

the electoral system is arranged in a manner that will consistently degrade a voter's or a group of voters' influence on the political process as a whole."¹⁷ But, in what could be the cruelest blow to those who will be involved in redistricting this year, the high court did not say which arrangements "consistently degrade" voting influence.

The partisan political nature of the 1991 redistricting in North Carolina could be especially

fractious in light of the emerging strength of the Republican Party in the state. Never before in this century has the GOP entered a redistricting session with the strength it will have in 1991. In November, voters elected 39 GOP representatives and 14 *GOP senators to the 1991 legislature. In 1971, the breakdown was 31 Republicans and 139 Democrats. In the 1981 redistricting, the breakdown was 34 Republicans and 136 Democrats. Following the

What Do Other States Do When It's Time to Redistrict?

Reapportionment in neighboring states is much like North Carolina's, but there are important differences. The legislatures of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee, like North Carolina's, all draw new district lines for the state House, state Senate, and U.S. Congress districts following the release of the decennial census.

But these four states must involve the governor in redistricting, because the chief executive has the veto in those states and may reject plans. North Carolina, the only state in the nation without a veto, does not directly involve the governor in its redistricting process.

All legislative districts in the four neighboring states—with the lone exception of Georgia's state House districts—are drawn for single members. All five states suffered with various redistricting problems and rejections in the 1980s. The South Carolina legislature failed to enact a congressional plan and it was left to the courts to do so. An S.C. Senate plan was enacted but overturned by the courts. The Tennessee legislature saw both its House and Senate plans overturned by the courts in the 1980s. The Georgia congressional plan and the Virginia House plan also were overturned.

A survey of other states finds other approaches to the drawing of district lines. In Alaska, the governor appoints a redistricting board and then can accept or reject the proposal of the board. In Arkansas, a board draws lines for legislative districts, but the legislature draws

the congressional districts. This Arkansas board comprises the governor, the secretary of state, and the attorney general, and the governor has the power to veto the legislature's congressional plan.

Colorado, Ohio, New Jersey, and Missouri also split the job between reapportionment commissions for legislative districts and the legislature for the congressional plan. Washington, Hawaii, Maine, and Montana have commissions which draw both legislative and congressional plans.

The states that have redistricting commissions have made it easier for their legislatures, but they have a mixed record in withstanding legal challenges. Alaska, for instance, has a redistricting board, but spent much of the 1980s in federal court answering one challenge or another, so having a redistricting board does not guarantee any more success than not having one.

And some states have it relatively easy. Alaska, Delaware, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming each have only one congressional seat, so they have no need for congressional redistricting. Nebraska has only three congressional seats and a unicameral legislature with 49 seats, so that state has to worry about redrawing a maximum of 52 new districts. North Carolina, with a 50-member Senate and a 120-member House and an 11-member congressional delegation that may expand to 12, has a total of 182 potential maps to draw in 1991.

—Paul T. O'Connor