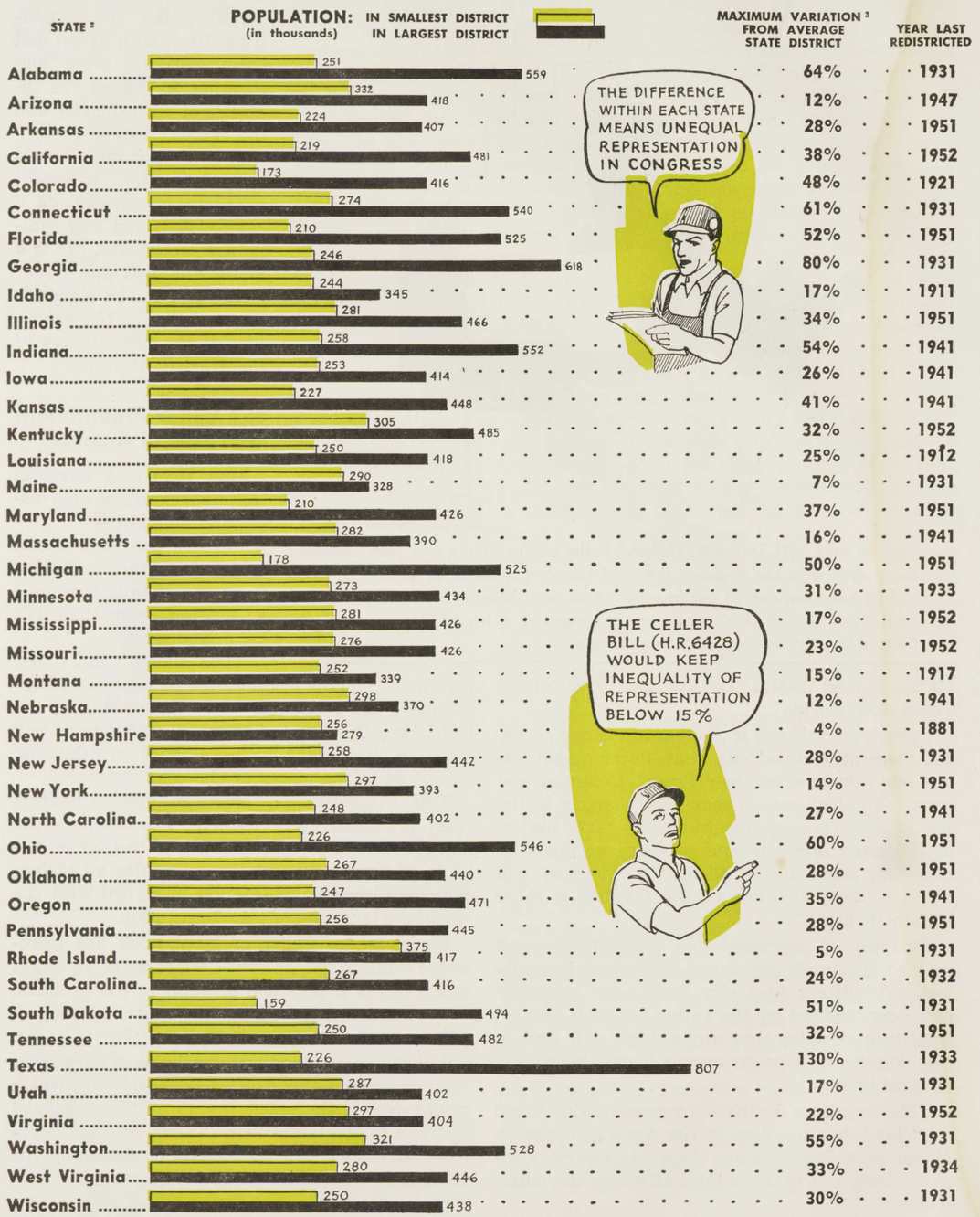
VARIATION IN THE POPULATION OF UNITED STATES CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS[1]



STATE[2]	POPULATION (in thousands): IN SMALLEST DISTRICT	IN LARGEST DISTRICT	MAXIMUM VARIATION[3] FROM AVERAGE DISTRICT	YEAR LAST REDISTRICTED
Alabama	251	559	64%	1931
Arizona	332	418	12%	1947
Arkansas	224	407	28%	1951
California	219	481	38%	1952
Colorado	173	416	48%	1921
Connecticut	274	540	61%	1931
Florida	210	525	52%	1951
Georgia	246	618	80%	1931
Idaho	244	345	17%	1911
Illinois	281	466	34%	1951
Indiana	258	552	54%	1941
Iowa	253	414	26%	1941
Kansas	227	448	41%	1941
Kentucky	305	485	32%	1952
Louisiana	250	418	25%	1912
Maine	290	328	7%	1931
Maryland	210	426	37%	1951
Massachusetts	282	390	16%	1941
Michigan	178	525	50%	1951
Minnesota	273	434	31%	1933
Mississippi	281	426	17%	1952
Missouri	276	426	23%	1952
Montana	252	339	15%	1917
Nebraska	298	370	12%	1941
New Hampshire	256	279	4%	1881
New Jersey	258	442	28%	1931
New York	297	393	14%	1951
North Carolina	248	402	27%	1941
Ohio	226	546	60%	1951
Oklahoma	267	440	28%	1951
Oregon	247	471	35%	1941
Pennsylvania	256	445	28%	1951
Rhode Island	375	417	5%	1931
South Carolina	267	416	24%	1932
South Dakota	159	494	51%	1931
Tennessee	250	482	32%	1951
Texas	226	807	130%	1933
Utah	287	402	17%	1931
Virginia	297	404	22%	1952
Washington	321	528	55%	1931
West Virginia	280	446	33%	1934
Wisconsin	250	438	30%	1931

[1] According to the division of Congressional Districts in the 83rd Congress, based on population as of the 1950 census.

[2] Six states—Delaware, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming are omitted. They elect their Representatives "at large".

[3] This refers to the percentage variation of the smallest or largest district from the average district which would exist if the total population of the state was divided by the total number of Representatives to which the state is entitled.

one-third are elected from districts so small or so large that the proposed 15 percent limitation is now being exceeded.

Six states—Arizona, Maine, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island—do not now exceed this limitation. (See Table Page 6.)

Six other small states elect their one or two Representatives by a vote of the entire state "at large."

Enactment of the Celler proposal would go a long way toward eliminating some of the worst examples of misrepresentation in the House of Representatives. Under this Bill, 36 states would be forced to redraw their Congressional Districts to conform to the 15 percent limitation. State legislatures would also be forced to change the Congressional districts within the states as the size and distribution of population changed. In addition, the Celler proposal would also eliminate election of Representatives "at large" except in the few small states entitled only to one.

Here are a few examples of the kind of Congressional misrepresentation which enactment of this Bill would end:

Although Michigan redistricted in 1951 to absorb one new additional Congressional seat, its 12th district represents a population of only 178,000; the 16th, which takes in part of the Detroit area, represents 525,000.

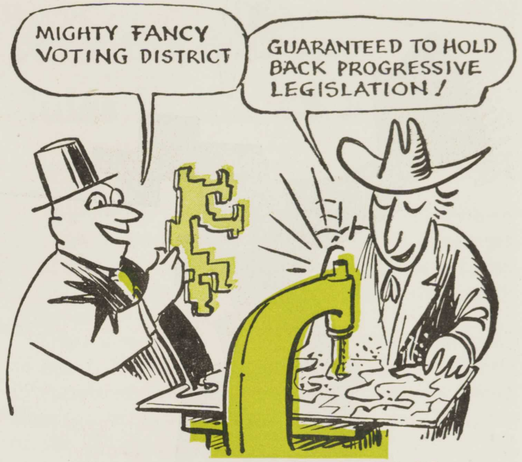
Texas was entitled to one new Representative after the 1950 Census. But the legislature decided to elect him "at large" to avoid setting up new districts, not done since 1933. Under this old arrangement, the Houston area (population 807,000) continues to elect one Representative as contrasted to the sparse 17th district (population 226,000) which also continues to elect one Congressman.

Georgia had no change in its number of Representatives resulting from the new census. Its Atlanta area of 618,000 is represented by one Congressman; but its 9th district has a population of only 246,000. Georgia last redistricted in 1931.

California gained seven new representatives as the result of the 1950 Census and completely redistricted the state in 1952. But it divided the population in the new districts so unequally that in Los Angeles County, for example, the smallest district represents 219,000 people; the largest, 481,000. Under the proposed Federal law, this flagrant violation of representation by population just could not take place.

Inequality by "Gerrymandering"

What happened in Los Angeles was no mere accident. The State legislature knew what it was



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doing. In the 1952 election the Republicans won 8 of the 12 new Congressional districts in Los Angeles County and in all cases they were the smallest ones; they averaged 296,000 people by population. The four Democratic victories were in the 4 largest districts with an average population of 447,000.

But it is not just the rotton borough system of artificial small districts which is unfair. There is also the ancient practice of playing partisan politics by laying out the boundaries of a district so your party is helped to win.

Back in 1812 Governor Gerry of Massachusetts carved out a district to his political advantage which looked like a salamander. The word "Gerrymander" has been used ever since to describe this unsavory practice.

This technique was also used in Los Angeles in 1952. As many solid Democratic areas as possible were put together into the smallest possible number of districts, and then ceded to the Democrats. By this process the eight new and smaller districts were made as "safe" as possible for the Republicans. (See Map on Page 5.)

In New York all of the Congressional districts are within the 15 percent population limitation. Rotten boroughs are not characteristic of this state. But the party that controls the state is able nonetheless to increase its Representatives in Congress by the process of gerrymandering.

As a result of the 1950 Census, New York lost two Representatives and the entire state was redistricted in 1951. But in laying out the new districts, the major loss was assigned to Brooklyn which was cut back from nine (all Democratic seats in the 82nd Congress) to seven full districts