



STATE OF IDAHO
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
LAWRENCE DENNEY

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: The Office of the Secretary of State, Election Division

Idaho's Presidential Electors Deserve Our Respect and Civility

Idaho's Presidential Electors will meet at 12:00 noon on December 19th as directed by the Congress of the United States. At that time, they will cast their votes for President and Vice-President.

Idaho Secretary of State, Lawrence Denney, would like to remind Idaho citizens, along with citizens around the country that the four people tasked with casting Idaho's Electoral College ballots are exactly that - people. Presidential Electors are individuals appointed by each political party and each independent Presidential candidate prior to the election. These individuals take a pledge that, given the opportunity to represent their state and their party in the Electoral College, he or she will cast an electoral vote for the party's nominee for both President and Vice-President. Since a majority of Idahoans cast their ballots for the Republican Party nominee, Donald Trump, Idaho's four electors will be the four Presidential Electors appointed by the Republican Party.

In recent days, Idaho's four Republican Party electors have been receiving phone calls regarding their vote in the Electoral College from citizens within Idaho and outside of the state. Many of these phone calls are crossing into what could reasonably be considered harassment. The callers are trying to persuade the electors to become what is known as a "Faithless Elector". Going against their pledge, "faithless electors" either abstain from or cast a ballot in opposition to their party's designated nominee.

"While there is no Federal requirement binding electors to their pledge, and while Idaho is one of 21 states that does not have state-level legislation to force an elector to comply, attempting to sway an elector's commitment to their party through insults, vulgar language, or threats, simply lacks civility..." says Secretary Lawrence Denney, Idaho's Chief Election officer.

"These are people who have volunteered to represent our state and their party in a process that goes back to the founding of our nation," Secretary Denney continued. "If the Presidential

Election had been different, the Presidential Electors would be from a different party and would still deserve the same respect. They don't deserve to be mistreated by someone just because that person doesn't agree with the outcome of the election. It is one thing to have a civil conversation and share your concerns, but some of the reports I've received are far from that type of behavior." The incidents Secretary Denney has been made aware of are "disheartening and show a tremendous disrespect for the individuals tasked with casting Idaho's electoral ballots."

While our current Electoral College was implemented in 1804 with the passing of the 12th Amendment, the Electoral College has existed in some form since unanimously electing George Washington on February 4, 1789. The first faithless vote was cast by Samuel Miles, a Pennsylvania Federalist, who believed no Presidential candidate other than George Washington should ever be elected unanimously, in 1796. Throughout our history there have been a total of only 157 faithless electors. Seventy-one of these faithless electors were because of the death of a party's nominee, like the 63 electors who would not vote for Democratic Presidential nominee Horace Greeley in 1872 when he died after the November election but prior to the convening of the Electoral College).

The most recent occurrence of a faithless elector was in 2004 when an anonymous elector from Minnesota voted for the same candidate for both President and Vice-President.

To date, no elector has ever changed the outcome of the election by voting against his or her party's nominee.

"I ask that those who wish to share their opinions with the four Presidential Electors remain respectful to the individual serving." Secretary Denney continued. Also, those who wish to share may send a letter or email in care of the Secretary of State's Office. These will then be provided to the Presidential Electors prior to the Electoral College meeting on December 19th.