



United States Senate

ROBO - LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
AGAINST REAPPORTIONMENT
FEB 24, 1966
2 ROLLS

..., 1966

...
...
...

Dear ...:

I have your recent letter advising me of the decision of your local League in regard to the position taken by the National League on legislative reapportionment.

I think perhaps that during your discussions you may have missed the real issue involved. The question is not whether a State will have a legislature apportioned on the basis of population or one patterned after the Federal plan, but rather whether the people of the State retain the right to decide for themselves the type of legislative apportionment that best meets the needs of their State. Obviously, this is a decision that can be and should be made only by the people in the State. My Amendment would not require a State to adopt any particular form of apportionment, but would reserve for the people the right to make this decision. After all, if the people of a State are not to be trusted to determine how they will be governed, then who is to make this decision? What is being done to our principle of self-government?

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen



ROBO - AGAINST REAPPORTIONMENT
FEB 24, 1966
2 ROLLS

United States Senate

..., 1966

...
...
...

Dear ...:

I have noted your opposition to my suggested Constitutional Amendment on apportionment of State Legislatures and your suggestion that the formula developed in the Reynolds v. Sims case be allowed to stand and State Legislatures be apportioned on the basis of population alone as the Court indicated.

I think perhaps you do not fully understand the Amendment that I am offering. In the first place, it does not overrule Reynolds v. Sims; there is nothing mandatory in the Amendment which would require a State to change its plan of apportionment from population to one patterned after the Federal Legislature.

The purpose of the Amendment is to make sure that the people of a State retain the right to determine for themselves how one House of their Legislature will be apportioned and this determination can only be made at a statewide election and must be approved by a majority of the people voting on the issue. It is purely permissive, but in a larger sense, it preserves this right of self-government for the people. They may not elect to utilize this right now, but they may want to have it in the future. I have no quarrel with that decision so long as the people are not precluded from making the decision, as they are now.

I am enclosing some additional material on this subject that you might find of interest.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen

Enclosures (3)

1. Reprint of Farm Journal article, "Let the People Choose"
2. "The Question Before Us"
3. "Let the People Decide"



United States Senate

ROBO - FOR REAPPORTIONMENT
FEB 24, 1966
2 ROLLS

..., 1966

...
...
...

Dear ...:

I am grateful for your support for my Constitutional Amendment on legislative apportionment which I believe is the gravest Constitutional issue confronting the country. It will be considered in the Senate sometime in the very near future and I am sure that with assistance such as yours we will be able to obtain approval, not only in the Senate, but in the House of Representatives, and have this Amendment ratified by the State Legislatures.

One of the things that is so often overlooked in the discussion of this Amendment is the fact that it is not necessarily how a State Legislature is apportioned, but of far more importance is whether or not the people of a State have the power to make this decision and not be required to have someone else make it for them. They have had this right since our country began. I regard this right of self-determination, of self-government, as one of the most basic factors in our form of government. This right has been taken from the people by the decision in Reynolds v. Sims - I propose to restore it.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen

Enclosures (2)

1. "The Question Before Us"
2. "Let the People Decide"

EVERETT MCKINLEY DIRKSEN
ILLINOIS

MINORITY LEADER



United States Senate

REAPPORTIONMENT
May 2, 1966
3 Rolls

, 1966

Dear :

While we failed by seven votes to secure the necessary two-thirds vote on my reapportionment resolution, it was an impressive showing and I promised the U. S. Senate that the issue was not dead and that we would resume in the 90th Congress which will convene in January of 1967.

Hopefully there will be sufficient changes in the Senate as a result of the election this fall to give us the necessary two-thirds.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen