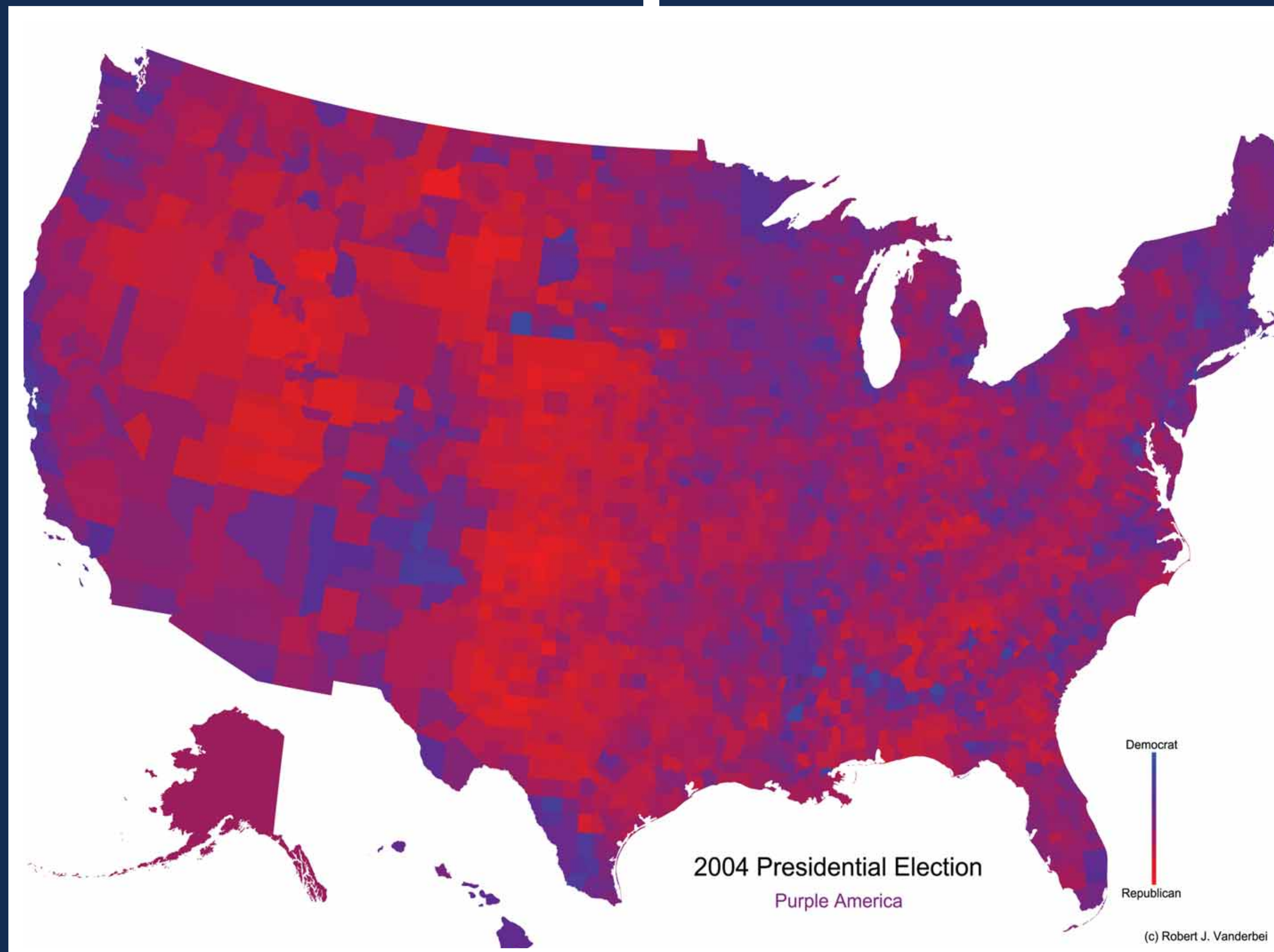


COLLEGE EXAM

Should the Electoral College be abolished in favor of a popular vote for president?

The way America elects its presidents has stirred debate since the Electoral College was created in 1787. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention could not decide whether the chief executive should be chosen by Congress or by popular election, so the Electoral College became their compromise. States would vote for “electors” who would then vote for president, which is still the way the system works today.

Over the years, more than 850 amendments have been proposed, though never passed in Congress, to reform the Electoral College. Proposals have ranged from changing the way electoral votes are allocated to abolishing the system entirely.



Critics of the Electoral College say that having electors vote for president undermines democracy since it is possible to be elected without winning the most popular votes, something that has happened in at least three elections and most recently in 2000. Supporters of the current system say that it has served the nation well and forces candidates to gain broad geographic support rather than concentrating only on large metropolitan areas.

Should the Electoral College be abolished in favor of a popular vote for president?

YES

- In the Electoral College system, it is possible for the loser of the popular vote to win the presidency, which is undemocratic.
- The Electoral College undermines the principle of “one person, one vote” by giving more weight to voters in less populous states.
- The Founding Fathers’ concern that voters would not have enough information to make informed choices is no longer true with modern communication technology, making the Electoral College archaic and unnecessary.

NO

- Popular election campaigns directed at a national audience would neglect important regional issues.
- In the current system, candidates must court votes in states covering both rural and urban areas, making sure that a diverse range of citizens’ concerns are heard.
- The Electoral College preserves the balance of power established by the framers in the Constitution by giving states the key role in choosing who will lead the federal government.