

Apportionment of Representation in the Indiana Legislature

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Since the 1960 state elections a focus of interest has developed concerning the possibility of reapportioning elective districts in Indiana. This is not a recent issue in as much as the General Assembly has steadfastly refused to reapportion itself since 1933. Recently one of the Judges of the State Court of Appeals ruled the whole Assembly unconstitutional for not reapportioning itself.

The Indiana General Assembly is composed of two houses, the upper house or Senate and the lower House of Representatives. At the last reapportionment the state was divided into 43 Senate districts which elect 50 Senators, and 75 House districts which elect 100 representatives. The boundaries of these voting districts strictly adhere to county boundaries, so that the county is the basic political unit of legislative districting. Counties may not be divided into more than one district, but a district may be formed by several counties which must be contiguous.

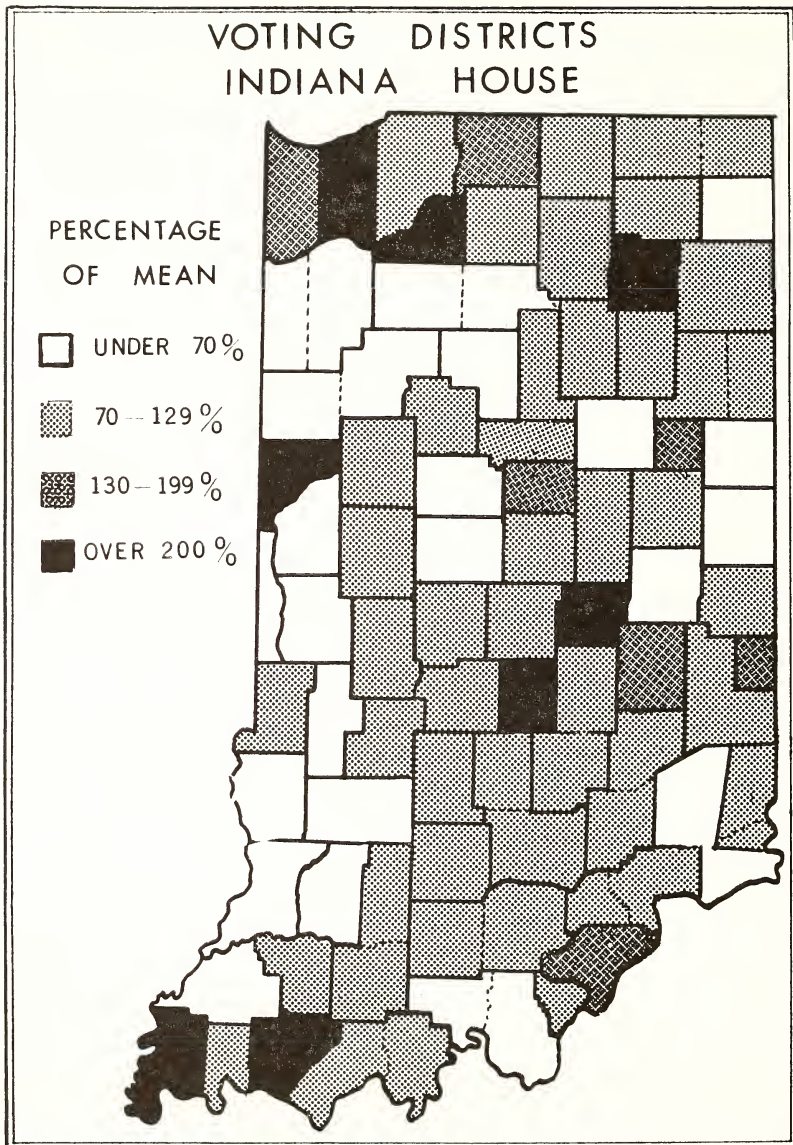
Any reapportionment would involve changing the boundaries of the present elective districts rather than adding representatives, since the number of representatives is specifically fixed in the State Constitution. According to the State Constitution, reapportionment of the elective districts is to be based on an enumeration of male inhabitants over 21 years of age, to be taken every six years. The last enumeration of this type made by the state was in 1931, but the 1933 and all subsequent legislatures have refused to use this law as a basis for reapportionment, because it became outdated when women also received the vote.

With this in mind, we shall take a look at the present apportionment of legislative voting districts in the state of Indiana.

The total population of the state has been divided by the number of representatives in each house of the state legislature, in order to compute a population mean per representative. The actual population of each elective district is divided by this mean, in order to find its percentage of the mean. The classification of all elective districts into four categories is purely arbitrary but necessary to facilitate graphic presentation.

The use of the population mean per representative is presumed to be the most ideal method of comparing equality of representation in this study, because it is consistent with the old democratic theory of one man, one vote. The population figures used are from the 1960 Census of Population.

The mean population figure for each of the 100 lower house representatives is 64,625. The range of population per representative of those districts in the 70 to 129% of mean classification varies from 32,443 (Marshall County district 70% of mean), to 59,225 (Monroe County district 127% of mean). One may hesitate to consider a distribution this wide as being acceptable, but considering all of the inheritant problems of apportioning a fixed number of representatives within unflexible districts, it would not be unreasonable to accept this range if it were to include all of the elective districts of the state. However, as shown on the district Map 1, only approximately two thirds of all lower house elective districts



Map 1

in the state do fall in this classification. The remainder are either highly over represented or badly under represented. For example, Lake County has an average of 95,581 people per representative (183% of mean), while Parke County has a population of only 14,804 enjoying the luxury of a representative. The Parke County district at 38% of mean is the most over represented elective district in the lower house.

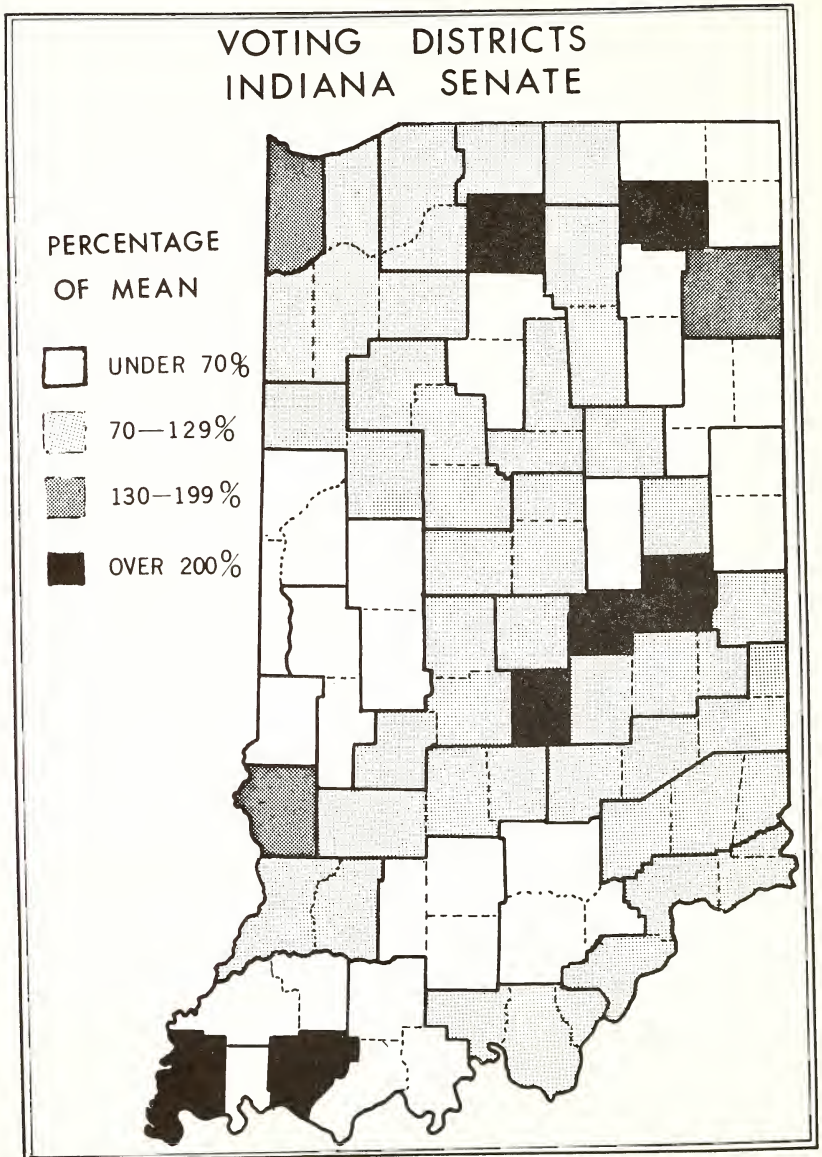
The districts which are under 70% of mean contain 15% of the total population of the state, which elects 23% of the representatives in the lower house. This may be compared with the districts which are in the 130 to 199% classification. They contain 19% of the total population but elect only 12% of the representatives. A vote cast in one of the latter districts has only approximately half the representation of a vote cast in one of the former districts. In the 70 to 129% of mean classification, 61% of the total population elects 64% of the representatives, and the districts which are over 200% of mean contain 5% of the total population but elect less than 1% of the representatives in the lower house.

Those districts which are over 200% of the mean have a unique characteristic of districting in common. They have been integrated with large adjacent urban districts in a very curious manner. An example of this is Johnson County adjacent to Marion County, which contains Indianapolis. The 697,567 inhabitants of Marion County have 11 lower house representatives which are elected at large in Marion County, in addition to another representative in common with Johnson County, population 43,707, who is elected at large in both counties. The question that arises is how to evaluate Johnson County. Can Johnson County be considered to have one full representative? Not really, when Marion County has 16 times more voice in determining this representative. Thus we find that Johnson County has 1/17 of one representative and Marion County has 11 16/17 representatives. This arrangement gives Johnson County a remarkable index figure of 1058% of the mean. There are thirteen of these integrated district combinations in the House and six in the Senate. In addition to Johnson County, Blackford County 194% of mean, Whitley County 542% of mean, Carroll County 124% of mean, Hancock County 324% of mean, Rush County 148% of mean, Tipton County 183% of mean, Pike County 116% of mean, Porter County 1270% of mean, Starke County 242% of mean, Posey and Warrick Counties 446% of mean, Warren County 209% of mean, and Union County 173% of mean, share in this dubious distinction of minor league representation.

In the Senate, the population mean per Senator is 93,250. As is evident by the Map 2, only half of the Senate districts fall within the 70 to 129% classification. The population distribution within this category ranges from 66,582 (population of Dearborn, Jennings, Ripley district 71% of mean) to an average of 117,435 per representative of Marion County district, 126% of mean.

The Clay and Parke County district (population total 39,011) is the most over represented district in the Senate at 42% of mean. At the other end of the index is the Lake County district, average population per representative 171,088, which is 184% of mean.

The districts under 70% of mean contain 20% of the total population, which elects 32% of the Senate. The districts in the 70 to 129% of mean classification contain 59% of the total population, which elects 58% of the Senate. The districts which are in the 130 to 200% of mean classification contain 16% of the total population and elect 10% of the Senate, while the districts over 200% of mean contain 5% of the population, which elects less than 1% of the Senate.



Map 2

Those districts over 200% of mean are those which share a representative with a large adjacent urban district. Unlike the lower house, all of these integrated districts are in this classification.

The apportionment of representation in the Indiana Legislature is unequivocally balanced for a considerable fraction of the state's inhabitants,

and does not present equal representation to the citizens of this state irrespective of geographic location within its boundaries.

Literature Cited

Census of Population, 1960.

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Yearbook of Indiana, 1950.