### **TRANSCRIPT**

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**Adia Samba-Quee:** [00:00:00] Civics 101 is supported in part by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:00:04] It's like, why would the archives be in charge of the certificate of the Electoral Commission?

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:00:11] This is Jessie Kratz, historian of the National Archives and Records Administration. That is the place tasked with the preservation and documentation of government records and as it turns out, administering the Electoral College.

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:00:25] So before the archives got the responsibility, it was part of the State Department. And then in 1950, there was a big reorgs of government and it was given to the National Archives. So I think that they're just washing their hands of this like bureaucratic requirement.

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:00:41] This is Civics 101.

[00:00:41] I'm Hannah McCarthy.

**Nick Capodice:** [00:00:42] I'm Nick Capodice.

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:00:43] And as part of our exploration of our unwieldy beast of an election process from individual votes to the Electoral College, I wanted to know who was in charge of making sure it doesn't get all muddled up.

**Nick Capodice:** [00:00:55] But wait, before you take one step further, we have a huge episode [00:01:00] on the Electoral College where we explain the life out of it. So if you don't know how it works, stop. Go to our website, civics101podcast.org and search Electoral College. All right. So who is in charge?

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:01:11] The archives is in charge Electoral College process.

[00:01:15] And this is something the archivist has delegated to the Office of the Federal Register and as one of their lesser known responsibilities. And so before the election, what they do is they contact all the people that are in charge of the election process in every state and outline the responsibilities for Electoral College process.

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:01:33] Somehow this is my favorite part, an official phone call to explain the Electoral College process to election officials.

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:01:40] And then after the election results are certified, the governor of each state and then the mayor of D.C., they have to prepare seven of these things called certificates of ascertainment.

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:01:49] These certificates are the link between our popular vote and the electoral vote. They list the various slate of electors for the various candidates and how many votes those electors received. [00:02:00]

**Nick Capodice:** [00:02:00] Because remember, when you vote for president, you're actually voting for a slate of electors who will then cast their vote basically on your behalf.

[00:02:09] So the certificates must feature all the slates and the various vote breakdown.

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:02:13] And be signed by the governor, a real signature, no stamp, and it has to carry the seal. And so the archivist gets these and he's been getting them and we've been posting them on the Electoral College website. So if you want to see the ones that have already come in there online now and this is the document that outlines who will be voting on December 14.

**Nick Capodice:** [00:02:31] Did you look them up?

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:02:31] Oh, of course. They're all totally different down to the sometimes roundabout way. They present all of the information and their graphic design. Ohio's is pretty ornate. And I do recommend if you have trouble wrapping your mind around the Electoral College, looking at one of these certificates of ascertainment, because they helped me to visualize things and clear things up. So the archivist reviews the certificates of ascertainment and make sure all the T's are crossed, the I's are dotted.

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:02:58] And then after the Electoral [00:03:00] College meets, we're going to get copies of the certificate of vote and the certificate of ascertainment, these pairs. And we work with Congress to make sure that they have all the copies as well when they're getting ready to count the electoral vote on January sixth.

**Nick Capodice:** [00:03:15] So the role of the archive specifically of the Federal Register is simply to process paperwork.

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:03:21] To be fair, very, very important paperwork. But, yes, Jesse did point out, though, you know, paperwork is kind of the point of the National Archives.

**Jessie Kratz:** [00:03:31] I mean, we're all about the paperwork. And so that's what we're basically managing the paperwork around it. But I like it because the archives role is really twofold. We're collecting the certificate and we're making them available to the public. And then we also after the election, we keep them forever and so people can come look at election results that happened, you know, 50 years ago, 100 years ago, and they're available for public use. And so, yeah, it's it's bureaucracy and it's paperwork. But I think it's really necessary. And it's [00:04:00] part of the democratic process.

**Hannah McCarthy:** [00:04:02] That does it for this episode on the Electoral College.

[00:04:04] But we are just scratching the surface of this behemoth. So stay tuned. If you have questions about the way this sometimes baffling democracy works, ask us. Click the button at the top of the homepage at Civics101podcast.org.