

Districting

- Districting & Redistricting
- Gerrymandering
- Fair division
- Baker vs. Carr

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House approves IRV for federal races

By Nancy Remsen
Free Press Staff Writer

March 14, 2008
MONTPELIER -- Supporters said instant runoff voting would enhance democracy.

"The system guarantees that the person elected is the choice of the majority," argued Rep. Christopher Pearson, P-Burlington, as he led a charge in the House on Thursday for a bill that would allow instant runoff voting for Vermont's congressional races starting in the fall.

Critics said instant runoff voting would cause unnecessary confusion.

"If this is the greatest thing since apple pie," said Rep. Mary Morrissey, R-Bennington, "then why would it not have spread like wildfire across the country?"

The Senate embraced this proposed change in the election process for Vermont's federal offices. Thursday, the House gave the bill preliminary approval by a vote of 81-60.

Despite the likelihood that the House will pass the bill today, the measure faces an almost-certain veto by Gov. Jim Douglas. At his weekly news conference, he declared, "I don't support IRV. I really believe IRV is a hypothetical election."

newsVIA.com

The International Monetary Fund has approved measures to give more voting power to developing nations, at the expense of the IMF's industrialized members. An IMF statement issued Friday says the Fund's executive board decided to overhaul the institution's governance structure to better reflect the role each member plays in the global economy.

Countries with fast-growing economies, such as Brazil, China, India and South Korea, will get the biggest boost in voting power. IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn says this is the beginning of a broader process to balance voting shares among the Fund's 185 members.

In total, about 5.5 percent of the IMF's voting shares will transfer to countries that have been underrepresented.

The executive board's proposal will go before all IMF members for a final vote next month. If the plan is approved, IMF officials said 135 of the Fund's members will get larger voting shares.

Friday's statement said the executive board will consider further power redistribution every five years.

The New York Times
October 23, 2008

Census Bureau's Counting of Prisoners Benefits Some Rural Voting Districts

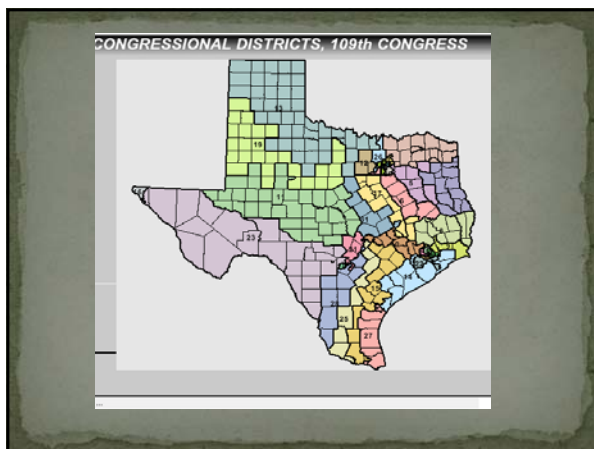
Danny R. Young, a 53-year-old backhoe operator for Jones County in eastern Iowa, was elected to the Anamosa City Council with a total of two votes — both write-ins, from his wife and a neighbor.

While the Census Bureau says Mr. Young's ward has roughly the same population as the city's three others, or about 1,400 people, his constituents wield about 25 times more political clout. That is because his ward includes 1,300 inmates housed in Iowa's largest penitentiary — none of whom can vote. Only 58 of the people who live in Ward 2 are nonprisoners. That discrepancy has made Anamosa a symbol for a national campaign to change the way the Census Bureau counts prison inmates.

"Do I consider them my constituents?" Mr. Young said of the inmates who constitute an overwhelming majority of the ward's population. "They don't vote, so, I guess, not really."

Concerns about so-called prison-based gerrymandering have grown as the number of inmates around the nation has ballooned. Similar disparities have been identified in upstate New York, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

Critics say the census should count prisoners in the district where they lived before they were incarcerated.



Structure

Each topic is a module, essentially self-contained.

Each topic includes:

- Readings from sources other than a textbook
- Lectures by people other than me
- Projects with real-world focus, usually in Excel

For Example:

Readings:

- Devlin, Stewart
- Supreme Court, U.S. Constitution

Guest Lecturers:

- U.S. Historian on history of apportionment
- Federal Judge on Baker v. Carr and districting

Projects:

- How would admitting Puerto Rico to statehood change the apportionment of congress?
- What are the power indices of the U.N. Security Council?

Flex Points



- Register to vote
- Vote!
- Attend a (non-required) lecture on a related topic
- Volunteer for a political activity
- Make me an offer

Final Project

Presentation on a topic related to the course material

Examples:

- Tom DeLay and the Texas gerrymander
- Desegregation, bussing, and school districts
- IRV in Montgomery County, Maryland
- Do third-party voters have any power?

Who:

Why, you, of course!

Taken together, these make a great Q.L. course.

Taken separately, they might fit into

- History
- Political Science
- Law
- Computer Science
- Sociology
- Other math courses – don't have to do it all

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Contact Me:

Kira Hamman
Penn State Mont Alto
khh11@psu.edu
www.personal.psu.edu/khh11
717-749-6029