The cost of this will be high. You will be ridiculed by some. You will be held in contempt by many. Some of you may even be prosecuted. But this is often the fate of patriots, because patriots do the right thing, not the easy thing.

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