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**Civics 101**

**Ask Civics: What role does Congress play in the Electoral College?**

**CPB:** [00:00:00] Civics 101 is supported in part by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:00:05] Election Day was ages ago. The Electoral College spoke. Each state certified their count with certificates of ascertainment. Finally, Inauguration Day.

**George W. Bush:** [00:00:17] All of this is where I, George Walker Bush, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of president.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:00:23] Not so fast. I'm JacquiFulton. Today on Civics 101, we're talking about the final, final, final step in our presidential election process, the certification of Electoral College votes by Congress.

**Pelosi:** [00:00:43] The House will be in order. May we please clear the middle aisle.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:00:48] Normally certifying the Electoral College votes, just mundane housekeeping, Congress completing paperwork, boring. But every so often it's used as a chance for a last-minute political theater. Let's set the scene for this blockbuster event. In a world where papers need to be pushed, will the United States Congress push those papers? The Senate packs up their lunch bills and takes a field trip to the House for a joint session of Congress.

**CSPAN:** [00:01:26] Vice President Cheney as president of the Senate, will chair this-

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:01:29] starring a vice president-

**Cheney:** [00:01:32] Pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the United States-

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:01:36] Who silently reads poster sized certificates from 50 states and the District of Columbia, then hands the certificates over to a teller who tells everyone what they say.

**Teller:** [00:01:52] Mr. President, the certificate of the electoral vote of the state of Alabama seems to be regular in form and authentic and it appears therefrom that John McCain of the state of Arizona received nine votes for president and Sarah Palin of the state of Alaska received nine votes for vice president.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:02:12] But wait, someone has an objection.

**Representative:** [00:02:14] Mr. President, I object to the certificate from the state of Alabama on the grounds that the electoral votes were not under all of the known circumstances regularly given and that the electors were not lawfully certified.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:02:26] The objection has to be in writing-

**Biden:** [00:02:28] Is the objection in writing-

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:02:30] Signed by a member of the House and a member of the Senate-

**Biden:** [00:02:35] Both member of the House of Representatives and a senator-

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:02:37] if it is the House and Senate, retired to the respective chambers and for up to two Nail-biting hours discuss the objection.

**Representative:** [00:02:48] Given the confirmed and illegal activities engaged by the government of Russia designed to interfere with our election and the widespread violations of the Voting Rights Act.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:02:57] Then they vote.

**Movie clip:** [00:03:01] Who is with me? Let's go!

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:03:05] It's all but certain to fail. This process has never succeeded in changing the outcome of its electoral college like ever.

**Representative:** [00:03:11] Mr. President, I object-

**Representative:** [00:03:13] I have an objection-

**Representative:** [00:03:14] Is there one United States senator who will join me in this letter?

**Biden:** [00:03:20] In that case, the objection cannot be entertained.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:03:26] You'll be on the edge of your seat as the winner is declared

**Representative:** [00:03:30] Barack Obama, the state of Illinois received 15 votes for president.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:03:33] Again

**Representative:** [00:03:34] Who received nine votes for president.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:03:36] And again

**Representative:** [00:03:37] Four votes for president.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:03:39] Critics are raving.

**Biden:** [00:03:42] The whole number of the electors appointed to vote for president of the United States is 538, of which a majority is 270.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:03:50] Will the United States Congress push those papers? Find out on January 6th.Every four years.

**Biden:** [00:03:59] This announcement of the state of the vote by the president, the Senate shall be deemed a sufficient declaration and shall be entered together with a list of votes in the Journal of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

**Movie clip:** [00:04:12] Coming soon to theaters.

**Jacqui Fulton:** [00:04:16] If you've got questions, we've got answers, just submit them at our website, Civics101podcast.org.