

Dear Friends:

December 1965

The Second Special Session of 1965 ended Nov. 4. The Legislature is in recess until the 1966 Budget Session in February. The 1966 Session will be the last meeting of the present Senate; the 1967 Session will open with a drastically reapportioned Senate and a slightly modified Assembly.

REAPPORTIONMENT - The California Supreme Court on Sept. 1, following the "one-man, one-vote" dictates of the U.S. Supreme Court, ordered reapportionment of the California Legislature's Senate and Assembly, and set forth its own plan which would go into effect if the Legislature did not act by Dec. 9, 1965.

The Court went much farther than it had to. For example, it ruled that no district could vary more than 15% from "ideal" district size (393,000). Further, the Court required that 1960 population figures be used - a completely ridiculous, unrealistic requirement. (Ventura County's population has increased from 199,000 in 1960 to over 335,000 today). Perhaps the Justices are not familiar with the "new math".

The standby plan provided for some "at-large" districts. It combined Ventura County and an Assembly District (57th) in the San Fernando Valley; Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Kern Counties were combined with 2 Senators to be elected at large. The Court also said that if the Legislature did not adopt a plan, each Senator would have to run every 2, rather than every 4 years. The idea apparently was to make its plan so bad the Legislature would have to act.

The Senate had a tough decision to make - to pass a bill as ordered by the Court, or to refuse to do so and allow the unreasonable Court plan to go into effect with the great chaos that would follow. The Senate, feeling duty-bound to do so, took the first alternative - many Senators actually voting for a bill which would put them out of office.

AB-1 also reapportions the Assembly in a minor way. Many districts in Los Angeles County were changed so as to make them "safer" for incumbents, particularly for Democrats.

Senate reapportionment is something else. The 10 counties of Southern California have had 10 Senators; they will have 23. There were 16 north of San Francisco; there will be 6. It is not true, in spite of what is commonly said, that all of Southern California will "benefit". Santa Barbara, Ventura and Imperial Counties all lose. Metropolitan domination of the Senate will be a reality; Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay area will control the Senate. Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties are combined in the 24th District.

I believe the U.S. Supreme Court is wrong. I completely agree with dissenting Justice Tom Clark: "The Court, I believe, is exceeding its powers under the equal protection clause. It is invading the valid functioning of the procedures of the states and thereby commits a grievous error which will do irreparable harm to our Federal-State relationship."

I strongly support U.S. Senator Dirksen's proposed Constitutional Amendment to allow states, subject to a vote of the people, to provide that one house of the legislature could be apportioned on a basis of other than strictly population. Dirksen's first attempt was blocked by a handful of "liberals". It is ironic that those who say they are so concerned with majority rule, protection of minorities, etc., have by their action indicated they don't trust the people to make their own decisions on makeup of their legislatures.

The question is not whether there should be reapportionment, but rather who should decide - the appointed U.S. Supreme Court or the people of the states involved.

Senator Dirksen is going to try again when Congress reconvenes. It is doubtful whether he will succeed. Even if Congress approves, it must be ratified by 3/4 of the States. Many states have already reapportioned, others are about to do so. There is practically no hope of ratification.

The recipients of this Newsletter overwhelmingly support such an amendment. Republicans favored such an Amendment by 82.4% to 17.6%; Democrats approved by 67.3% to 32.7%; and Independents by 71.6% to 28.4%.

The California Senate will almost surely cease to be the great "check and balance" against excesses of the lower house and the Governor. The needs of rural areas may well be ignored by the now to be urban Senate.

While the Court should have allowed fast-growing Ventura County to retain its Senate seat, the Ventura-Santa Barbara County combination makes more sense than the Ventura-San Fernando Valley and Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Kern County plan by the Court.

I completely oppose the proposal to split California.

THE 1966 SESSION - Budget - The Legislature's biggest problem will be to balance the expected \$4 billion plus budget. We have been told some \$250 million in new taxes will be necessary just to balance the budget - even if there are no new programs. Some additional revenues may be needed; however, I believe major emphasis should be on cutting spending.

Tax Reform - No doubt there will be renewed attempts for "tax reform". "Reform" is necessary, particularly to provide some relief for the already badly overburdened property taxpayer. We must be careful lest "reform" merely be used as a cover for a big tax increase.

Smog - Smog is no longer just a Los Angeles problem, it is a State problem. Smog, mostly "imported" from Los Angeles County, has come to Ventura County and is already causing crop and other damage. It could also easily become a problem in Santa Barbara. Controversy will center around the question of whether or not used cars should be required to have smog control exhaust devices.

State College - 1966 should see the selection of a 4-year State college site in Ventura County to implement my SB-70. The Legislature may well provide funds for acquisition in next years budget. Unfortunately, construction seems to be several years away.

Simi Freeway - Construction of this vitally needed road is scheduled to begin in January. The freeway will be of great advantage in encouraging industrial and commercial development in the Simi Valley, thus broadening the tax base so as to provide tax relief for the homeowner.

DECENCY AMENDMENT - My SB-346 would have, in effect, overruled the Carol Lane case, thus returning some control over vice crimes to cities and counties; the bill was defeated, but the "Decency Amendment" initiative petition now being circulated will, if enough signatures are obtained, be on the 1966 general election ballot. It provides that cities and counties may enact legislation concerning illegal aspects of sexual, etc., conduct if: 1) the legislation does not duplicate or contravene state law; or, 2) the Legislature has not expressed its intent that there be no local regulation of the subject. County Supervisor John Montgomery (Camarillo-Thousand Oaks) is County Chairman for the initiative.

1965 has been an exciting and historic year in California. It has been an honor and a privilege to represent the people of Ventura County in the State Senate.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
and a
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Bob & Norma Lagomarsino

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from your
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