A Brief History of Redistricting

Wendy Underhill – Director, Elections and Redistricting

NCSL Legislative Summit
Nov. 4, 2021
Taking the Census, back in the day (1870)
“Vintage” Census record
Early Census Map (1890)
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ROLL CALL

1940 CENSUS
U.S.A.
The states asked for it

Congress gave them what they wanted

NCSL was instrumental in getting it enacted
State and Federal Collaborations

- Voting District Project
- Block Boundary Suggestion Project (Cathy McCully’s baby)
- Local Update of Census Addresses
Feds helping Georgia take accurate count

By EVELYN DODD
Staff Writer

With the 1990 federal census less than a year away, state officials are encouraging local citizens to help Uncle Sam get an accurate count.

Linda Meggers, director of the Georgia Office of Reapportionment, talked with members of the Coosa Valley Area Planning and Development Commission (CVAPDC) at their regular meeting Thursday on the importance of an accurate census.

Two areas where the census can have a major impact on a state, she said, are representation and funding. “And, what impacts the state, impacts you on the local level,” she said.

According to Ms. Meggers, the federal government has devoted more money to the 1990 census than to any other — most of it to outreach programs.

“They want to get an accurate count,” she said. “It’s a multi-million-dollar gift the federal government is giving away,” she said. “But, it’s what you do with the information that will make it valuable.”

The census, she said, is the socioeconomic profile of a community, which can be instrumental in areas such as industrial development.

It is a “family portrait,” she said, “and when all the members aren’t represented, we don’t have a very complete picture.”

An accurate census, Ms. Meggers said, assures state and local governments of receiving a fair share of government funding and provides private industry with valuable data for investment decisions.

Last year Georgia missed out on the “most important tool we have for drawing districts,” Ms. Meggers asserted. “Many people were not counted,” which means.

Please see Census, page 5A
Colorado Congressional Commission Hearing (2021)

Source: Grand Junction Sentinel
This map shows who has ultimate authority—not states with advisory or back-up commissions.
States That Reallocate Inmate Data (2021 Cycle)

Note: Illinois’ law goes into effect for the 2030 redistricting cycle.
This map shows states that mandate public input for redistricting—although many other states may choose to hold hearings as well.

Source: NCSL
Florida 1981

Courtesy of John Guthrie
Kristen Clarke
Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
Thank You to Michelle Davis, Frank Strigari and Jeff Wice
Denver (1970)
Louisiana (1981)
Nevada (1971)

Courtesy of Kathy Steinle
Alabama (2002)

Source: The Guardian
Florida (2002)

Source: The Guardian
In Memoriam

Glenn Koepp

1945 - 2021
Wendy Underhill
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Reach out anytime!

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