

The numbers war

A look at where candidates stand on election day



Pro: States where the candidate is leading by nine points or more

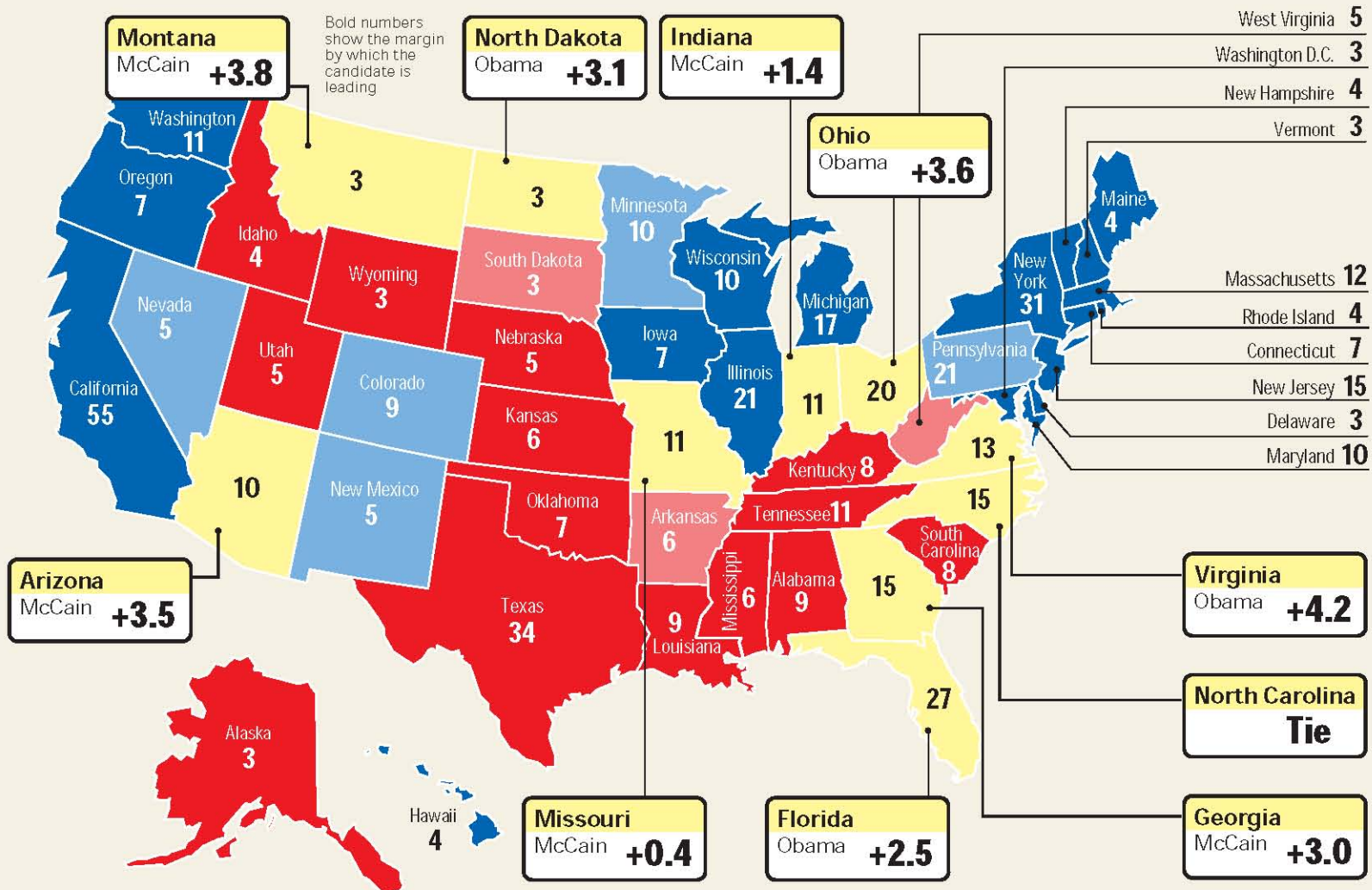
Leaning: States where the candidate has a lead of between four and eight points

Toss up: States where a candidate is leading by four points or less

THE WINNING NUMBER:

270

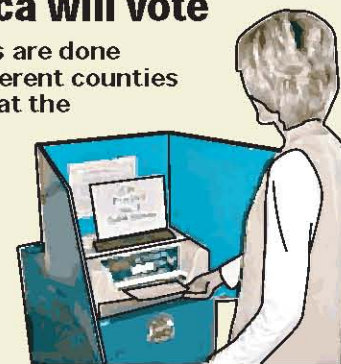
To get into the White House, a candidate needs 270 or more than half the total of 538 electoral votes.



Sources: REALCLEARPOLITICS.COM, POLLSTER.COM

How America will vote

Casting of ballots are done differently in different counties in the US. A look at the various systems:



OPTICAL SCAN ▶

Voters fill in a machine-readable ballot.

Percentage of counties: **58.9%**

ELECTRONIC ▶

Voters use touch-screen or push-button machines.

34.3%

PAPER ▼

Votes are marked on paper in a booth and counted by hand.

1.8%



LEVER ▶

Voters pull a machine lever to mark their choices. New York is the only state using this device.

2%



PUNCHCARD ▶

Voters punch holes next to their choices on a paper ballot and these are counted manually. This is used in only 12 counties in Idaho.

0.3%

MIXED SYSTEMS 2.7%



HOW THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE WORKS

- The winner of the US presidential poll is not decided by the popular vote.
- To win, he has to get minimally 270 out of 538 votes cast by members of the Electoral College (EC).
- Each state plus the District of Columbia gets a minimum of three votes in the EC.
- States are apportioned electors according to population size. So California has 55, while Vermont gets three.
- The electors are usually state officials or party leaders.
- Generally, the candidate who wins the popular vote in a state gets all its EC votes.
- On Dec 15, when the EC meets, the electors are expected to cast their votes according to the result in the state they represent.