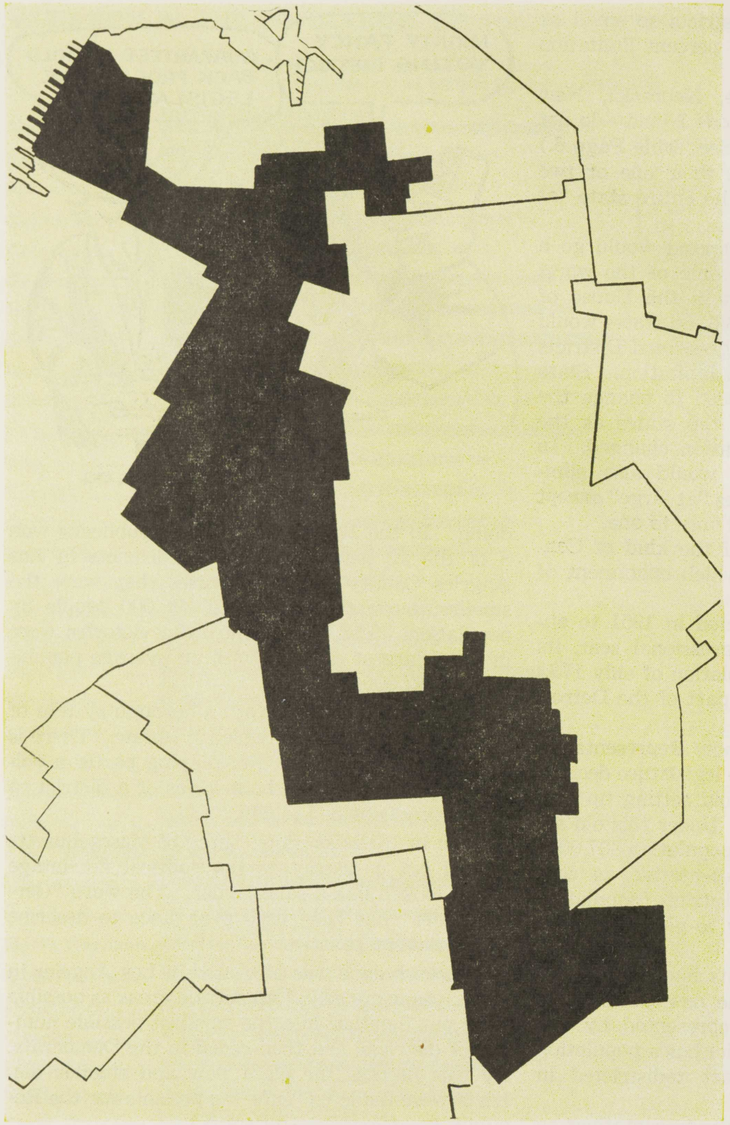


Economic Outlook, CIO.

IN BLACK ON THE MAP TO THE LEFT is the outline of the 12th Congressional District of Brooklyn. Enough Republican voters have been put into this elongated district to produce a Republican district for the first time in many years in this area.

and another which is now divided with neighboring Richmond County.

More than a reduction of normal Democratic districts was achieved. By carefully gerrymandering the new 12th district in Brooklyn, enough Republican voters were concentrated into it to elect a new Republican Congressman. A similar result was obtained in the new district which is now shared with Richmond County.

The map above shows clearly how the new 12th district was skillfully carved out of portions of five old Brooklyn districts in order to gather together Republican votes and a Republican victory.

Clearly, it is not enough to seek to establish Congressional districts of reasonably equal population. Some means are also necessary to curb the gerrymandering instinct to which all political parties succumb when they control state government.

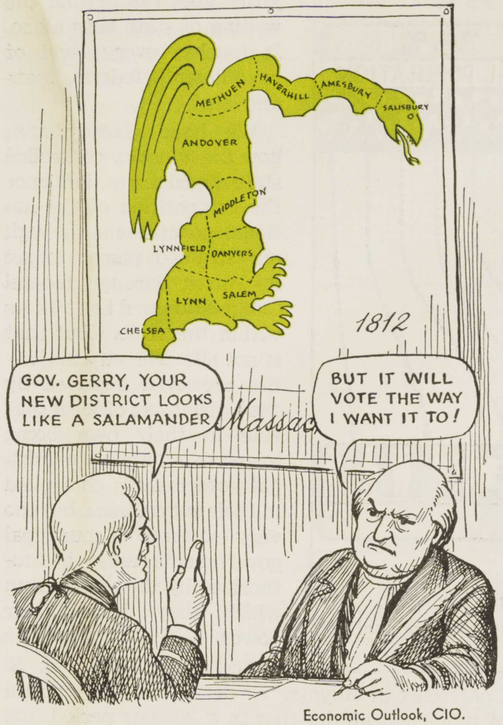
In principle—and sometimes written into state law—there is the logical requirement that each Congressional district have a basic geographical unity. However, both the principle and the law are generally violated.

With our form of representative government battling the totalitarian ideology around the world, it is timely that we re-appraise our own performance. Let us see that it truly reflects the highest possible fulfillment of the American goal of government based on the consent of the governed.

It is high time that the election of our U. S. House of Representatives be properly based upon the popular will of "respective numbers" as intended by the Constitution.

The CIO has declared that "Gerrymandered Congressional districts and widespread failure of states to reapportion districts in accord with population shifts are denying millions of Americans the full value of their vote."

And while reform is being undertaken at the federal level, action must be launched simultaneously to eradicate the widespread growth of



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minority rule over the governments of the 48 states. The failure of our state governments to give adequate representation to expanding urban populations is the root cause of the evil of misrepresentation both in the state capitals and in Washington.

To restrain the gerrymanderers, Congressman Celler's Bill would require the state not only to create districts within the 15 percent limitation, but also to create districts which are "contiguous" (in actual contact) and "compact" (closely united or packed).

The State legislatures would continue to draw up Congressional districts subject to these limitations. Since both federal and state courts have held they are powerless to compel a state legislature to redistrict, the Celler bill would now give specific authority to the U. S. District Courts to review compliance by the legislatures.

Surely the objective of providing each citizen with more nearly equal and effective voice in the conduct of his Federal government through his elected Representative, deserves the support of every American. The vested interests of present office holders, political parties and special lobbies is a powerful obstacle to overcome. Yet, it can be done.

How the Minority Rules in the 48 States

Some years ago the Supreme Court of Kentucky declared:

"Equality is the basis of patriotism. No citizen will or ought to, love the state which oppresses him; and that citizen is arbitrarily oppressed who is denied equality of representation with every other of the Commonwealth."

These words could apply with considerable force to our federal government as well, since millions of American citizens, as we have seen, are being deprived of equal representation in the Congress of the United States. In the legislatures of the states, however, minority rule is becoming so oppressive and has become so widespread, that it has taken on the nature of a national scandal!

Who are the second class citizens in this underrepresented majority? They are the millions living in our towns and cities, says the United States Conference of Mayors, pointing to the fact that the 59 percent of all Americans who were living in urban centers in 1947 elected only 25 percent of the state legislators.

"59%=25% is bad arithmetic—and bad government. It hurts not just city dwellers, but everybody." [1]

Today, 64 percent of all Americans live in urban centers and each year the proportion continues to rise. Yet the representation of city dwellers in most of the states has hardly increased at all.

Take New Jersey, for example, the most heavily urbanized state in the nation. In the upper House of its state legislature sit eight senators who represent eight counties which contain four-fifths of the population. Outvoting them time after time are thirteen Senators from thirteen rural counties who represent only one-fifth of the population of New Jersey.

In Connecticut, the city of Hartford with 177,397 people has two representatives in the lower House; the town of Colebrook with a population of 592 also has two.

In agricultural Iowa, Polk County with 226,010 inhabitants—half of them living in Des Moines—is allowed one Senator in the upper House. Mahaska County with 24,672 people has one. (The population of Polk County increased 30,000 between 1940 and 1950; Mahaska lost 2,000. Representation? Still one each.)

[1] See "Government of the People, By the People, For the People," a pamphlet issued by the United States Conference of Mayors, 730 Jackson Place, N. W., Washington, D. C.