

Remapping plan distorts voting power, aide charges

Republican-designed plan violates one person/one vote principle, secretary says

By SCOTT G. OTT
Collegian Staff Writer

The recently approved congressional district reapportionment plan gives some districts more voting power than others because inaccurate census figures were used in drawing up the plan, the press secretary to state Rep. Doug Walgren, D-Pittsburgh, said yesterday.

Jonathan Delano said the Supreme Court principle of one person/one vote is violated in the Republican-designed plan that was signed by Gov. Dick Thornburgh last week.

Delano said the new plan is unconstitutional because all of the congressional districts do not contain the same number of voters, thereby giving individuals in less populous districts more voting power.

The difference between the highest populated district and the lowest is 2,060, Delano said.

Walgren filed suit in U.S. District Court on Friday asking the court "to adopt a non-partisan, compact plan for congressional reapportionment," Delano said.

Walgren and several other Democrats will submit their own reapportionment plan to the court. The plan deviates from the ideal population per district by about

100 people statewide, Delano said.

The Democratic plan will make the districts more compact, he said. However, further details about the plan will not be released until the suit goes before the court.

The present plan is "based on faulty census figures," Delano said.

According to revised figures from the director of the U.S. Bureau of Census, the ideal number of voters per district in Pennsylvania should be 515,821, and not 515,944 — the number that state senate Republicans used in drawing up the reapportionment plan, Delano said.

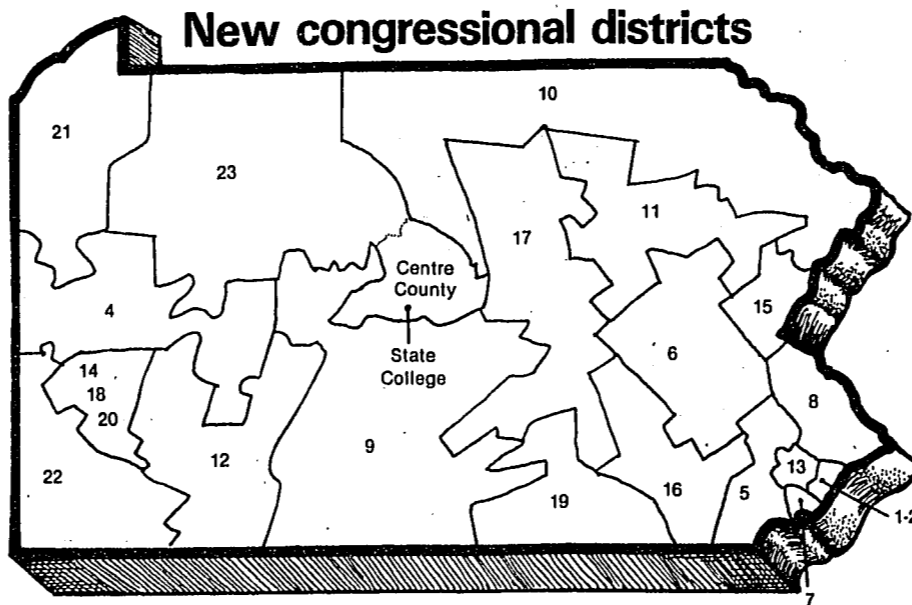
"Not a single district contains the ideal number. People in different districts are entitled to the same amount of votes," he said.

Fifteen districts are less populated than Rep. William F. Clinger's 23rd district, Delano said.

Census Director Bruce Chapman sent a letter to the Secretary of the Commonwealth in October 1981, telling of the erroneous figures, Delano said.

However, Richard Campbell, a Republican-appointed data processor, failed to enter the new figures in the legislative computer, he said.

Eleven copies of the letter were sent "to everyone from the governor's office



on down to the Liquor Control Board," Delano said. Walgren's office received a copy of the letter in November.

He said Democrats in the state senate incorrectly assumed that the Republican plan was based on the revised numbers.

The present plan discriminates against communities because of the political views of their citizens, Delano said.

"Anyone who looks at this map is going to conclude that there was tremendous political gerrymandering," he said.

The Republican-dominated senate approved the plan 28 to 22, with two Democrats joining the majority.

Rick Santorum, a legislative assistant to state Senator J. Doyle Corman, R-Central Pa., said many other Democrats

would have voted for the plan because it did not hurt their districts, however, they decided to vote along party lines.

"Everytime the Republicans proposed a compromise, the Democrats wanted more," Santorum said.

Rep. William F. Clinger, R-Central Pa., said "The Democrats were offered a good deal several times, but they got greedy and the Republicans got mad."

Clinger said several pending lawsuits asking the courts to draw up a new plan will probably be unsuccessful.

If the judge does throw out the present plan, he said a special congressional primary would have to be held — possibly as late as September.

This delay could cost taxpayers \$5 million, Clinger said.

Delano said Walgren is "adamantly opposed to a separate primary for congressional candidates."

However, he said delaying all of the primaries, possibly for a month, would be better than having congressional districts that are unconstitutional.

Clinger acknowledged that the figures used to write the reapportionment bill were incorrect, but said, "the deviation is well within the limits that other courts have accepted."

"The plan is valid because it does not

allude to numbers," Clinger said.

During the senate battle over reapportionment, Corman fought to keep Centre County in Clinger's district.

Rep. Gregg L. Cunningham, R-Centre County, said the approved plan was good because it keeps Clinger in Centre County and does not split the county.

However, he said the 23rd will be "a very tough district to represent."

"On the not-so-positive side we end up being a very, very remotely attached appendage to a very large congressional district comprised of counties with which we have somewhat less in common than is true of some of the counties more immediately surrounding us."

Because Centre County is now attached to the rest of the district "by a land bridge of only one township (Burnside)," Cunningham said it would be nearly impossible to elect anyone from this part of the district.

The western counties will tend to vote with the northern counties leaving Centre County as "the odd man out," he said.

Clinger said he is "giving very serious consideration" to running for re-election this year, and he will make an announcement tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. at The Nitanny Lion Inn.

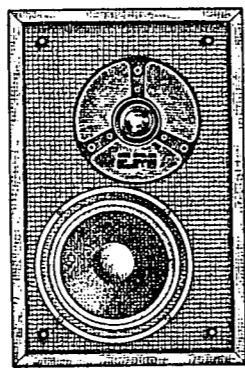
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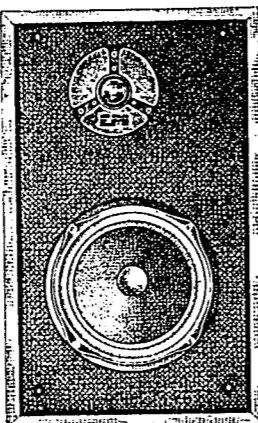


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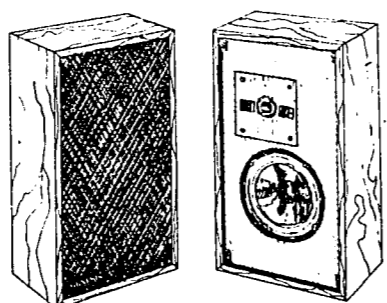
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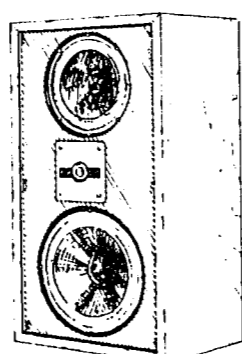


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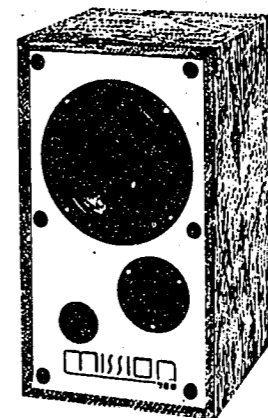
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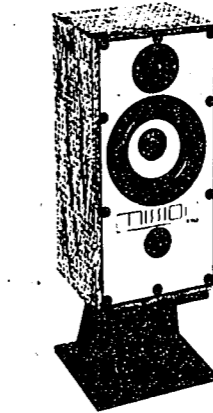
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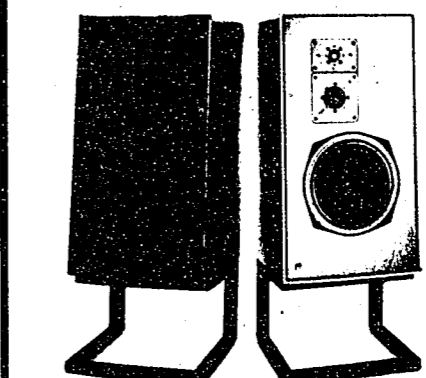


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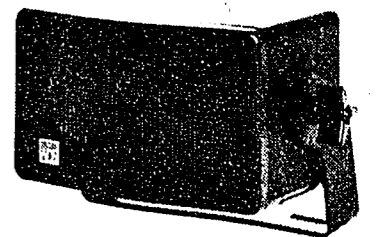
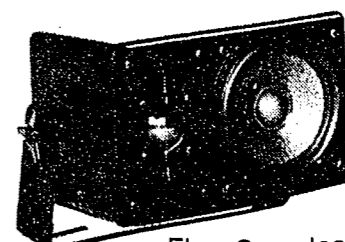
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