Twitter Thread by Barry Burden



Barry Burden
@bcburden

A thread on the #ElectoralCollege as voting gets underway. This is day that 538 privileged people out of 239 million eligible voters actually get to vote for president and vice president. 1/11

A reminder that "college" is probably the wrong term. That word does not appear in the US Constitution. By design, the full set of electors never actually meets as a group. 2/11

This bizarre and antiquated system violates the fundamental norm of "one person, one vote." States such as mine get showered with attention from the campaigns while most others are ignored. It is well known that voter turnout is higher in the battleground states. 3/11

What is often overlooked is the system also makes elections less secure. An election that turns on a few states is easier for a malicious actor to get a foothold. Hacking a decentralized national system is nearly impossible, but targeting a few states is not. 4/11

The system also fosters partisan disputes. When it all comes down to a few battlegrounds, political parties are incentivized to manipulate election rules, file lawsuits, & generally do all they can to win by small margins. 5/11

There is no ideal way to run an election, but over time the U.S. has come to embrace the notion of voting equality. The Electoral College remains one of the few places where that value is violated. 6/11

The Electoral College system as outlined in the Constitution is not exactly the problem. It's the use of winner-take-all rules in the states for awarding electors that turns a national election into one focused on a few battlegrounds. 7/11

A remedy that does not require amending the Constitution is for states to award their electors on a proportional basis. If that rule was in place, we would have known quickly after election day that Wisconsin was going to award Biden & Trump 5 electoral votes each. 8/11

Other options include the national popular vote interstate compact or amending the Constitution to do away with the electoral system altogether. For these reforms, adopting ranked choice voting would be welcome. 9/11

Just don't allocate electors by congressional district. A district-based system heightens incentives for partisan gerrymandering, where SCOTUS has already removed the guardrails. Making the presidency dependent on districts would only intensity the manipulation of maps. 10/11

Best wishes to everyone for a smooth round of electoral voting today and counting in Congress on Jan. 6. But for the sake of enhancing representational equality, reducing partisan legal disputes, and improving election security, let's make some changes for 2024. 11/11