



CRAIG BROWN
COLUMBIANA COUNTY RECORDER

Courthouse • 105 South Market • Lisbon, Ohio 44432 • Phone: 330-424-9517 ext. 640 • Fax: 330-424-5067

Electoral College to cast your votes today

Published: Monday, December 15, 2008 Youngstown Vindicator - By David Skolnick, skolnick@vindy.com

This is the first time Ohio Democrats have participated in the Electoral College since 1996. The voters spoke last month by electing Democrat Barack Obama as president. Election boards throughout the country have certified the results of that Nov. 4 election, some quicker than others.

But as those who paid attention in civics class know, it's the vote of the Electoral College that determines the next president.

For those who didn't know that, don't worry. The system is set up so that if a Democrat wins in a state, the members of the Electoral College in that state are Democrats selected earlier in the year through a vote of a small group of Democratic loyalists. It's the same for Republicans in states where John McCain, that party's presidential nominee, won.

In the Electoral College's history, more than 99 percent of the electors voted as pledged.

At noon today, the 20 members of Ohio's Electoral College will meet in the Ohio Senate chambers in the Statehouse in Columbus to vote for Obama as president and Joe Biden as vice president.

Among the 20 Ohio members of the Electoral College are Columbiana County Recorder Craig Brown and Renee Cafaro, the sister of incoming Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafaro and also a daughter of J.J. Cafaro, whose family's company is a major shopping complex developer.

"It's an honor to be selected, and I'm very excited to vote for Barack Obama," said Brown, of Salem. "Not a lot of people get the opportunity to have a vote in the Electoral College."

This is the first time Ohio Democrats have participated in the Electoral College since the 1996 re-election of President Bill Clinton.

Eighteen of the Electoral College members were elected by Democrats in their congressional districts during an Ohio Democratic Party convention in Columbus this summer.

There were about 35 to 70 people from each district at the convention, Brown said.

The entire convention membership elected Gov. Ted Strickland and state Democratic Chairman Chris Redfern to the state's two at-large positions on the Electoral College.

The winner-take-all approach that 48 states use for the Electoral College vote should be changed to the system used in Maine and Nebraska, Brown said.

In those two states, two electors are chosen by the statewide presidential popular vote with the remainder by the popular vote in each congressional district.

"It's time for the process to evolve somewhat," Brown said. "I'd like to see it remain but with the vote by congressional district."

That system would dramatically change the presidential voting process. It would eliminate the practice of a candidate's winning all of a state's electoral votes regardless of how close the popular vote is in the states.

"But it would be more representative of voters," Brown said. One perk of being a member of the Electoral College is an invitation to the presidential inauguration. Brown said he hopes it includes a good view of the inaugural address. This is also Cafaro's first Electoral College.

Cafaro's voting address is in Liberty, but she also has a residence in New York and works as a special assistant to the senior adviser for New York Gov. David A. Paterson.

Cafaro couldn't be reached to comment.