



## Death Threats and Intimidation Continue Against Presidential Electors

In the last presidential debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, Trump (but not Clinton, interestingly enough) was asked if he would accept the results of the election, if he were to lose. Trump, who had expressed concern over election fraud, refused to say, finally saying he would keep everyone in suspense.



Clinton responded by saying Trump's refusal to commit to accepting the results of the election as "horrifying," and "really troubling." She added, "That is not the way our democracy works. We've been around for 240 years, we've had free and fair elections, we've accepted the outcomes when we may not have liked them, *and that is what must be expected of anyone standing on a debate stage in a general election.*" (Emphasis added.)

But now that she has clearly lost the election, under the Electoral College system mandated by the Constitution, Clinton has joined in support of the effort to question the election results, even to the point of backing an open letter from several Democratic electors to James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence. These electors want a "briefing" on what role Russian hackers may have played in the election.

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Not only are Clinton and her supporters not accepting the results of the election, thousands of her supporters are inundating Republican presidential electors with phone calls, letters, and e-mails in a frantic attempt to keep Trump from obtaining the majority vote in the Electoral College on Monday.

Some of the electors have even received death threats.

In 2000, I was a presidential elector in Oklahoma, a state that has gone Democrat in a presidential election only once since 1948. As an ardent supporter of the Electoral College, I wanted to participate in the system. So I ran for presidential elector at the fourth congressional district convention, and was nominated for the position. While I was not thrilled with our nominee, George W. Bush, I had pledged to support the party's nominee were that nominee to carry the state, which of course Bush did. After Bush won enough states to put him at 271 (one more than the minimum 270 needed to reach the required majority), I did get some letters urging me to switch to Gore — but no death threats.

Sixteen years later, it is clear that the disrespect for our election system has only accelerated. Brian Westrate, an elector from Wisconsin, reports that he has received almost 50,000 e-mails, even including some from a former porn star in California, urging him to break his pledge to back the Republican



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nominee. What many do not understand is that those chosen as electors are typically longtime Republican Party activists, and are nominated to serve as electors as an honor for their years of service to the party.

How much honor is there in lying?

In contrast to those who would break their pledge, Hector Maldonado, a Republican elector from Missouri, was a strong supporter of Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) in the primaries, but he has said he will cast his electoral vote for Donald Trump with conviction.

It appears that this Democrat-inspired effort to get Republican electors to disregard their pledge, party loyalty, and the wishes of the people of their state is not working. Two Democrat electors have formed a group calling itself "Hamilton Electors." The term apparently comes from Hamilton's explanation of the need for the Electoral College, found in the *Federalist Papers*. Hamilton said the Electoral College would ensure that "the office of the president will never fall to the lot of any man who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications."

Whether someone is qualified to be president is clearly subjective. It is not uncommon for members of one political party to consider the nominee of the other political party as "unqualified." That is what the election is all about, and under the system put in place by Hamilton and the rest of the Framers of the Constitution, Trump has certainly met the "qualification" test.

But that has not stopped the continuing effort to deny Trump the presidency — despite Hillary Clinton's "horror" that anyone would not just "accept" the results of the election.

In Mesa, Arizona, Sharon Geise reported that she has received in excess of 50,000 e-mails since the election — apparently from Clinton supporters who have not accepted the results of the election. "They're overpowering my iPad," she said.

"Obviously their minds are made up and they're not going to change. I'm not either," Geise added.

Republican elector Patricia Allen of Tennessee is particularly upset at the suggestion by constitutional law professor Lawrence Lessig, of Harvard University, that he would give free legal advice to electors who change their vote, and face legal consequences. (Some states provide for fines if an elector fails to vote for the candidate who won the most popular votes in the state.)

"That borders on bribery," Allen said. "Carried to this extreme, the day might come when an elector could be sold to the highest bidder."

Michael Banerian, a senior at Oakland University in Michigan, and a Republican elector, has been threatened with death if he votes for Trump. "Somebody threatened to put a bullet in the back of my mouth," the 22-year-old Banerian said.

Reports of Republican electors being harassed have been reported across the country. The effort is being egged on, not only by Hillary Clinton, but by President Barack Obama, at least indirectly. Obama added fuel to the fire when he told U.S. intelligence agencies he wanted a report on alleged Russian hacking of Democratic Party e-mails. The *Washington Post* has reported that the Obama-run CIA concluded the meddling was intended to help Trump. This public announcement is clearly intended to thwart the results of the election.

Just how does this effort intend to frustrate the results of the election?

A Democratic elector from Washington state, Bret Chifafalo, is an organizer of the Hamilton Electors



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group. He claims the Electoral College is the nation's "emergency brake." Appearing in a video, Chiafalo explained what the group is trying to accomplish. "If only 37 Republican electors change their vote, Donald Trump will not have the 270 electoral votes he needs to be president. Thirty-seven patriots can save this country."

The attempt to overturn the results of the election do not appear to be working. The Associated Press has interviewed more than 330 electors, and has found very little desire among them to not accept the results of the election.

If all the electors voted according to the results of the popular vote in their state, per state law in those states, Trump would have 306 electoral votes. Were 37 Republican electors to switch their votes to someone else — a highly unlikely scenario among a group consisting of hard-core party loyalists, for the most part — then the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives, since in that case neither Trump nor Clinton would have received a majority of the Electoral College vote.

Once the election reached the House of Representatives, the Constitution stipulates that each states' delegation of members of the House cast one unit vote. Since the Republicans hold a majority of state delegations, the Republicans in Congress would then elect the president, choosing from among the top three vote-getters in the Electoral College vote, scheduled for Monday, in state capitols across the country.

Even if the Republican members of Congress had another Republican in addition to Trump to choose from, it is extremely unlikely that very many would do so. While many House Republicans are not enamored with Trump, such a move would be seen by millions of Republicans as dishonorable.

In other words, Republican members of the House of Representatives have most likely accepted the results of the election, unlike Hillary Clinton, many Democrats, and even some disgruntled Republicans, who have opted to ignore those results.

What is more likely to happen is that electors will meet in their state capitols on Monday, December 19, and they will cast one ballot for president, and then cast another ballot for vice president. The results will then be transmitted to the president of the Senate, the National Archives, and the presiding judge of the federal district court wherein the capitol is located.

At the end of the day on Monday, Donald Trump will be president-elect, and Mike Pence will be vice president-elect.

But those on the political Left will still not accept the results of the election, and we can confidently predict more shenanigans over the course of the next several weeks, months, and throughout the term of President Donald Trump.



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