

VOTES AND VOICES: THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

GOVLEARN

**HOW IS A PRESIDENT
ELECTED?**

TIMELINE

CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **CANDIDATES OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE THEY ARE RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT**
- **TYPICALLY AT "RALLIES" OR ONLINE VIDEOS**
- **RALLIES ARE OFTEN HIGH ENERGY EVENTS THAT ARE USED TO RAISE MORALE AND SUPPORT**



**EXAMPLE OF ANNOUNCEMENT
VIA ONLINE VIDEO
HILLARY CLINTON**



**EXAMPLE OF ANNOUNCEMENT
VIA RALLY
DONALD TRUMP**

PRIMARIES

- **DURING PRIMARIES, CANDIDATES VIE FOR THEIR POLITICAL "PARTY'S" NOMINATION**
- **A POLITICAL PARTY IS DEFINED AS AN ORGANIZED GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH AT LEAST ROUGHLY SIMILAR POLITICAL AIMS AND OPINIONS, THAT SEEKS TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY BY GETTING ITS CANDIDATES ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE**
- **CANDIDATES WIN STATES IN PRIMARIES AS WELL AS "CAUCUSES"**
- **A CAUCUS IS A MEETING AT WHICH LOCAL MEMBERS OF A POLITICAL PARTY REGISTER THEIR PREFERENCE AMONG CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR OFFICE OR SELECT DELEGATES TO ATTEND A CONVENTION, AS OPPOSED TO PRIMARIES, IN WHICH VOTERS CAST THEIR VOTES AT POLLS**



THE CONVENTION

- **FOLLOWING THE PRIMARIES, ALL CANDIDATES FROM A POLITICAL PARTY AND "DELEGATES" MEET IN A DESIGNATED CITY FOR THEIR "CONVENTION"**
- **FOR INSTANCE, A CANDIDATE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION MUST WIN A MAJORITY OF COMBINED DELEGATE VOTES AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION TO BECOME THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE**
- **PLEGGED DELEGATES ARE REELECTED OR CHOSEN AT THE STATE OR LOCAL LEVEL, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE AT THE CONVENTION**
- **THE NOMINEE THEN PROCEEDS ON TO THE GENERAL ELECTION WHERE HE/SHE WILL FACE AN OPPONENT FROM A SEPARATE POLITICAL PARTY**



THE "VEEP"

- **THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, SHORTLY BEFORE OR AT THE PARTY CONVENTION, CHOOSES A PERSON, TYPICALLY A POLITICIAN FROM THEIR PARTY, TO BE THEIR "RUNNING MATE"**
- **A RUNNING MATE, IN TERMS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, IS SOMEONE WHO, IF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IS ELECTED, WOULD SERVE AS VICE PRESIDENT**
- **THERE ARE SOME OCCASIONS WHEN VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE ANNOUNCED BEFORE IT IS CLEAR THE CANDIDATE HAS WON OR LOST THE PARTY NOMINATION, SUCH AS TED CRUZ, WHO CHOSE FORMER CANDIDATE CARLY FIORINA AS HIS RUNNING MATE; CRUZ WENT ON TO LOSE THE PARTY NOMINATION TO DONALD TRUMP**



THE GENERAL ELECTION

- **THE GENERAL ELECTION IS THE PERIOD IN WHICH NOMINEES FROM POLITICAL PARTIES CAMPAIGN TO WIN THE ELECTION**
- **THE MODERN GENERAL ELECTION CONSISTS OF TONS (AND TONS) OF RALLIES AND DEBATES**
- **DEBATES ARE TELEVISED EVENTS IN WHICH THE CANDIDATES ARE ASKED QUESTIONS BY A MODERATOR (OFTEN A JOURNALIST FROM A MAINSTREAM NEWS SERVICE) ABOUT THEIR STANCES ON POLITICAL ISSUES**
- **THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF DEBATES: TOWN HALL AND PODIUM**
- **PODIUM DEBATES ARE DEBATES IN WHICH CANDIDATES STAND BEHIND PODIUMS AND LECTERNS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS DIRECTLY FROM THE MODERATOR**
- **TOWN HALLS ARE DEBATES IN WHICH CANDIDATES WALK AROUND THE STAGE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE MEMBERS**
- **DONATIONS ARE OFTEN GIVEN BY BUSINESSPEOPLE TO SUPER PACS. THE DEFINITION IS ACCORDING TO GOOGLE: "A TYPE OF INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE WHICH MAY RAISE UNLIMITED SUMS OF MONEY FROM CORPORATIONS, UNIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS BUT IS NOT PERMITTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO OR COORDINATE DIRECTLY WITH PARTIES OR CANDIDATES"**

WHAT IS THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE?

- **THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE IS A PROCESS, NOT A PLACE**
- **FOUNDING FATHERS ESTABLISHED IT IN THE CONSTITUTION AS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT BY A VOTE IN CONGRESS AND ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT BY A POPULAR VOTE OF "QUALIFIED CITIZENS"**

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- **THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE CONSISTS OF 538 ELECTORS**
- **A MAJORITY OF 270 ELECTORAL VOTES IS REQUIRED TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT**
- **YOUR STATE'S ENTITLED ALLOTMENT OF ELECTORS EQUALS THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN ITS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION: ONE FOR EACH MEMBER IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PLUS TWO FOR YOUR SENATORS**
- **UNDER THE 23RD AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC) IS ALLOCATED 3 ELECTORS AND TREATED LIKE A STATE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE. FOR THIS REASON, THE WORD "STATE" CAN ALSO REFER TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

WHAT IS “WINNER TAKES ALL?”

- **49 OF 51 GROUPS OF ELECTORS* USE A “WINNER TAKES ALL” OR PLURALITY** SYSTEM—WHICH MEANS THAT IF A CANDIDATE HAD THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE IN A STATE, THEY WOULD BE ENTITLED TO ALL THE ELECTORAL VOTES OF THAT STATE**
- **IT IS POSSIBLE TO JUST RECEIVE 50.01% OF VOTES IN 11 GROUPS OF ELECTORS (CA, TX, FL, GA, NC, VA, IL, MI, OH, PA, NY) AND GET 0% OF VOTES IN THE OTHER 40 GROUPS OF ELECTORS BUT STILL TIE THE ELECTION**

***I AM NOT USING THE TERM STATE BECAUSE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA IS ALSO INCLUDED, BUT IT IS NOT A STATE**

****THE NUMBER OF VOTES CAST FOR A CANDIDATE WHO RECEIVES MORE THAN ANY OTHER BUT DOES NOT RECEIVE AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY**

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER 2?

- **MAINE AND NEBRASKA BOTH USE AN ALTERNATE METHOD OF ALLOCATING THEIR ELECTORAL VOTES, CALLED THE CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT METHOD.**
- **CURRENTLY, THESE TWO STATES ARE THE ONLY TWO IN THE COUNTRY THAT DIVERGE FROM THE TRADITIONAL WINNER-TAKE-ALL METHOD OF ELECTORAL VOTE DISTRIBUTION**
- **WITH THE DISTRICT METHOD, A STATE DIVIDES ITSELF INTO A NUMBER OF DISTRICTS, ALLOCATING ONE OF ITS STATE-WIDE ELECTORAL VOTES TO EACH DISTRICT**
- **THE WINNER OF EACH DISTRICT IS AWARDED THAT DISTRICT'S ELECTORAL VOTE, AND THE WINNER OF THE STATE-WIDE VOTE IS THEN AWARDED THE STATE'S REMAINING TWO ELECTORAL VOTES**

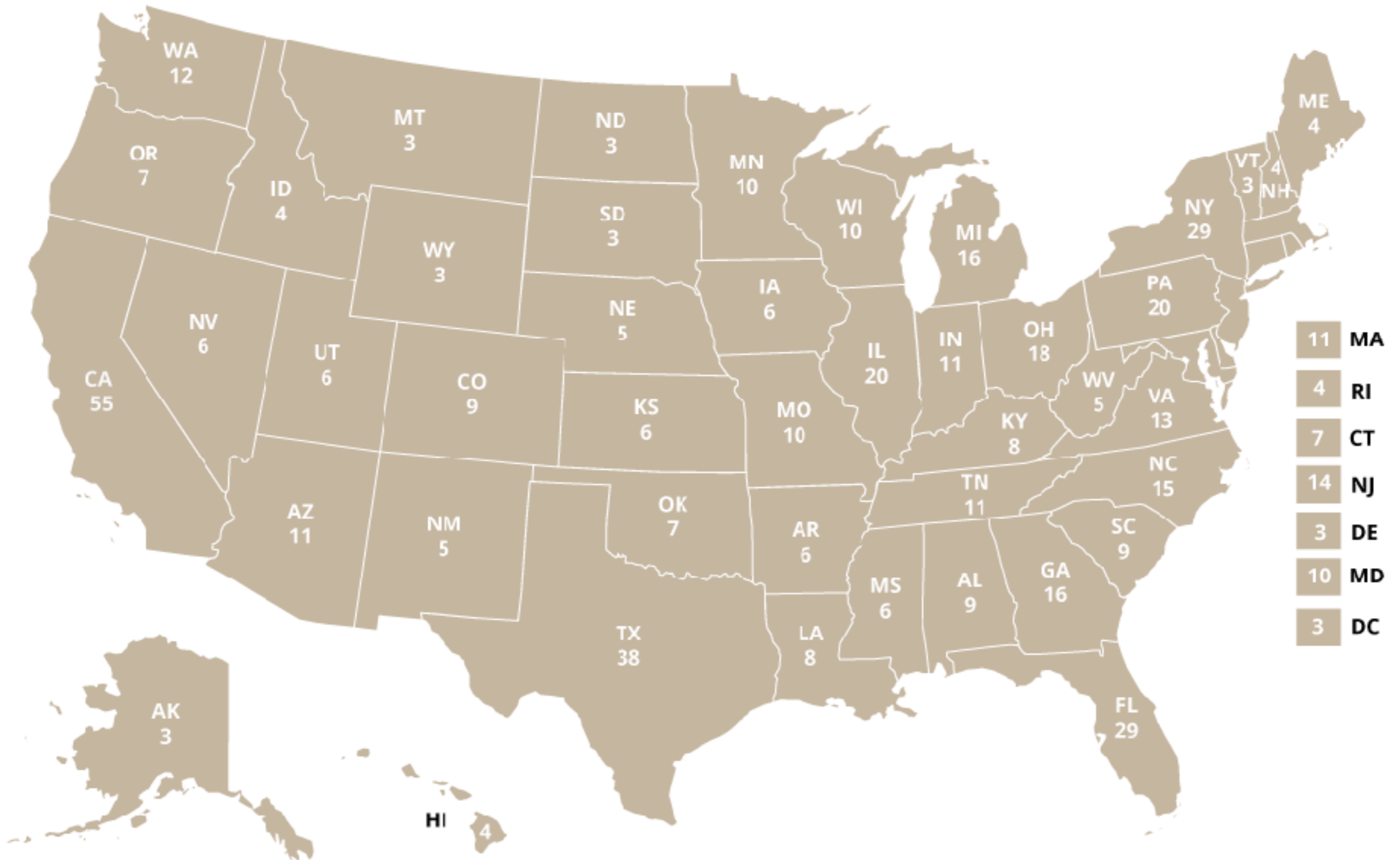
WHAT ARE “SWING STATES?”

- **A US STATE WHERE THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE SIMILAR LEVELS OF SUPPORT AMONG VOTERS, VIEWED AS IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING THE OVERALL RESULT OF A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**
- **CANDIDATES CAMPAIGN HIGHER IN THESE STATES TO EARN THEIR ELECTORAL VOTES AND OFTEN VISIT THESE STATES MORE THAN SAFE STATES**
- **SAFE STATES ARE STATES THAT HAVE CONSISTENTLY VOTED FOR A CERTAIN POLITICAL PARTY OVER TIME—HOWEVER, THIS DOESN'T GUARANTEE VICTORY IN AN ELECTION**
- **HILLARY CLINTON, THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IN 2016, DID NOT OFTEN VISIT SAFE STATES MICHIGAN AND WISCONSIN, AS HER OPPONENT DONALD TRUMP DID, AND SHE LOST THOSE STATES IN THE ELECTION**

WHAT ARE “THIRD PARTIES”

- **A POLITICAL PARTY IS DEFINED AS AN ORGANIZED GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH AT LEAST ROUGHLY SIMILAR POLITICAL AIMS AND OPINIONS, THAT SEEKS TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY BY GETTING ITS CANDIDATES ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE**
- **THE USA HAS TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES: THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY**
- **HOWEVER, THESE ARE NOT THE ONLY PARTIES—PARTIES LIKE THE GREEN PARTY AND THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY TEND TO GARNER UP 1 TO 5% OF THE POPULAR VOTE IN STATES**
- **HOWEVER, NO THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE HAS WON A STATE IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SINCE GEORGE WALLACE OF THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENT PARTY IN 1968, IN WHICH HE WON LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS, MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, AND GEORGIA**
- **THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE PUTS THIRD PARTIES AT A DISADVANTAGE, AS THEY RARELY GARNER A PLURALITY OF THE POPULAR VOTE IN A STATE, LET ALONE THE MAJORITY**

ELECTORAL MAP



ELECTORAL COLLEGE MAP TO SCALE

The Electoral College

Projected 2012 Map



| | |
|--------|--------|
| TX: +2 | IA: -1 |
| AZ: +1 | LA: -1 |
| FL: +1 | MA: -1 |
| GA: +1 | MO: -1 |
| NV: +1 | NY: -1 |
| UT: +1 | OH: -1 |
| | PA: -1 |

SIMULATION

BRINGING ELECTORAL COLLEGE TO LIFE

- **2 CANDIDATES RANDOMLY SELECTED**
- **CANDIDATES ASSIGNED PLATFORMS**
- **MINI DEBATE (HINT FOR CANDIDATES: TRY TO SYMPATHIZE WITH SWING STATES)**
- **STUDENTS (NOT CANDIDATES) ARE ASSIGNED STATES WITH ELECTORAL VOTE COUNTS ON THEM**
- **THEY PUT THEM IN BOWLS WITH CANDIDATES NAME ON THEM**
- **MOCK ELECTION NIGHT COVERAGE**
- **MOCK INAUGURATION**

CANDIDATE PLATFORMS

BLUE PARTY

- **ALL DOGS SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN RESTAURANTS**
- **GUM SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHEWED DURING CLASSES IN SCHOOLS**
- **THERE SHOULD BE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT EVERY INTERSECTION IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**
- **FIDGET SPINNERS SHOULD BE BANNED FROM ALL SCHOOLS**
- **EVERY CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 15 SHOULD HAVE A TELEVISION IN THEIR BEDROOM AND A SMARTPHONE SUPPLIED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

RED PARTY

- **NON-SERVICE DOGS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN RESTAURANTS**
- **GUM SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE CHEWED DURING CLASSES IN SCHOOLS**
- **THERE SHOULD NOT NEED TO BE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT EVERY INTERSECTION IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**
- **EVERY STUDENT, ALONG A NOTEBOOK AND PENCILS, SHOULD BE SUPPLIED A FIDGET SPINNER AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY SCHOOL YEAR**
- **PARENTS SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHETHER THEIR CHILD SHOULD HAVE ELECTRONICS**