



STATE OF MINNESOTA

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ARNE H. CARLSON
GOVERNOR

January 10, 1992

The Honorable Jerome M. Hughes
President of the Senate
State of Minnesota
328 Capitol
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear President Hughes:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 358, Senate File 1596/House File 1726, a bill changing the boundaries of State legislative districts. This legislation would provide new Senate and House of Representative districts for the next 10 years.

During last year's session I attempted to veto Chapter 246 on Constitutional grounds as well as on grounds of simple fairness. That bill was in fact ultimately declared unconstitutional. Unfortunately, the new proposal embodied in Chapter 358 does not correct the problems inherent in Chapter 246. It lacks the essential element of fairness, both in its substance and in the process through which it was drafted.

After the original bill was declared unconstitutional, I wrote to the Legislative leadership and proposed that new legislation be prepared by either of two methods:

- Negotiation between Republican and Democrat legislative leaders, to produce a bi-partisan plan, or
- By referring the matter to a Commission with membership equally divided between Republican and Democrat appointees. Sitting legislators would not be eligible for the Commission, and both parties would agree to abide by its results.

I have never received a response to that request, and the bill pushed through Committee this week reflects no effort at developing a fair, negotiated or bi-partisan solution.

I had earlier called on a bi-partisan Reapportionment Advisory Committee to give me their recommendations on criteria that should be considered in any legislative redistricting plan. The Committee found that, in upholding constitutional principles,

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legislative districts must be contiguous and adhere to the one person, one vote principle. To accomplish this, the Committee recommended a maximum deviation of one percent from the ideal population. This bill permits excessive deviation.

I established policy priorities for any redistricting plan in this order: (a) enhancement of the interests of minority groups, (b) maintainance, as far as possible, of the boundaries of existing political subdivisions such as municipalities and counties, and (c) the development of geographically and geometrically compact and convenient districts.

The proposed redistricting plan falls short of attaining the first priority. Fairness to minorities is a fundamental precept. And this bill dilutes minority votes in violation of that precept. For example, Minnesota's largest minority group is the African-American Community. This bill unfairly spreads African-Americans over three legislative districts in Minneapolis.

The plan also makes the assumption that all minorities have common interests and should be grouped together. Even with this insensitive assumption, no Senate district has 50 percent minorities. I believe Minnesota can do better than that. The way to do better is to draw the minority districts first.

The bill separates Minnesota Native American reservations into different districts. This is not consistent with the fundamental goal of consolidating minority voting power. In all cases, district plans should be drawn to preserve the strength of minority voting populations and increase the probability of minority representation.

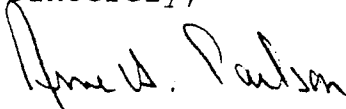
Chapter 358 is also contrary to the Committee's recommendation to respect political lines as much as possible. Too many county lines are cut. Political boundaries do not receive as much respect as is practicable. Cities are sliced, suburbs are divided and townships are fragmented. These deficiencies must be corrected.

Finally, the Committee's third priority is that districts be geographically and geometrically compact. The new redistricting plan embodied in Chapter 358 continues the existence of too many oddly shaped districts. For example, the metro district boundaries are confusing and the districts are anything but compact.

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The deficiencies in Chapter 358 reflect a flawed process. Because of these flaws, and because this legislation which will affect Minnesota for the next 10 years was prepared with no bi-partisan input, I must veto this bill.

Sincerely,



ARNE H. CARLSON
Governor

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c Senator Roger Moe, Majority Leader
Senator Duane Benson, Minority Leader
Senator Larry Pogemiller, Senate Chief Author
Representative Dee Long, Speaker of the House
Representative Terry Dempsey, Minority Leader
Representative Peter Rodosovich, House Chief Author
Mr. Patrick E. Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Edward A. Burdick, Chief Clerk of the House
Ms. Joan Anderson Growe, Secretary of the State