



Alaska State Legislature

2
1974

Source:

SR 1

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1

Relating to redistricting of the Senate.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

WHEREAS the Alaska Constitution, art. II, sec. 3, provides for the election of members of the Senate for four-year terms, one-half of whom shall be elected every two years; and

WHEREAS, under the Governor's Proclamation of Reapportionment and Redistricting proclaimed December 11, 1973, the terms of office of certain members of the Senate from Anchorage, who were elected to office in 1972 and whose terms of office normally would have expired four years thereafter, were cut short when the Governor's plan subdivided the greater Anchorage area into districts of one or two senators whereas heretofore senators had been elected area-wide in Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, although a voter has an important interest in being represented by a senator of his own choosing, nevertheless there is a substantial if not equal public interest in preserving the continuity of membership in one house of the legislature; there is a public good to be served by maintaining the stability of the legislative process and that has been achieved in Alaska as prescribed in the state constitution by the election of senators for four-year, staggered terms; and

WHEREAS this goal of continuity and stability in a legislature, as recognized by the California Supreme Court recently in *Legislature v. Reinecke*, 516 P.2d 6, at page 12 (1973), is a rational state objective and may reasonably be promoted by provision for four-year staggered terms; and that provision does not constitute "invidious discrimination" against any voter; and

WHEREAS to obviate whatever temporary disenfranchisement or inequality that may occur following redistricting, and particularly the subdivision of the greater Anchorage area into one- or two-member Senate districts, by truncating some or all senatorial terms that still have two years to run, would substantially interfere with the orderly processes of representative, constitutional government in Alaska; and

WHEREAS the concept of representation in the Senate conceived by the framers of the Alaska Constitution was that that body would represent somewhat larger constituencies and broader geographic or socio-economic areas than members of the House of Representatives, and it is still possible under the holdings of the United States and Alaska Supreme Courts to create units of representation for the two legislative chambers that reflect somewhat different constituencies; and

WHEREAS, even under the Governor's Proclamation of Reapportionment and Redistricting, the second largest city in the state, Fairbanks, remains as the largest community in the state with representation in the Senate as a unit; thus, there is no rational basis for treating Anchorage in a contrary manner, for if senators were elected areawide from Anchorage there would be no need to arbitrarily abrogate the terms of senators elected in 1972 from that city;

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the sense of the Senate of the Alaska State Legislature that

(1) the members of the Senate should represent larger, broader socio-economic constituencies and geographic units than the members of the House of Representatives; this best can be achieved by treating the greater Anchorage area in the same manner as the election district encompassing the City of Fairbanks and the North Star Borough under the Governor's December 11, 1973, Proclamation of Reapportionment and Redistricting, thus electing senators from both communities areawide; and

(2) the terms of office of members of the Senate due to expire in 1976 should not be abrogated in 1974 due to, or as a result of, redistricting.