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Subject: Joint Session of Congress: Electoral College Count 1PM EST
Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 10:03:00 AM
Attachments: [CRS Counting Electoral Votes An Overview of Procedures at the Joint Session, Including Objections by Members of Congress.pdf](#)
[2021.01.06 - BGOV OnPoint Congress Set to Count Electoral College Votes.pptx](#)

Hi all-

At 1:00 PM today the Congress will hold a Joint Session of Congress to count electoral votes. I wanted to send out a brief summary on the procedures for today. Attached is a Congressional Research Service report and a BGOV summary for your reading pleasure.

Maybe I'm a complete political nerd....but it will be worth watching.

BGOV Summary

When: Under federal law, a joint session to count electoral votes begins at 1 p.m. on Jan. 6 in the year following the presidential election.

Where to Watch: The Electoral College vote count can be viewed on several major networks as well as on CSPAN ([Channel 16 at Interior](#)), or online at the [House](#) and [Senate](#) websites.

Who Runs It: Vice President Mike Pence will preside over the joint session in his capacity as president of the Senate. Speaker Nancy Pelosi will occupy the seat to the vice president's left, like at a State of the Union address.

What Happens: The states' electoral vote certificates are verified, and the votes for president and vice president read aloud, in alphabetical order by members of Congress acting as tellers. The tellers usually are the chairmen and ranking members of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee and the House Administration Committee, the panels that have jurisdiction over federal elections.

When the tellers are done, the vice president announces the totals and who has been elected president and vice president. A majority of the 538 electoral votes is required for election. In the 2013 joint session, Biden announced his own re-election as vice president. In 2017, he announced the election of Donald Trump as president and Pence as vice president.

How Long Will It Take? The pro forma ceremony usually takes about half an hour and lacks suspense. No debate is permitted.

The joint session can take longer if there's an objection to the counting of the electoral votes of one or more states. Under federal law, an objection must be "made in writing, and shall state clearly and concisely, and without argument, the ground thereof," and be signed by at least one House member and one senator.

In those cases, the joint session is suspended and each chamber meets separately to debate and vote on the objection, with debate limited to two hours. Both chambers would have to agree for the

votes to be set aside.

If there are objections to more than one state's votes, those would be considered separately.

Have There Been Objections Before? Several objections were raised by House members in January 2001, when Al Gore presided over the process certifying his loss to George W. Bush, but no senators signed on.

In January 2005, then-Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-Ohio) objected that her state's electoral votes were not "regularly given." Ohio was the last state called in the 2004 election, when it backed President George W. Bush by 2 percentage points and clinched his re-election over Democratic challenger John Kerry. Tubbs Jones and then-Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) co-signed the objection.

The two Democrats said they wanted to call attention to voting irregularities and not overturn the election result.

The objection was overwhelmingly rejected, 31-267 in the House and 1-74 in the Senate. The joint session reconvened, and the presiding officer, Vice President Dick Cheney, announced his and Bush's re-election.

In 2017, seven House Democrats formally objected to various states' electoral votes for Trump, alleging voter suppression and Russian interference in the 2016 election. Biden, the presiding officer, rejected all of them because no senator joined a House member to object in writing.

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