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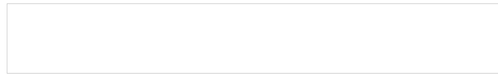

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The Electoral College Primer 2000. Lawrence D. Longley and Neal R. Pierce. Yale University Press, 1999. ISBN:0300080360, $16, paper, 224 pages.

This is a brief, yet colorful, monograph describing the legal and institutional framework that comprises the Electoral College. Longley and Pierce employ historical analysis, simple statistical analysis, and anecdotes to reveal the inadequacies and quirks of the Electoral College and some potential implications upon future elections.

Exemplifying their fluid prose and ability to captivate, Longley and Pierce begin their book with an electoral scenario in which the Electoral College rules allow the Speaker of the House to become an acting president in the 2000 election. Although such a scenario seems ridiculously implausible, the illustration clearly and succinctly illuminates how the Electoral College works and some of its shortcomings. The strength of the book, as seen in this story and subsequent chapters, is its ability to clearly describe what the Electoral College is and how it works. For example, the authors discuss, among many things, the number of electors, who picks electors, who becomes an elector, how states nominate electors, how electors vote, whether electors are bound, and how the votes of electors are counted.

The authors contradict the notion that the Electoral College was an intentional product of a sound political philosophy. Rather, they believe it to be the result of pressure to produce an expedient short-term solution to the problem of presidential selection. Yet, the college has entrenched itself in custom, law, and political necessity and endures in a manner not foreseen by the Founding Fathers.

Longley and Pierce conclude that the Electoral College is a "faltering and potentially dangerous mechanism" (40). They argue that the popular vote does not equal electoral votes; hence, the people's president does not necessarily reflect the people's will. The proof is in three elections where the electoral vote reversed the

popular vote, two elections decided by the House, 17 elections decided by a plurality, and 22 "hairbreadth" elections where subtle shifts could have produced deadlock. Not only do the authors concisely review this history, but they also perform a statistical analysis to uncover biases in the Electoral College. They demonstrate that the Electoral College over-represents super-small states, super-large states, and urban areas.

Longley and Pierce do not hide their disdain for the Electoral College; in fact, they clearly demonstrate its inadequacies and defects. Nevertheless, they contribute a coherent and lucid explanation of the rules and workings of the Electoral College.

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Honor in the House: Speaker Tom Foley. Jeffrey R. Biggs and Thomas S. Foley. Washington State University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0874221730, $25, paper, 384 pages.

In this biographical account of the life of former House Speaker Tom Foley, Biggs and Foley himself take a close look at both the political life of the person and the personal life of the politician. The book is uniquely written, combining Biggs' narrative of the Speaker inter-spliced with detailed accounts in Foley's own words of his life as a politician.

This book sheds a welcome perspective that portrays our elected representatives in human terms not solely as strategic pursuers of re-election. It offers a look at a man who represented the Fifth District of Washington State yet who refused to relinquish his own moral judgment even when it would cost him political capital. As the book demonstrates, Foley viewed the privilege to serve as a responsibility that requires the member to balance between duty to district, to country, and to conscience.

From his initial run for Congress, unseating 22-year incumbent Walt Horan, to the time of his own defeat in 1994, Foley demonstrated grace, dignity, and integrity. During a time when negative campaigning appeared to be both popular and effective, Foley explains why he would never do an opponent the dishonor of public ridicule.

Honor in the House details the struggles that faced Foley when he rose to positions of leadership under the Reagan administration. A master at consensus-building, Foley used his roles as party whip, leader, and finally Speaker of the House to bring the factions on both sides of the aisle to compromise. As former Speaker "Tip" O'Neill said of Foley, he could always see "three sides of every question."

This part-biography, part-autobiography will add much to an understanding of the life of Tom Foley. Perhaps more important, however, is its contribution to understanding political life as a multi-dimensional and dynamic process.

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Horses in Midstream: U.S. Midterm Elections and Their Consequences, 1894-1998. Andrew E. Busch. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999. ISBN 0822957051, $19.95, paper, 288 pages.

"Midterm elections," says Andrew E. Busch, "are not the poor stepchild of the American electoral process." They are important in their own right because their results, which are usually detrimental to the president and his party, serve as an additional check in the American system. Midterm elections change the dynamics of government, most obviously because they change the partisan makeup of Congress. However, midterms often change the internal composition of the two parties. They alter dynamics within the president's party and leave him in a less powerful position among his own. Midterms are also more likely either to produce or strengthen divided government. In addition, the president's mandate, claimed with his election, is undercut with increases in the opposition's strength. Gains for the opposition provide unique opportunities with which they can gain momentum, develop issues, and propel leaders into the national spotlight. Finally, Busch identifies the midterm effect as extending to the states.

To illustrate the importance of midterm elections, Busch formulates four descriptive types: preparatory, calibrating, exceptional, and normal. Preparatory midterms launch the opposition party into the White House in the next election as happened in the midterms of 1918, 1950, 1958, 1966, 1974, 1978, 1990. A calibrating election puts a brake on a president's initiatives, as was the case in 1938, 1982, and 1986. The exceptions to the rule that the president's party loses seats at midterm are the elections of 1934, 1962, and 1998. Busch classifies all other midterms as normal, where the loss of seats harms the president to varying degrees.

Midterms are vital to the American system because they seem to maintain an equilibrium by giving the out-party an automatic boost every four years, except in the rare cases where the president's party gains seats. Other factors combine with the midterm effect to determine whether it will be preparatory, calibrating or normal and the impact it will have on the next election.

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Losing Our Democratic Spirit: Congressional Deliberation and the Dictatorship of Propaganda. William Granstaff. Westport, CN: Praeger, 1999. ISBN: 0275965678, $59.95 cloth, 248 pages.

In what sense does congressional deliberation represent the American electorate as a *whole*, and not just as a collection of special or partial interests? Is there such a thing as a considered "national interest" on most questions that Congress takes

up? William Granstaff asks his readers to consider these fundamental questions of American governance: ones that rarely get asked or seriously considered in the congressional literature, despite a renewed focus on the act of deliberation itself.

In order to get at this broad set of questions, Granstaff selects three cases of congressional deliberation over sending U.S. troops abroad, viz., Lebanon, the Persian Gulf and Somalia, because these debates *should* deal with the national interest. In each instance, Granstaff finds that congressional deliberation was "a fakery" engaged in by sophisticated member-linguists whose primary purpose is to preserve the mere facade of democratic representation while advertising themselves to constituents. Instead of true deliberation, members put forth "palaver," or "talk that charms and beguiles." He concludes from these debates that the "American constitutional system is *usually* dysfunctional as a *democratic* republic" (13, 194; italics in original).

Granstaff utilizes straightforward methods: analysis of logical fallacies, "common sense," the founders' political philosophy, and a content analysis of the debates using the sentence as the unit of analysis. He frames his analysis around two "questions of governance." The questions of governance purport to describe the most fundamental aspects of the "national interest" in *any* debate: (1) is this difficulty a threat? and (2) should we do this? Each sentence of each debate selected is studied applying these methods, yielding quantitative tables.

According to Granstaff, the *only* way to legitimately arrive at the "national interest" is for *both* houses of Congress to engage in "full-representative-deliberation," meaning that *every member* of both houses must both deliberate over, and vote on, the same question during the same time frame. Anything less would mean that congressional output will be "counterfeit."

Primarily a work of political philosophy, the book offers a theoretical argument that some will interpret differently. The *Federalist* (Nos. 57, 70-77) provides evidence that the founders believed that the president would be a significant player in deciding foreign affairs and that members of Congress would represent the "partial interests" of their constituents. Nonetheless, this book contributes valuable insight by highlighting the logical fallacies of congressional deliberation and the lack of interaction in congressional speeches.

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Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government. Shawn Bowler, David M. Farrell, and Richard S. Katz, editors. Ohio State University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0814250009, $24.95, paper, 304 pages.

Bowler, Farrell, and Katz expand the field of knowledge of comparative legislative studies in this collection of essays. The idea of party discipline in parliamentary democracies is a rarely studied phenomenon in the literature. Bowler, Farrell, and Katz and the contributors enter this breach and provide the reader with a better understanding of party cohesion and discipline, essential elements in the maintenance of parliamentary democracy.

The newer democratic regimes of Spain and Hungary are studied and compared with the well-developed, established democracies in Britain, Finland, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland. The authors also go one step further by placing an excellent analysis of the European Parliament (EP) in the theoretical mix. They state that "the EP does have the potential to exercise influence with the European Union" (209). The challenge for the EP is for the members to "act in concert," a feat required of any legislature, especially a transnational entity like the EP.

The authors not only debunk the "automatic" nature of party discipline in parliamentary democracies but also extend the comparison of democracies beyond the well-traveled Anglo-American road. The inclusion of an eastern European and Scandinavian example in the model are wise choices and allow for interesting analysis and comparisons.

The value of this book is the examination of larger questions, like the EP and conservative dissent throughout Europe, juxtaposed with the individual cases. By going beyond a simple comparison of the individual cases, and articulating the larger theoretical template of transnational democracy and dissent as a guide, the authors make a splendid contribution to a better understanding of contemporary parliamentary democracy. Furthermore, they allow the reader to peer into the future of parliamentary democracy through their analysis.

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Politics, Parties, and Parliaments: Political Change in Norway. William R. Shaffer. Ohio State University Press, 1998. ISBN 081420788X, $19.95, paper, 290 pages.

William Shaffer presents an ambitious study that explains the Norwegian parliament's role in political change in Norway in the past fifteen years. The author proposes that parliaments do matter when discussing political and social change, even in states where at first glance it does not appear that parliaments have much power. He presents an in-depth description of the historical background of parliamentary government in Norway as an antecedent to understanding the political changes.

Shaffer identifies the routes to public policy in Norway and, for good reason, tends to emphasize the electoral channel rather than the corporate path. In the post-World War II period, Norway preferred corporatist decision making in its consensual democracy; however, in the last two decades, there has been a change in the structure of policy making. In the period from 1981 to 1994, Shaffer posits, the centrist and right-of-center parties have taken on a larger role and shifted power away from socialist/leftist-oriented parliamentary control. As a result, he argues, the Storting, the Norwegian parliament, has gained visibility and vitality.

The growth in disparity of policy preferences between the parties invigorated the parliament and made citizens take notice that the electoral channel of policy making was growing in importance once again. Shaffer outlines the various pieces of the puzzle of political change by identifying and examining aspects of

the parliamentary process from committee participation to role call voting. His analysis results in an interesting and enlightening look at the political change in Norway.

Shaffer's book advances our understanding of parliaments, Norwegian politics, and some key aspects of comparative politics. The chapter that explains the electoral structure in Norway is particularly interesting in its thoroughness and clarity. For the instructor or student of comparative politics, this book also provides a good example of how single case studies are put together.

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The Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation. Elisabeth R. Gerber. Princeton University Press, 1999. ISBN 0691002673, $17.95, paper; 171 pages.

Although the introduction of referenda and initiatives were originally advocated by Populist and Progressive reformers as a way to circumvent the influence of economic interest groups in state legislatures, scholars argue that these same interest groups have been able to manipulate the direct legislation process to pursue their narrow policy preferences. However, these recent accounts are largely based on the enormous level of spending in direct election campaigns and the suspicion that this increased spending creates an advantage for monied interest groups. In *The Populist Paradox*, Elisabeth Gerber challenges this argument and provides the first systematic study of how interest groups and citizen groups actually affect direct legislation.

Using surveys of the activities and motivations of interest groups and the campaign finance records from 168 direct legislation campaigns in eight states, Gerber finds that economic interests and citizen interests have different objectives and pursue different political activities to achieve those objectives. While economic interest groups are more likely to use monetary resources to preserve the status quo or pressure the legislature, citizen groups attempt to pass initiatives by capitalizing on their personnel resources. Furthermore, the differing motivations and activities undertaken by citizen and interest groups are reflected in the policies created by direct legislation. Citizen groups are much more successful than interest groups at modifying policy through the direct election process. However, economic interest groups are more successful at blocking measures through opposition spending. Because the laws passed by direct legislation are likely to reflect the interests of citizen groups, it appears that economic interest groups do not dominate the direct legislation process as critics have argued.

Gerber believes that direct legislation has still not lived up to the expectations of Populist and Progressive reformers. While the success of economic groups in the direct legislation process has been somewhat conservative and highly constrained, these interest groups have been able to block a number of citizen initiatives and to use the direct legislation process to enhance and protect their interests by influencing state legislatures. Although the populist paradox may not be as dangerous as critics have argued, it remains a viable phenomenon in American

politics.

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Representation: Theory and Practice in Britain. David Judge. Routledge, 1999. ISBN 0415081971, $29.99 paper, 230 pages.

Concerned with the "several seismic upheavals" forecasted to take place in the British parliament by 2002, David Judge explores the historical dimensions of British representation (201). Specifically, he examines "the *political* dimensions of representation and the interconnections of the theory and practice of political representation in Britain" (1). Stemming from an intense belief that the wisdom of both theorists and practitioners is crucial to a thorough analysis of representation, this book thus poses as a critical addition to the legislative literature.

Judge grounds his treatment of representation in the linguistic analysis of Hannah Pitkin (1967) and the theoretical treatises of Mill, Bentham, and Burke, but extends the analysis to encompass a thorough case study of Britain. (Consequently, each chapter in the book can be divided analytically into two parts: theory and practice.) Judge bases his analysis on three classic questions central to the concept of representation: Are the people conceived as individuals or a collectivity? Are the representatives conceived as individuals or a collectivity? And finally, what do representatives represent? Individuals? Collectivities? Opinions? Interests?

One of the crucial arguments Judge makes in his analysis of the British case is that there is a significant difference between a representative government and a representative democracy. He suggests that whereas Britain has had a representative government for centuries, it has only developed a representative democracy in the last several decades (15). He states that "representative government in Britain has traditionally been conceived, and functioned, as a means of legitimating executive power through the condition of responsiveness. The emphasis has been upon consent and the legitimation of the change of governors by a representative body encompassing the 'political nation.'. . only in the twentieth century did the 'political nation' come to approximate 'the people'" (ibid). Judge's analysis is invaluable in that it provides a new conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of changing representational systems both at home and abroad.

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Senates: Bicameralism in the Contemporary World. Samuel C. Patterson and Anthony Mughan, eds. Ohio State University Press, 1999. ISBN 0814250106, $19.95, paper, 360 pages.

Patterson and Mughan discuss the origins and continued existence of

bicameralism in terms of democratic theory and function. Their introductory chapter contains a table which compares the nine bicameral case studies which are undertaken in this book. In this table, Patterson and Mughan describe each upper house by its governmental system, the length of each senate's terms, the method by which seats are selected, and the constitutional powers of each upper house.

The bulk of the book revolves around individual case studies written by a distinguished group of scholars. The book includes analyses of the U.S. Senate by Barbara Sinclair, the German Bundesrat by Werner J. Patzelt, the Australian Senate by John Uhr, the Canadian Senate by C. E. S. Franks, the French Senate by Jean Mastias, the British House of Lords by Donald Shell, the Italian Senato by Claudio Lodici, the Spanish Senado by Carlos Flores Juberias, and the Polish Senat by David M. Olson. In addition to the senate characteristics that are described in the aforementioned table, each chapter also examines internal structure and decision-making, party structure and leadership, and the capacity for change within senates. These case studies provide a depth of insight from which Patterson and Mughan are able to draw their conclusions.

Patterson and Mughan place the study of senates into a comparative perspective. They argue that senates are an important and overlooked institution within democratic nations. Further, they conclude that these upper houses have significant democratic ramifications for the legislative process in terms of redundancy and representation. This is a timely book which underscores the importance of and invites further senate studies.

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A Two-Way Street: The Institutional Dynamics of the Modern Administrative State. George A. Krause. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999. ISBN 0822941023, $45, cloth, 256 pages.

Do politicians control the bureaucracy or does the bureaucracy possess authority independent from political institutions? Krause explores this important research question through a broader lens than traditional theories of agency-political relations. Traditional theories generally fall under two competing perspectives: (1) bureaucratic autonomy theories, which posit that agencies have considerable discretion from elected officials; and (2) political control theories, which argue that agencies respond to the wishes of elected officials. Most agency-political relations fall somewhere between the two extremes. Therefore, relying solely on these narrowly defined theories produces a literature of agency and policy specific findings. Krause provides a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the relationships between the presidency, the Congress, and administrative organizations.

Krause's dynamic systems model of policy administration rests on three assumptions. First, mutual adaptation may exist between elected officials and bureaucrats where bureaucratic behavior influences the behavior of elected officials and vice versa. Second, political institutions may influence each other. Third, institutions engage in and respond to deviations from expected behavior,

often referred to as policy innovations or perturbations. Thus, the dynamic systems model is a process of feedback or "two-way street" between administrative agencies and elected officials. These institutions respond to one another, to events and conditions within each institution, and to the larger policy environment. By using extensive quantitative analysis and case studies of two federal regulatory agencies (the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice), Krause finds support for such a dynamic relationship of institutional interdependence.

This book is an interesting addition to the literature on agency-political relations. It suggests that political scientists need to create new theories of administrative politics that are more comprehensive in nature than existing theories. The dynamic systems model is such an attempt at creating a common theoretical ground for explaining not only regulatory policy, but distributive and redistributive policies as well.

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Ten Secrets of Redistricting

By Steve Miller

Redistricting is a wonderful mix of politics, law, cartography, demography and computer science. And you may feel that you need the wisdom of Solomon to accomplish it.

Recall the great story of Solomon's wisdom: Two women claim to be the mother of the same baby, so Solomon proposes to cut the baby in two and give each women half. The first woman says, "Let me think about it." The other says, "Give the baby to her," revealing herself as the true mother.

If the baby had been a legislative district, the two women would have said, "Sure, cut it up," and then fought over the halves. Eventually, they would have sued each other-one in state court, one in federal court.

Even Solomon's wisdom might not be enough to aid you in the decennial redistricting that looms following the 2000 census. By following the 10 nuggets of advice below, however, you might manage to avoid some long nights and major headaches. Redistricting will never be easy or simple, but there are ways to minimize the trauma.

1. Know your mission.

Adopt a mission such as "draw a legislative redistricting plan according to constitutional standards by Dec. 3, 2001." This will help you stay focused on the real business of redistricting - churning out maps. Read the redistricting statute and the state constitution-everyone else will. For example, the statute may authorize you to borrow staff from other state agencies. It may also limit travel reimbursement for committee members after a set number of days.

Does your mission include keeping the public informed? Citizens are certain to offer input and ask to be involved. Consider putting a site on the World Wide Web to disseminate basic census data, precinct maps, redistricting plans and information about the legislature's redistricting process. As part of knowing your mission, you should understand your history. If you're new to redistricting, it will help to find out what issues emerged in your state during the previous redistricting cycles. History has a way of repeating itself. Issues from the '80s and '90s will almost certainly re-emerge.

2. Make decisions early.

Computer technology and redistricting go hand in hand. Your state must decide if it will write software locally or purchase an off-the-shelf system. States like New Jersey and Virginia with elections in 2001, should be designing systems right now. Many states will start drawing new districts the day after receiving data from the Census Bureau. You do not want to design and build the airplane as it taxies down the runway. Accomplish as many tasks ahead of time as possible.

Here are some of the things to do early to make the job easier:

- Create a large scale map book using census blocks, and include every member's residence.
- Decide whether to set up public-use computer terminals and, if so, set them up.
- Print demographic reports of the current districts and voting precincts.
- Set a cut-off date for changing local voting precincts in your data base.
- Adopt criteria to govern drawing of all plans to be considered by the committee.
- Calculate the actual cost of maps for sale to the public.
- Requisition a large color plotter (for printing maps) and photocopier to be dedicated to redistricting.
- Start communicating with local officials through informational memos and regional meetings.
- Work out a process with local officials for getting updated precinct maps that you can digitize.
- Adopt rules for acceptance of third-party plans.
- Consult and hire outside legal counsel to assist the legislature if you do not have expertise in house.

3. Plan a timeline.

Another useful device is a timeline. Analyze your 1990 experience and plan purchases of equipment and software in stages up through the year 2001. The plan can be modified as you move along. Due to U.S. Supreme Court decisions, consider whether your software will include a "compactness test." Computer programs can calculate how compact a district is by several recognized methods. Early on, select the features your software will offer, and pick what data to include in your files. Will you have past electoral behavior of each precinct? For which elections? It seems like just a data problem to the staff, but election history data is very subjective stuff with complex political implications. Acquiring data from local governments may present major challenges. With election data, you must have precinct maps in effect on the date of the elections.

4. Provide security for files.

Secure both paper and digital files. As a general rule, copy all data on a computer disk to back up tapes daily. A disk crash won't hurt too badly if yesterday's plan is saved on the tape backup. Redistricting plans generated by legislators are the very essence of the process and must be treated as extremely valuable documents. Have uniform methods for labeling, filing, indexing plans and maps that you generate as well as maps received from others. Create a form, or small label, that has the minimum information to appear on plans and maps.

5. When it comes to staff, redundancy is good!

As a staff person, when you're hot, you're hot-and everybody loves you. Legislators will love you. They will come to see you every day, all day long. They will call you at home. You will get to know them well. You will need more staff. Redistricting resembles "tag-team" wrestling. You need people to gather and edit data, maintain the software and network, draw district, and keep up with all the collateral files. Plan a way to get extra terminal operators on

short notice. Train staff to run redistricting software. Plan for enough staff to cover for illnesses. Identify a good manager to oversee the whole circus.

6. When it come to equipment, redundancy is good!

Make sure you have enough computer equipment. Never underestimate the need for more terminals, better processor speed, more disk space, faster networks or color plotters. Equipment will break down. When legislators, with little spare time, sit at a computer terminal to draw new districts, speed really counts. Advanced testing is critical. How many active terminals will the operation need at a time? How long will work sessions last? Mississippi usually had two terminals going at once for about 12 hours per day. But at times, there were four terminals running and sometimes sessions lasted 16 hours a day for days at a time. You will not regret acquiring the fastest computers. And hire enough terminal operators to support the effort. There are infinite ways to draw a district, and you many come close to exploring them all. Terminals will be busy most of the time. And don't forget to have comfortable chairs.

7. Separate the warring factions.

I don't want to give redistricting a bad name, but it's a war, and war is hell. Doors and windows can cause problems because people can and will look through them to sneak a peek. Those drawing plans need privacy. Separate staff from members. Talk to the capitol police or sergeant at arms about security issues.

8. Don't play on the railroad tracks.

Take extra care in the vicinity of great forces. No matter how many computers and staff are available, all resources will be used. In times of crisis, the demand will exceed the supply. Someone must act as gatekeeper to determine who gets to use the machines and the staff. Redistricting can be one of the toughest issues that a legislature has to deal with because it affects every member directly. Unfortunately, redistricting can bring out the worst in people. At some point, if the politics get too tough, the staff or other legislators may want to jump in between the contenders. However, one shouldn't feel the urge to step in between two oncoming trains. Don't make promises you can't keep. Don't forget the high stakes involved and that you lack control over the multitude of players.

9. Learn the new math.

In drawing minority districts-or trying to maximize the number of them-you may fall well below the ideal population. If you try to minimize the number of those districts, the might become overpopulated. Therefore, the average (mean) population deviation from the ideal district size for all minority-controlled districts can indicate the effort to create minority districts. Consider the following equation. A=B/C where A=theoretical maximum percentage of minority-controlled districts in the plan, B=minority percentage of the overall population and C=percentage of a minority needed in a district for it to control the district. So, if there are 100 districts and the minority makes up 40 percent of the population, and it needs 60 percent of a district to control it, one could draw 66 districts controlled by the minority. This equation assumes an overall deviation of zero percent and ignores compactness. In the real world, you can draw a plan with a 10 percent deviation overall (for a state legislature), which may make it easier to draw minority-controlled districts. You cannot achieve the maximum because of the dispersion of the minority population, but you can probably do more than you thought possible. This formula explains why plans drawn out by human beings tend toward gerrymanders rather than compactness.

10. Adopt a grand strategy.

Sometimes the staff drawn the plan, and sometimes the legislators do it. But regardless, it helps to look at the state overall before you start. In a statewide plan, where you want to make only changes that are absolutely necessary, you can begin with the existing plans. In an area experiencing dramatic population gains or losses, you may have to move or "pop" a district from one part of the state to another. But "popping" a district is a decision that is easier to make on the front end than after the plan is nearly done. If you are working with a particular criterion in mind, start in the most important place. If you want to create minority-controlled districts, start with them. Keep in mind that according to the Supreme Court, creating minority districts cannot be the predominant factor in the development of the plan. Generally, the place where you start will have the most compact districts, and the last area where you work will look the most contorted. You can judge this book by its cover because oddly shaped districts reveal the stresses of using conflicting criteria. If a district looks like a lizard, it probably is one.

The Real Game is Politics

Never forget that technology is only a tool and will play a minor part in the real game of deciding the geographical content or shape of districts. Redistricting is foremost a political activity that is supported and constrained by technology and law. Never assume or underestimate the political motivations of players in the redistricting game.

To run a redistricting office, you need to understand the nature of the census data, the technology you will use to manipulate the data, the political environment that surrounds redistricting and the legal restraints upon the process. Add that understanding to the wisdom of Solomon, and you emerge from the process relatively unscathed. (And it might not hurt to follow the 10 pieces of advices offered above.) Happy line drawing.

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Steve Miller worked as a nonpartisan redistricting staff member for the PEER Committee in Mississippi during the 1990 round of redistricting and now is the chief of the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. He is also the staff co-chair of the NCSL Redistricting Task Force.

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Key Redistricting Words and Phrases

By Tim Storey

PL 94-171. Congress passes this law in 1975, requiring the U. S. Census Bureau to furnish state governments data by April 1 of the year after the census for use in redistricting. The law requires that the bureau allow states to define the boundaries of the areas in which population data is collected.

TIGER. Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing-the system and digital database developed at the Census Bureau to support its mapping needs for the census.

Census Block. The smallest unit of geography used by the Census Bureau for counting people. There are over 7 million blocks in the Census Bureau's database. Blocks are almost always bounded by visible features such as roads and rivers.

Phase I and Phase II. Programs run by the Census Bureau to collect boundary information

from state and local governments. Phase I allows states to suggest boundaries for census blocks. Phase II lets states group blocks into precincts so that the official census data will contain precinct population totals.

VTD. Voting tabulation district-usually a precinct or a ward.

Minor Civil Division. A supervisor's district, police jury district or township. Typically, subdivisions of a county.

Undercount. The estimated number of people who are not counted by the census.

Differential Undercount. The difference in the undercount between ethnic groups. The undercount for ethnic groups has traditionally been higher than for whites.

Sampling. A statistical technique used to estimate the whole population based on a sample. Proposed as a remedy for the undercount.

GIS. Geographic Information System. Computer software that can display spatially encoded data in the form of maps.

Overall Range or Overall Deviation. For a redistricting plan, the difference in population between the smallest and largest district, normally expressed as a percentage.

Majority-minority districts. Districts where an ethnic or language minority group has more than half of the population.

VAP. Voting age population-number of people over the age of 18.

BVAP. Black voting age population-the percentage of population of blacks, 18 years or older.

Packing. Drawing a minority-controlled district with an excessively high percentage of a minority population, "wasting" the additional people who could increase the minority population of another district. This is not allowed against an ethnic minority but is permissible against a political party.

Fracturing. Splitting an area where a minority group lives so that it cannot form an effective majority in a district.

Retrogression. Drawing a redistricting plan that reduces the chances for minority groups to elect representatives of their choice.

Section 5 Preclearance. The procedure required by the Voting Rights Act where the Department of Justice must approve any change in election laws including any redistricting plan before the law becomes effective. Section 5 applies in all or parts of 16 states. State Legislatures, Sept. 1999. Copyright 1999 by State Legislatures. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

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More News, Less Coverage

By Garry Boulard

A huge study last year showed that despite the shift in power from Washington to the states,

newspapers were cutting back on the number of reporters assigned to the statehouse beat.

It seems like an idea whose time has come: a Web site for journalists, constituents and lawmakers devoted in its entirety to state legislative news.

"We've been on line since Jan. 25, and so far we're seeing about 3,000 readers a day," reports Ed Fouhy, editor of Stateline.org, which is being produced by the Pew Center on the States.

"We are not interested in sheer numbers. This is not a mass media site where we are competing with the Associated Press or CNN," continues Fouhy. "But even so, the response we've gotten has far exceeded our expectations."

Just as impressive, the average visitor to the new site, according the Stateline's own detailed in-house readers' surveys, sticks around for nine to 10 minutes-an eternity in Web space.

Fouhy believes such responses indicate a yawning hunger across the country for news coming out of the state capitals, particularly during a time when because of devolution there is more news to report.

"We've seen a great deal of power and money going back to the states in recent years," Fouhy says, "which naturally means that the states themselves will be creating more news. But even more than that, the states finally have the *authority* to do things they've been saying for a long time they should be doing for themselves. That in itself makes them newsworthy."

If the birth of Stateline.org reflects the shift of power from Washington to state capitals-perhaps the most important story of the 1990s-it also is indicative of a far less certain, and much more tentative response on the part of the press as to where government news comes from today.

"We're hearing all kinds of things on that question," says Gene Roberts, a professor of journalism at the University of Maryland and a long-time working reporter for such papers as *The New York Times* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

"On the one hand, newspapers want to make the claim that they provide their readers with the most comprehensive coverage possible," says Roberts. "But it is also true that there have been cutbacks in much of the state coverage, and this has proved to be a sore point with many of the larger papers."

Roberts should know. In 1998 he helped compile a massive study funded by the Pew Center and released by the *American Journalism Review* that showed clearly that many papers across the country were reducing their state coverage and cutting back on the number of reporters assigned to roam the marble halls of state capitals.

Empty Desks

The study pulled no punches: "Coverage of state government is in steep decline," it said. "In capital press rooms around the country, there are more and more empty desks and silent phones. Bureaus are shrinking, reporters are younger and less experienced, stories get less space and poorer play, and all to frequently editors just don't care."

The industry's response to the study was overwhelmingly negative. Newspapers across the country denied that they were shortchanging readers, or that reducing their staff presence at the legislatures meant a reduction in the amount or scope of coverage.

Other papers argued that the study shortchanged them by failing to count the many special reporters they send to cover the legislature for singular topics such as science or

environmental issues. "But we were not aware of any health care reporters coming to any capital and staying for weeks at a time," explains Roberts. "We counted only the correspondents who stuck with it day in and day out."

Even so, the industry criticism of the study continued, proving at the very least that a nerve had been touched.

"I guess some people got mad," laughs Reese Cleghorn, president of the *American Journalism Review* and dean of the college of journalism at the University of Maryland, "so that means the study had an effect because it is something the papers should be embarrassed about."

The study also went beyond the numbers. It dug into the very marrow of how papers decide whether or not a legislative study is worth covering. An more often than not, researchers for the Pew report found that many editors today just don't give a hoot about legislative reporting.

"They say, 'Don't do the procedurals, don't do the subcommittees, wait until something goes to a full committee,'" continues Cleghorn, "even though what happens at the subcommittee level may be the most important part of the legislative process."

Big Picture Reporting

This so-called big picture reporting is not without its critics.

Dave McNeely, political columnist for the *Austin American Statesman* and a well-known advocate for increased statehouse reporting among the nation's papers, thinks following and writing about what happens to a bill as it pushes its way to final passage is the most interesting part of the process. It's what provides readers with a tangible view of where power resides in any given legislative session, he says.

"A lobbyist friend of mine once told me there is only one way to pass a bill and that is through the House and Senate, ending when the governor signs it," says McNeely. "But there are 476 ways to kill a bill and knowing where those spots are and what the process is, is crucial to both lobbying and reporting."

Jack Wardlaw, who reports on the Louisiana Legislature for The *Times-Picayune* in New Orleans, says what happens to a bill in a committee or subcommittee can provide substance and shape that might alter the meaning and intent of the final legislation. "That's why it's important to report on the progress of a bill all the way through, particularly when it is something that the people care about anyway. If you don't, you're really doing the public a disservice."

But even worse than failing to report on the ups and down of certain legislation is a much larger, and far less tangible, attitude on the part of many papers today concerning government reporting in general: "They don't like it," says Professor Roberts. "We were amazed to discover just how many editors today are philosophically opposed to governmental coverage in general. It is just in the air. Some newspaper companies and editors even go as far as the simply believe that state government and all government news is a big turn-off to readers, so they want to stay away from it."

Former Pennsylvania Speaker of the House and frequent press critic Bob O'Connell sees all of this as inevitable: "You have to look at the press as a business, and until you do that you are not going to understand the story."

O'Donnell argues that the frequently aired declarations fro the press that they are here to serve and fight for the public's right to know are basically nothing more that a lot of smoke and

noise.

"Those kinds of statements are essentially self-serving," charges O'Donnell. "Informing the citizenry is not their main goal, making a buck is. And when you see it that way-that this is nothing more than a business looking for a market, and if reporting on lifestyles instead of the legislative process is what gets them their market-all of this begins to make much more sense."

Entertaining News

Alan Rosenthal of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University has his own take: "Papers want to find stuff that connects with their audience, things that affect their personal lives, news that is more entertainment-oriented.

"That makes it kind of hard to sell that story about the legislature discussing energy deregulation. People just don't see what it has to do with them," he says.

But Rosenthal says he can't wonder but if a shrinking state press corps is such a bad thing: "Given the nature of the coverage, I am not really all that devastated."

Industry insiders say the primary reason for the decrease in state coverage is found in the results of the many readers' surveys that papers regularly conduct. These are surveys usually commissioned by a paper or publishers' group and intended to gauge public satisfaction or the lack of it with a given newspaper. Should the front page type be bigger or smaller? Would you like to see more or fewer graphs and color? How about the amount of sports reporting and the number and variety of cartoons?

But the answers to such surveys are oftentimes colored by the manner in which questions are asked and their context. And sometimes the survey results can be downright contradictory. In 1990 some 63 percent of the readers of The *Orange County Register* in Santa Ana, Calif., said in a survey that they would read the paper more if fewer of the stories from the front page "jumped" to an inside page.

In response, the *Register* began to run shorter stories, half of which began and ended on the front page. Goodbye to those annoying jumps. Then in 1997 came another survey for the same paper, and it showed that 59 percent said they wanted to read longer stories in the newspaper, and would be *more* likely to read the *Register* even if a story from the front page jumped to an inside page.

Similar surveys repeatedly indicate that readers dislike meaty government pieces, whether of the reporting or analytical variety, prompting publishers and editors to cut such coverage.

But the problem with such marketing research is that it is anything but solid or sure. "Much of it is subjective, unscientific and amendable to manipulation," contends the *American Journalism Review* in another epic study, this one released in March on how reader surveys are conducted. "Its heavy reliance on focus groups constitutes a serious weakness. Its results always depend on the questions asked. And questions of interest to serious journalists (for instance, what's the impact of challenging a community's cherished assumptions?) are almost never explored."

Perhaps the landmark readers' survey was sponsored by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau and the American Newspaper Publishers Association in the late 1970s. Comments from some 3,000 respondents indicated that readers wanted more attention paid "to their personal needs, help in understanding and dealing with their own problems in an increasingly complex world."

Newspaper publishers and editors across the country took those results to mean that people also disliked governmental reporting, beginning the long drive to lessen coverage on the national, state and local levels. And even though the two principal authors of the 1978 Newspaper Readership Project later argued that their findings had been taken out of context, the trend has clearly continued.

Fewer Reporters

As of 1998, according to the Pew study, virtually every major newspaper had pulled back on its statehouse reporting. In some 27 states, there were fewer reporters covering state news than just six years ago, while only 14 states could report increases. Part of the decline is due to the collapse of the United Press International news service, which was once a major presence in virtually every state capital.

Other statehouse reporters were lost to mergers or the closing of such papers as the *Baton Rouge State Times*, the *Nashville Banner*, the *Phoenix Gazette* and the *Arkansas Gazette*.

The giant Gannett and Knight-Ridder newspaper chains have reduced their statehouse reporting staffs by more than 14 percent followed by smaller decreases at the Newhouse and MediaWatch chains.

But individual papers such as *The Albuquerque Journal*, *The Charlotte Observer* and *The Times-Picayune* have seen moderate gains in the number of reporters assigned to the state legislatures.

"Our statehouse staff has actually increased in recent years," says McNeely of the *Austin American Statesman*. But in a state that has seen an abnormal amount of press closings, including the *Houston Post*, the *Dallas Times Herald* and the *San Antonio Light*, the surviving papers in these big Texas markets, according to McNeely, "don't do as much state reporting as they used to mainly because they don't have the competition they once did. There's a lack of incentive."

Ironically, as many in-state papers have cut back on their statehouse reporting, national papers such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* have increased their state staffs.

The New York Times, in fact, has emphasized increased statehouse reporting on its national pages, a move that Robin Toner lauds as a move in the right direction. "The *Times* today takes the states incredibly seriously. And, what with welfare and more of the important stuff getting kicked out the states as opposed to being dealt with exclusively in Washington, this is the kind of coverage we should be providing."

Toner, who was the chief of correspondents for the national desk at the *Times* and is now covering policy news in Washington, comes to her interest in state news naturally: She covered the West Virginia and then Georgia legislatures when she began her career as a journalist in the late 1970s. She now says she cannot imagine tackling Washington without the experience she gained at the state legislature level.

"There is a certain rhythm to covering a legislative body that is transferable," says Toner. "And that helped me immensely when it came to trying to understand Washington."

Stringers Help

The New York Times does not maintain a presence in every one of the state capitals, but it does employ an elaborate network of stringers and paid correspondents who deep the regional

bureaus and the national desk back in New York abreast of statehouse events. If a story is particularly important, the *Times* will send in one of their heavy hitters to cover it at the statehouse.

"You don't see much of them unless there is a big story unfolding with true national interest," says Wardlaw of the *Times-Picayune*. He remembers the explosive abortion rights debates that took place in the Louisiana Legislature during the early 1990s, which attracted staff reporters from the *Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*, far and above their usual stringers. "They ganged up on us then," says Wardlaw.

Similarly at *USA Today*, columnist Rich Wolf, who willingly said adios to writing about Washington in favor of emphasizing the states, does not actually visit each and every one of the state capitols, nor does he write about them all. But his net is wide if he can spot a trend.

"That's the best thing about this business," explains Wolf. "So often there will be five or six or eight states tackling something like welfare reform or term limits at the same time. That is perfect for my column because then I can write about as many states as possible with this one topic and compare and contrast the things they are doing."

The New York Times, says Toner, uses the same approach. "I think we are looking for patterns: Is what is happening in Oklahoma also happening in Texas and Missouri? And are we going to be the first to pick up on it?"

Although on many days the *Times* does indeed reach deep into the South through its Atlanta bureau or out West with the desk in Los Angeles, the paper obviously continues to emphasize its coverage of states nearest to its circulation base: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut in particular. "If they are a state legislative paper," says Rosenthal, "that legislature is in Albany."

Although no one argues that increased attention of the *Times* and other national publication will compensate for the cutbacks in statehouse reporting on the part of the other big city and capital city dailies, statehouse reporting advocates are fighting back.

October Seminar

In October, the editors of the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, in conjunction with the Pew Center as well as several other sponsoring groups (including the NCSL), will host a three-day seminar designed to examine the state of statehouse reporting. The idea, says Steve Smith, managing editor at the *Gazette*, is partly to talk about "the possibility of organizing ourselves into some sort of professional organization that would help perpetuate the craft of statehouse reporting."

With more than 400 statehouse reporters from around the country already signed up for the conference, Smith says the meeting could also serve to symbolize the commitment that at least this part of the press feels toward "quality legislative coverage." Whether or not their publishers will be listening is another matter.

Meanwhile the editors of the massive Pew study that got everyone charged up in the first place are hoping to find funding for a second study that may show marginal increases in the number of reporters covering state capitols.

"The evidence is only anecdotal at this point," says Professor Roberts. "But from what we've been hearing, many of the papers who reduced their staffs by 1996 and 1997 have turned around and hired new reporters to cover the legislature. We just don't know at this point if the new gains are enough to make up for the old losses. Probably not. But at least it's a step in the

right direction."

For Fouhy at Stateline.org the idea that any news organization could ignore or choose not to cover the states is inconceivable. "Now more than ever, the papers should be following state events because there is so much going on there," he says. He notes by way of illustration that the states recently were earmarked for more than $30 billion in federal money that was once used to fund more than 100 job and vocational training programs.

"So the obvious question is what are the states going to do with that money? How will they do anything different? What new ideas will they come up with?" Fouhy continues.

"How can any paper not want to cover stories like this?"

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Announcing a New State Politics and Policy Journal

The Illinois Legislative Studies Center at the University of Illinois at Springfield is launching a new journal, which will be the official publication of the State Politics and Policy Section of the American Political Science Association.

Tentatively titled State Politics and Policy Quarterly, the mission of the journal will be to foster, highlight, and promote the rigorous, theoretically-driven and methodologically sound study of political behavior and policy, using the methodologically advantageous venue of the U. S. states. There has long been a need for such a journal, and SPPQ will fill that need. This will be a carefully refereed journal of high academic quality with a specialty focus, at the level of Legislative Studies Quarterly, Political Behavior, and American Politics Quarterly.

A first-class organizing committee has been assembled to guide the journal's development: Virginia Gray, Kenneth Meier, Richard Niemi, Gary King, Keith Hamm, James Garand, Paul Brace, David Lowery, Ronald Weber, William Berry, Malcolm Jewell, Gerald Wright, Elinor Scarbrough, and Thomas Holbrook.

The first official call for papers will be sent out to members of APSA's State Politics and Policy, Public Policy, Urban Politics, Legislative Studies, Public Administration, and Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations sections in early 2000. The first issue is slated to appear in March 2001.

I strongly encourage readers of the LSS Newsletter who work in the area of state politics and policy to submit their best manuscripts to SPPQ. This is your chance to be there at the creation! To do so, please send four copies (three with identifying references removed) to me at the address below. We will strive to provide you with careful and thorough referees' reports in a timely fashion. Watch your email in early 2000 for a more detailed announcement.

Chris Mooney, Director, Illinois Legislative Studies Center, PAC 484, P. O. Box 19243, University of Illinois at Springfield, Springfield, IL 62794-9243.

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News from the Congressional Papers Roundtable

Institutional News

In April, Millersville University dedicated the archives of Bob Walker (R-PA), who served in the U. S. House of Representatives for more than 20 years. Walker was best known as an early and staunch supporter of Ronald Reagan and a leader in the Republican resurgence in 1995. The archives contain more than 200 c. f. of material housed in the university's Ganser Library. Most of the collection is officially open, although the personal correspondence is closed until April 2009.

The Ohio State University Archives . . . received an additional 100 c. f. of materials from the home of Sen. John Glenn (D-OH). This accession included personal correspondence, photographs, other audiovisual items, printed materials, and artifacts. The archives also received materials from the U.S. Astronauts Hall of Fame in Titusville, FL, and NASA's Space Center in Houston. These artifacts and photographs document Glenn's military, NASA, corporate, and U.S. Senate careers, and they had been displayed in temporary exhibits commemorating the senator's 1998 flight aboard the space shuttle Discovery.

The Carl Albert Center at the University of Oklahoma announces two new accessions. Added to the existing Carl Albert Collection are 82 c. f. of files and 24 framed photos and memorabilia. Included is a set of pens used to sign the Great Society legislation and given to Carl Albert (D-OK) as a present from President Lyndon Johnson.

The Center has also acquired 14 boxes from newspaper reporter Allan Cromley. This collection contains files on Oklahoma's delegation to Congress during the 1950s-1980s. A similar collection, the papers of UPI reporter Harry Culver, was acquired years ago and has recently been processed and made available to researchers. The Center's web site (http://www.ou.edu/special/albertctr/archives/) has also expanded. In addition to existing information on resources documenting Native American history and the Great Depression, smaller subject descriptions have been added. New topics include abortion, birth control, migrant labor, and the UN.

The Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University continues processing on the papers of Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ). Most of the collection documents Bradley's 18 years in the Senate. In the past year significant progress has been made on the 2100 c. f. collection, which is being processed by project archivist Kristen Turner and her team of one full-time assistant and four students.

The papers of Rep. Eligio (Kika) de la Garza (D-TX) have been acquired by the University of Texas-Pan-American. The university received 717 boxes of archival materials, 588 from the congressman's Washington, DC, office and 129 from his McAllen, TX, office. Materials include legislative documents, constituent inquiries and requests, photographs, maps, trophies, plaques, and awards.

Tulane University has received the congressional papers of Robert Livingston (R-LA), representative of the First Congressional District from 1977-1999. Livingston, who received a BA and JD from Tulane, was Speaker-designate and chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. The speeches, interviews, press releases, newsletters, and other public documents will be open once they are processed. The remaining papers are restricted for 10 years. Tulane University Library has made a special allocation for the rapid processing of Livingston's papers.

Online Access to Senate Oral Histories

Since 1976, the Senate Historical Office has conducted oral history interviews with former senators and retired members of the Senate staff. Both biographical and institutional in scope,

these interviews include personal recollections of careers within the Senate and discussions of how Congress has changed over the years.

During the week of 26 May 1999 with the online publication of a 1989 interview with Sen. George A. Smathers (D-FL), the Historical Office initiated a project that will eventually provide online access to its complete oral history series.

For more information, click on "Oral History Project" at the Senate Historical Office home page (http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn_history.html).

For more information about this and other publications of the Senate Historical Office, please contact Betty K. Koed, Assistant Historian, Senate Historical Office, Betty_Koed@sec.senate.gov, (202) 224-0753.

Rules and Guidelines for Senate Committee Records

Karen Paul of the Senate Historical Office reports: A Records Management Handbook for United State Senate Committees has recently been published. It and the pamphlet U.S. Senate Records: Guidelines for Committee Staff have been distributed in the Senate. Newly highlighted in the handbook and pamphlet are the rules and statutes governing ownership and disposition of committee records. It is important that all repositories receiving senators' papers be aware that committee records should not be included in such donations. If they are found mixed with the private papers, repositories should contact the Senate Archivist at (202) 224-3351 and arrange for the return of these materials.

Rayburn Memorabilia to Stay Put

The 11 May 1999 issue of the Dallas Morning News reported on an agreement between the office of Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and the state of Texas allowing the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum to retain control of memorabilia housed there. A spokesman for Hastert stated that the Bonham, Texas, facility could keep the items as long as they are publicly displayed. The memorabilia has been on display since the library opened in 1957. The University of Texas's Center for American History, which oversees the Rayburn Museum, maintains that the items belong to it and are state property. The Feb. 1999 issue of the Congressional Papers Roundtable Newsletter stated that the Clerk of the House had been claiming memorabilia that former Speakers had given to universities and libraries throughout the country.

Congressman Sponsors Bill to Prepare a History of the House

Page Putnam Miller's 9 July 1999 NCC Washington Update reported the following: On 22 June 1999, John Larson (D-CT) introduced H.R. 2303, a bill that directs the Librarian of Congress to prepare a history of the House of Representatives. Larson, a former high school history teacher and a newly elected member of the House, introduced this bill because of his disappointment as a new member of Congress with the lack of awareness in the House to its own history. He sees this as a bipartisan initiative and has enlisted 245 cosponsors, including the leadership of both parties.

The bill begins by stating that "subject to available funding," the Librarian is mandated to consult, commission, or engage the services or participation of eminent historians and current members and former members of the House in preparing the history...

Many in the historical profession are pleased to see a renewed interest in the history of the House of Representatives; however, there is a hope that this move will not preclude efforts to restore the House Historical Office, which was dismantled in 1995. There is also some

concern in the historical profession about how this history will be prepared. Just five years ago the Congressional Research Service, which is part of the Library of Congress, prepared a history of the House that was never widely distributed because of its disjointed narrative and its heavy reliance on lists, tables, and charts. Ironically, the House Historical Office was in the process of preparing a history of the House and had completed about one-third of the manuscript at the time the office was disassembled. There is also the question, in light of the library's own budgetary priorities and constraints, of how it would deal with this "unfunded mandate."

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New Book

The Contemporary Congress, 3d. Edition, Burdett A. Loomis, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1999.

In the third edition, Burdett Loomis once again provides a brief yet comprehensive overview of the Congress. The breadth of coverage in this text offers instructors the flexibility to use it either as a supplement or as the main foundation for the course. With a new edition for each new Congress, The Contemporary Congress analyzes the impact of new faces, issues, and political contexts on the workings of the legislative branch.

Loomis writes in the preface, "The 106th Congress, with Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), is a lot different than that of Speaker Newt Gingrich. . . Nor does the future look any more certain on Capitol Hill. The election of the year 2000 is arguably the first since 1952 in which both houses of Congress and the presidency are up for grabs."

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Parliamentary Conferences for the Years 2000-2001

The Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association has announced six international parliamentary conferences it is planning or sponsoring.

June 2000 - "Czech Parliamentary Research in the First Democratic Decade," Prague, Czech Republic, sponsored by the Czech Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences and the Parliamentary Documents Center of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. **Contact:** David M. Olson, Dept. of Political Science, 237 Graham Building, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC 27412, U.S.A.; Tel. +1-910-334-5989 or 299-7272; Fax +1-910-334-4315 or 334-3009; E-mail: olsondm@iris.uncg.edu.

August 4-6, 2000 - "Fourth International Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians," Wroxton College, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom, sponsored jointly with the Centre for Legislative Studies of the University of Hull, United Kingdom. **Contact:** The Lord Norton of Louth, Dept. of Politics, The University of Hull, Hull, HU6 7RX, United Kingdom; Tel +44-1482-854-168 or 466-208; E-mail: p.norton@pol-as.hull.ac.uk

December 2000 - International Conference on "Parliamentary Institution Building and Reform in the New Democracies," Cape Town, South Africa, sponsored jointly with the Centre for Comparative and International Studies of the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. **Contacts**: Hennie Kotzé, University of Stellenbosch, Dept. of Political Science, Private Bag X1, 7602 Stellenbosch, South Africa; Tel. +27-21-808-2107; Fax +27-21-808-

4336; E-mail: HJK@akad.cun.ac.za **OR** Lia Nijzink, Political Information and Monitoring Service, IDASA, Cape Town Democracy Centre, Box 1739, Cape Town 8000, South Africa; Tel. +27-21-461-2559; Fax +27-21-462-5261; E-mail: lia@idasact.org.za

Dates to be set in 2000-01 - International Conference on "Reforming Legislatures: Tensions Between Legislation and Oversight," Jerusalem, Israel, sponsored jointly with the Israel Democracy Institute, the Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, and the Dept. of Political Science of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. **Contact**: Reuven Y. Hazan, Dept. of Political Science, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 91905 Jerusalem, Israel; Fax: +972-2-588-1333; E-mail: mshazan@mscc.huji.ac.il

July 2001 - Budapest III International Conference on "Parliamentary Parties and Parliamentary Committees," Budapest, Hungary, sponsored jointly with the Center for Democracy Studies of the Budapest University of Economic Sciences. **Contacts**: Attila Ágh, Department of Political Science, Budapest University of Economic Sciences, Fovám tér 8, H-1093 Budapest, Hungary; Fax and Tel. +36-1-218-8049; E-mail: poltagh@pegasus .bke.hu **OR** Lawrence D. Longley, Dept. of Government, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, U.S.A.; Tel. +1-920-832-6673; Fax +1-920-832-6962; E-mail: PowerLDL@aol.com

July 2001 - Ljubljana III International Conference on "Parliamentary-Executive Relations" [tentative title], Ljubljana and Portoroz, Slovenia, sponsored jointly with the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Social Sciences and the Political Science Association of Slovenia. **Contacts**: Drago Zajc, Dept. of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, P.O. Box 47, 61109 Ljubljana, Slovenia; Tel. +386-61-168-1461; Fax +386-61-168-3421, 168-2329, or 168-5330; E-mail: drago.zajc@uni-lj.si **OR** Lawrence D. Longley, Dept. of Government, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, U.S.A.; Tel. +1-920-832-6673; Fax +1-920-832-6962; E-mail: PowerLDL@aol.com

These international conferences are sponsored by a variety of scholarly organizations including the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association.

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RCLS Invites Participation in Organized Sessions at the Year 2000 IPSA World Congress in Quebec City

The Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association is an organization of more than 150 scholars from 30 different countries of the world whose goal is to facilitate research into the comparative forms and effects of legislative institutions, processes, and politics. The resulting network of international scholars included individuals interested in national, cross-national, and sub-national aspects of legislatures.

The RCLS, which in 2000 will celebrate its 29th year of scholarly activity, regularly organizes international gatherings of parliamentary and legislative specialists. Scholars and others interested in parliaments and legislatures are invited to join this international network and thus facilitate communication among researchers with common interests in the comparative forms and effects of legislative institutions, processes, and politics.

Membership in RCLS currently runs through the year 2000 IPSA World Congress in Quebec City, Canada, and entitles international scholars to information concerning the professional activities of the Research Committee (including program plans for sessions at the year 2000 IPSA World Congress), receipt of the RCLS International Newsletter, and listing in the RCLS

International Membership Directory and Research Register.

To join RCLS, please send your name, professional address, telephone and fax numbers, E-mail address, and current legislative research interests, together with a check or international money order payable to "RCLS" for $40 U.S. or £30 sterling to either:

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Burdett A. Loomis, Editor
University of Kansas
January 2000

Congressional Biographies and Congressional Scholarship: An Uneasy Pairing

Editor's note:

There are few good biographies of members of Congress. Indeed, there are few biographies at all. Yet there are hundreds, thousands of telling stories, insightful anecdotes. Why not more, or better, biographies? Historians have expressed relatively little recent interest in political institutions, and political science scholarship, while becoming much historical, has not embraced biography at all. Given the genre's emphasis on a single case, perhaps we should not worry too much about the dearth of biographies. Yet the careful examination of a single individual - a Rayburn, a Rostenkowksi, a Dirksen, an Aldrich - may tell us as much as a data-rich, assumption-driven piece of analysis. Moreover, the absence of biographies means that we have given up the telling of stories to others, who may well develop more cynical, less understanding studies than those who best understand the legislative branch.

The authors represented here offer varied perspectives on the art and importance of biographical scholarship. In profiling Dan Rostenkowski, Richard Cohen has focused on a man at the end of a rich, controversial career, while Darrell West offers us a portrait of Representative Patrick Kennedy, who stands near the beginning of what may well be a long and distinguished life of public service. In dealing with living politicians, both have had to address issues of access and emphasis in producing the best work they could, given certain practical limitations. Conversely, Garrison Nelson's work on former Speaker John McCormack relies on more traditional historical methods, mixed with a detective's nose for sorting out the strands of a mystery.

Jeff Biggs' collaborative work with Tom Foley stands as a unique form - neither biography, memoir, or autobiography. Rather, he gives us the mix of voices of congressman, former staffer, and chronicler of events, and perhaps offers us the book that Ambassador Foley might never write. Finally, Betty Koed, the Assistant Historian in the Office of the Senate Historian provides us with a measured set of reflections on the virtues of political biography.

At present, neither publishers, the disciplines of political science and history, nor the public as a whole offer much encouragement for writing legislative biographies. Yet given the complexity of the legislative process, and its hidden nature, even in the era of C-Span (or maybe particularly in this era), we could profit from more and better stories that mix the personal with politics and policy making. Indeed, the story of deliberative democracy remains one of the most important, least understood tales of our time.

Contents of this issue:

Unraveling the Reinvention of Speaker John W. McCormack
Garrison Nelson, University of Vermont;
Senior Fellow, McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts-Boston

Writing a Kennedy Biography
Darrell M. West, Brown University

Writing About Rosty: The Journalist as Biographer
Richard E. Cohen, *National Journal*

Working with the Congressman: The Speaker as Co-Author
Jeffrey Biggs, American Political Science Association

The Usefulness of Political Biographies
Betty K. Koed, Assistant Historian, United States Senate

Contributions to "Extension of Remarks" are encouraged. The total length of such contributions should be four pages, text typed, single spaced, with references following the style of *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. Works may be edited for content or for length. Please send proposed contributions to Burdett A. Loomis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-2157.