

The Apportionment Problem

Bringing Down the House

Charles Biles, Ph.D.

Mathematics 5: Contemporary Mathematics

College of the Redwoods

Spring Semester 2017

website: nia977.wix.com/drbcap

“... no political problem is less susceptible of a precise solution than that which relates to the number most convenient for a representative legislature, ...”

James Madison
The Federalist 55

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The Apportionment Problem

Determine how many seats in the U.S.
House of Representatives each state gets.

CONGRESSIONAL SEATS

2010
OFFICIAL RESULTS



(US apportionment population = 309,183,463)/435 \approx 710,767

<http://www.census.gov/2010census/data/apportionment-data.php>

History

To appreciate history, keep the following two perspectives in mind:

History

To appreciate history, keep the following two perspectives in mind:

- What was it like to live back then?

History

To appreciate history, keep the following two perspectives in mind:

- What was it like to live back then?
- How did we get from then to now?

The Constitution: Article I

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

The Constitution: Article I

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members **chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, . . .**

The Constitution: Article I

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members **chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, . . .**

Representatives . . . shall be apportioned among the several States
. . . **according to their respective Numbers, . . .**

The Constitution: Article I

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members **chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, . . .**

Representatives . . . shall be apportioned among the several States . . . **according to their respective Numbers, . . .**

The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, **and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, . . .**

The Constitution: Article I

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members **chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, . . .**

Representatives . . . shall be apportioned among the several States . . . **according to their respective Numbers, . . .**

The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, **and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, . . .**

The Number of Representatives shall **not exceed one for every thirty Thousand**, but **each State shall have at Least one Representative; . . .**

The First Census 1790

State	Population
CT 5	236841
DE 1	55540
GA 3	70835
KY 2	68705
MD 6	278514
MA 8	475327
NH 3	141822
NJ 4	179570
NY 6	331589
NC 5	353523
PA 8	432879
RI 1	68446
SC 5	206236
VT 2	85533
VA 10	630560
US 67	3615920

The first apportionment population census.

Source:
Balinski and Young,
Fair Representation,
Second Edition, 2001,
page 158.

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790

State Population	
CT	236841
DE	55540
GA	70835
KY	68705
MD	278514
MA	475327
NH	141822
NJ	179570
NY	331589
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VT	85533
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First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790

State	Population
CT	236841
DE	55540
GA	70835
KY	68705
MD	278514
MA	475327
NH	141822
NJ	179570
NY	331589
NC	353523
PA	432879
RI	68446
SC	206236
VT	85533
VA	630560
US	3615920

3792621 — City of Los Angeles 2010

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill
State	Population	30000
CT	236841	
DE	55540	
GA	70835	
KY	68705	
MD	278514	
MA	475327	
NH	141822	
NJ	179570	
NY	331589	
NC	353523	
PA	432879	
RI	68446	
SC	206236	
VT	85533	
VA	630560	
US	3615920	

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill
State	Population	Divisor 30000
CT	236841	
DE	55540	
GA	70835	
KY	68705	
MD	278514	
MA	475327	
NH	141822	
NJ	179570	
NY	331589	
NC	353523	
PA	432879	
RI	68446	
SC	206236	
VT	85533	
VA	630560	
US	3615920	

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill
State	Population	Divisor 30000
CT	236841	7.895
DE	55540	1.851
GA	70835	2.361
KY	68705	2.290
MD	278514	9.284
MA	475327	15.844
NH	141822	4.727
NJ	179570	5.986
NY	331589	11.053
NC	353523	11.784
PA	432879	14.429
RI	68446	2.282
SC	206236	6.875
VT	85533	2.851
VA	630560	21.019
US	3615920	

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill	
State	Population	Divisor 30000	Seats
CT	236841	7.895	7
DE	55540	1.851	1
GA	70835	2.361	2
KY	68705	2.290	2
MD	278514	9.284	9
MA	475327	15.844	15
NH	141822	4.727	4
NJ	179570	5.986	5
NY	331589	11.053	11
NC	353523	11.784	11
PA	432879	14.429	14
RI	68446	2.282	2
SC	206236	6.875	6
VT	85533	2.851	2
VA	630560	21.019	21
US	3615920		

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill	
State	Population	Divisor 30000	Seats
CT	236841	7.895	7
DE	55540	1.851	1
GA	70835	2.361	2
KY	68705	2.290	2
MD	278514	9.284	9
MA	475327	15.844	15
NH	141822	4.727	4
NJ	179570	5.986	5
NY	331589	11.053	11
NC	353523	11.784	11
PA	432879	14.429	14
RI	68446	2.282	2
SC	206236	6.875	6
VT	85533	2.851	2
VA	630560	21.019	21
US	3615920		112

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill		Senate Bill	
State	Population	Divisor	30000 Seats	Divisor	33000 Seats
CT	236841	7.895	7	7.177	7
DE	55540	1.851	1	1.683	1
GA	70835	2.361	2	2.147	2
KY	68705	2.290	2	2.082	2
MD	278514	9.284	9	8.440	8
MA	475327	15.844	15	14.404	14
NH	141822	4.727	4	4.298	4
NJ	179570	5.986	5	5.442	5
NY	331589	11.053	11	10.048	10
NC	353523	11.784	11	10.713	10
PA	432879	14.429	14	13.118	13
RI	68446	2.282	2	2.074	2
SC	206236	6.875	6	6.250	6
VT	85533	2.851	2	2.592	2
VA	630560	21.019	21	19.108	19
US	3615920		112		

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790		House Bill		Senate Bill	
State	Population	Divisor	30000 Seats	Divisor	33000 Seats
CT	236841	7.895	7	7.177	7
DE	55540	1.851	1	1.683	1
GA	70835	2.361	2	2.147	2
KY	68705	2.290	2	2.082	2
MD	278514	9.284	9	8.440	8
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NH	141822	4.727	4	4.298	4
NJ	179570	5.986	5	5.442	5
NY	331589	11.053	11	10.048	10
NC	353523	11.784	11	10.713	10
PA	432879	14.429	14	13.118	13
RI	68446	2.282	2	2.074	2
SC	206236	6.875	6	6.250	6
VT	85533	2.851	2	2.592	2
VA	630560	21.019	21	19.108	19
US	3615920		112		105

First Apportionment Bills

Census 1790			House Bill		Senate Bill	
State	Population		Divisor 30000	Seats	Divisor 33000	Seats
CT	5 236841		7.895	7	7.177	7
DE	1 55540		1.851	1	1.683	1
GA	3 70835		2.361	2	2.147	2
MD	6 278514		9.284	9	8.440	8
MA	8 475327		15.844	15	14.404	14
NH	3 141822		4.727	4	4.298	4
NJ	4 179570		5.986	5	5.442	5
NY	6 331589		11.053	11	10.048	10
NC	5 353523		11.784	11	10.713	10
PA	8 432879		14.429	14	13.118	13
RI	1 68446		2.282	2	2.074	2
SC	5 206236		6.875	6	6.250	6
VT	2 85533		2.851	2	2.592	2
VA	10 630560		21.019	21	19.108	19
US	67 3615920		120.531	112	109.573	105

First Apportionment Bills

House:
43/67
= 64%

Senate:
8/14

Census 1790			House Bill		Senate Bill	
State	Population		Divisor 30000	Seats	Divisor 33000	Seats
CT	5 236841		7.895	7	7.177	7
DE	1 55540		1.851	1	1.683	1
GA	3 70835		2.361	2	2.147	2
MD	6 278514		9.284	9	8.440	8
MA	8 475327		15.844	15	14.404	14
NH	3 141822		4.727	4	4.298	4
NJ	4 179570		5.986	5	5.442	5
NY	6 331589		11.053	11	10.048	10
NC	5 353523		11.784	11	10.713	10
PA	8 432879		14.429	14	13.118	13
RI	1 68446		2.282	2	2.074	2
SC	5 206236		6.875	6	6.250	6
VT	2 85533		2.851	2	2.592	2
VA	10 630560		21.019	21	19.108	19
US	67 3615920		120.531	112	109.573	105

Rule of Three

Federalists in Congress apply a new idea:

Multiply the House size by each state's proportion to determine the state's **quota** (fair share of the House).

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Multiply the House size by each state's proportion to determine the state's **quota** (fair share of the House).

$$\text{quota} = (\text{House size}) \times \frac{\text{state population}}{\text{national population}}$$

Rule of Three

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Multiply the House size by each state's proportion to determine the state's **quota** (fair share of the House).

$$\text{quota} = (\text{House size}) \times \frac{\text{state population}}{\text{national population}}$$

Rule of Three

The House Bill

Census

House Bill

State Population		Divisor 30000	Seats
CT	236841	7.895	7
DE	55540	1.851	1
GA	70835	2.361	2
KY	68705	2.290	2
MD	278514	9.284	9
MA	475327	15.844	15
NH	141822	4.727	4
NJ	179570	5.986	5
NY	331589	11.053	11
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RI	68446	2.282	2
SC	206236	6.875	6
VT	85533	2.851	2
VA	630560	21.019	21
US	3615920		

The House Bill

Census

House Bill

State Population		Divisor 30000	Seats
CT	236841	7.895	7
DE	55540	1.851	1
GA	70835	2.361	2
KY	68705	2.290	2
MD	278514	9.284	9
MA	475327	15.844	15
NH	141822	4.727	4
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NY	331589	11.053	11
NC	353523	11.784	11
PA	432879	14.429	14
RI	68446	2.282	2
SC	206236	6.875	6
VT	85533	2.851	2
VA	630560	21.019	21
US	3615920		112

The House Bill

Census

House Bill

State Population		Divisor 30000	Seats	Quota $h=112$
CT	236841	7.895	7	
DE	55540	1.851	1	
GA	70835	2.361	2	
KY	68705	2.290	2	
MD	278514	9.284	9	
MA	475327	15.844	15	
NH	141822	4.727	4	
NJ	179570	5.986	5	
NY	331589	11.053	11	
NC	353523	11.784	11	
PA	432879	14.429	14	
RI	68446	2.282	2	
SC	206236	6.875	6	
VT	85533	2.851	2	
VA	630560	21.019	21	
US	3615920		112	

The House Bill

Census

House Bill

State Population		Divisor 30000	Seats	Quota $h=112$
CT	236841	7.895	7	7.336
DE	55540	1.851	1	1.720
GA	70835	2.361	2	2.194
KY	68705	2.290	2	2.128
MD	278514	9.284	9	8.627
MA	475327	15.844	15	14.723
NH	141822	4.727	4	4.393
NJ	179570	5.986	5	5.562
NY	331589	11.053	11	10.271
NC	353523	11.784	11	10.950
PA	432879	14.429	14	13.408
RI	68446	2.282	2	2.120
SC	206236	6.875	6	6.388
VT	85533	2.851	2	2.649
VA	630560	21.019	21	19.531
US	3615920		112	112

Problem

Census		House Bill		
State	Population	Divisor 30000	Seats	Quota $h=112$
CT	236841	7.895	7	7.336
DE	55540	1.851	1	1.720
GA	70835	2.361	2	2.194
KY	68705	2.290	2	2.128
MD	278514	9.284	9	8.627
MA	475327	15.844	15	14.723
NH	141822	4.727	4	4.393
NJ	179570	5.986	5	5.562
NY	331589	11.053	11	10.271
NC	353523	11.784	11	10.950
PA	432879	14.429	14	13.408
RI	68446	2.282	2	2.120
SC	206236	6.875	6	6.388
VT	85533	2.851	2	2.649
VA	630560	21.019	21	19.531
US	3615920		112	112

The Quota Rule
is violated.

The Senate Bill

Census

Senate Bill

State Population		Divisor 33000 Seats	
CT	236841	7.177	7
DE	55540	1.683	1
GA	70835	2.147	2
KY	68705	2.082	2
MD	278514	8.440	8
MA	475327	14.404	14
NH	141822	4.298	4
NJ	179570	5.442	5
NY	331589	10.048	10
NC	353523	10.713	10
PA	432879	13.118	13
RI	68446	2.074	2
SC	206236	6.250	6
VT	85533	2.592	2
VA	630560	19.108	19
US	3615920		105

The Senate Bill

Census

Senate Bill

State Population		Divisor 33000 Seats		Quota $h=105$
CT	236841	7.177	7	6.877
DE	55540	1.683	1	1.613
GA	70835	2.147	2	2.057
KY	68705	2.082	2	1.995
MD	278514	8.440	8	8.088
MA	475327	14.404	14	13.803
NH	141822	4.298	4	4.118
NJ	179570	5.442	5	5.214
NY	331589	10.048	10	9.629
NC	353523	10.713	10	10.266
PA	432879	13.118	13	12.570
RI	68446	2.074	2	1.988
SC	206236	6.250	6	5.989
VT	85533	2.592	2	2.484
VA	630560	19.108	19	18.310
US	3615920		105	105

Problem

Census		Senate Bill		
State	Population	Divisor	33000 Seats	Quota $h=105$
CT	236841	7.177	7	6.877
DE	55540	1.683	1	1.613
GA	70835	2.147	2	2.057
KY	68705	2.082	2	1.995
MD	278514	8.440	8	8.088
MA	475327	14.404	14	13.803
NH	141822	4.298	4	4.118
NJ	179570	5.442	5	5.214
NY	331589	10.048	10	9.629
NC	353523	10.713	10	10.266
PA	432879	13.118	13	12.570
RI	68446	2.074	2	1.988
SC	206236	6.250	6	5.989
VT	85533	2.592	2	2.484
VA	630560	19.108	19	18.310
US	3615920		105	105

Large states are favored over small states.

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	
CT	236841	
DE	55540	
GA	70835	
KY	68705	
MD	278514	
MA	475327	
NH	141822	
NJ	179570	
NY	331589	
NC	353523	
PA	432879	
RI	68446	
SC	206236	
VT	85533	
VA	630560	
US	3615920	120.5307

$d = 30000$

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	
CT	236841	
DE	55540	
GA	70835	
KY	68705	
MD	278514	
MA	475327	
NH	141822	
NJ	179570	
NY	331589	
NC	353523	
PA	432879	
RI	68446	
SC	206236	
VT	85533	
VA	630560	
US	3615920	120.5307

$d = 30000$

$$3615920/121 = 29883.6$$

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$
CT	236841	
DE	55540	
GA	70835	
KY	68705	
MD	278514	
MA	475327	
NH	141822	
NJ	179570	
NY	331589	
NC	353523	
PA	432879	
RI	68446	
SC	206236	
VT	85533	
VA	630560	
US	3615920	120.5307

$d = 30000$

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota
CT	236841		7.860
DE	55540		1.843
GA	70835		2.351
KY	68705		2.280
MD	278514		9.243
MA	475327		15.774
NH	141822		4.707
NJ	179570		5.959
NY	331589		11.004
NC	353523		11.732
PA	432879		14.366
RI	68446		2.271
SC	206236		6.844
VT	85533		2.839
VA	630560		20.926
US	3615920	120.5307	120

$d = 30000$

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota	Lower Q
CT	236841		7.860	7
DE	55540		1.843	1
GA	70835		2.351	2
KY	68705		2.280	2
MD	278514		9.243	9
MA	475327		15.774	15
NH	141822		4.707	4
NJ	179570		5.959	5
NY	331589		11.004	11
NC	353523		11.732	11
PA	432879		14.366	14
RI	68446		2.271	2
SC	206236		6.844	6
VT	85533		2.839	2
VA	630560		20.926	20
US	3615920	120.5307	120	111

$d = 30000$

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota	Lower Q	Appt
CT	236841		7.860	7	8
DE	55540		1.843	1	2
GA	70835		2.351	2	2
KY	68705		2.280	2	2
MD	278514		9.243	9	9
MA	475327		15.774	15	16
NH	141822		4.707	4	5
NJ	179570		5.959	5	6
NY	331589		11.004	11	11
NC	353523		11.732	11	12
PA	432879		14.366	14	14
RI	68446		2.271	2	2
SC	206236		6.844	6	7
VT	85533		2.839	2	3
VA	630560		20.926	20	21
US	3615920	120.5307	120	111	120

$d = 30000$

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State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota	Lower Q	Appt
CT	236841		7.860	7	8
DE	55540		1.843	1	2
GA	70835		2.351	2	2
KY	68705		2.280	2	2
MD	278514		9.243	9	9
MA	475327		15.774	15	16
NH	141822		4.707	4	5
NJ	179570		5.959	5	6
NY	331589		11.004	11	11
NC	353523		11.732	11	12
PA	432879		14.366	14	14
RI	68446		2.271	2	2
SC	206236		6.844	6	7
VT	85533		2.839	2	3
VA	630560		20.926	20	21
US	3615920	120.5307	120	111	120

This became the first apportionment bill passed by Congress.

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota	Lower Q	Appt
CT	236841		7.860	7	8
DE	55540		1.843	1	2
GA	70835		2.351	2	2
KY	68705		2.280	2	2
MD	278514		9.243	9	9
MA	475327		15.774	15	16
NH	141822		4.707	4	5
NJ	179570		5.959	5	6
NY	331589		11.004	11	11
NC	353523		11.732	11	12
PA	432879		14.366	14	14
RI	68446		2.271	2	2
SC	206236		6.844	6	7
VT	85533		2.839	2	3
VA	630560		20.926	20	21
US	3615920	120.5307	120	111	120

This became the first apportionment bill passed by Congress.

26 March 1792:
bill is sent to President Washington for his approval.

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota	Lower Q	Appt
CT	236841		7.860	7	8
DE	55540		1.843	1	2
GA	70835		2.351	2	2
KY	68705		2.280	2	2
MD	278514		9.243	9	9
MA	475327		15.774	15	16
NH	141822		4.707	4	5
NJ	179570		5.959	5	6
NY	331589		11.004	11	11
NC	353523		11.732	11	12
PA	432879		14.366	14	14
RI	68446		2.271	2	2
SC	206236		6.844	6	7
VT	85533		2.839	2	3
VA	630560		20.926	20	21
US	3615920	120.5307	120	111	120

This became the first apportionment bill passed by Congress.

26 March 1792:
bill is sent to President Washington for his approval.

5 April 1792: Washington vetoes the bill.

Hamilton's Method

State	Population	$h = 120$	Quota	Lower Q	Appt
CT	236841		7.860	7	8
DE	55540		1.843	1	2
GA	70835		2.351	2	2
KY	68705		2.280	2	2
MD	278514		9.243	9	9
MA	475327		15.774	15	16
NH	141822		4.707	4	5
NJ	179570		5.959	5	6
NY	331589		11.004	11	11
NC	353523		11.732	11	12
PA	432879		14.366	14	14
RI	68446		2.271	2	2
SC	206236		6.844	6	7
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U.S.:
 $3615920/120 = 30,132.66\dots$

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Connecticut:
 $236841/8 = 29605.13$.

Delaware:
 $55540/2 = 27770$

U.S.:
 $3615920/120 = 30,132.66...$

Basic Jefferson Method

After Washington's veto letter of 5 April 1792,
Congress quickly passes the original Senate bill.
Washington signed the bill on 14 April 1792.

Two Methodologies

- Divisor Methods
- Quota Methods

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Divisor methods **create** seats.

Quota methods **distribute** seats.

Quota Method

Example: California, 2010 Census

$$Q_{CA} = h(p_{CA}/p_{US}) = 435 \left(\frac{37,341,989}{309,183,463} \right) = 52.5376...$$

<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-08.pdf>

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The resulting house size is the sum of each state's apportionment.

First 60 years

- A Basic Divisor Method would be used as the House apportionment method until 1850.

- ❖ 1790: $s = 15$; $d = 33000 \Rightarrow h = 105$
- ❖ 1800: $s = 16$; $d = 33000 \Rightarrow h = 141$
- ❖ 1810: $s = 17$; $d = 35000 \Rightarrow h = 181$
- ❖ 1820: $s = 24$; $d = 40000 \Rightarrow h = 213$
- ❖ 1830: $s = 24$; $d = 47700 \Rightarrow h = 240$
- ❖ 1840: $s = 26$; $d = 70680 \Rightarrow h = 223$

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Problems are discovered as the method is used; however, defects of the method were evident from the beginning.

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Jefferson's method systematically favors larger states; further, it can violate the Quota Rule.

1830 Census

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Webster: round normally.

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A constituency of 46,776 is closer to the target constituency of 50,000; hence, Dean awards Vermont 6 seats.

James Dean

Step 1: Select the constituency, d .

Step 2: Calculate $q = p/d$ and $n = \text{int}(q)$.

Step 3: Let the apportionment be either n or $n+1$,
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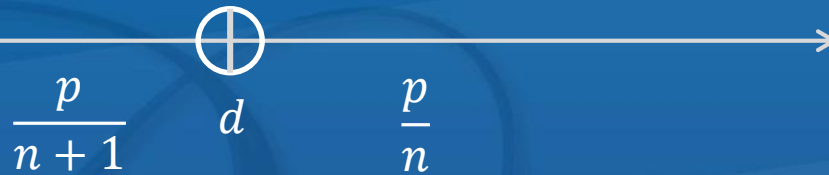
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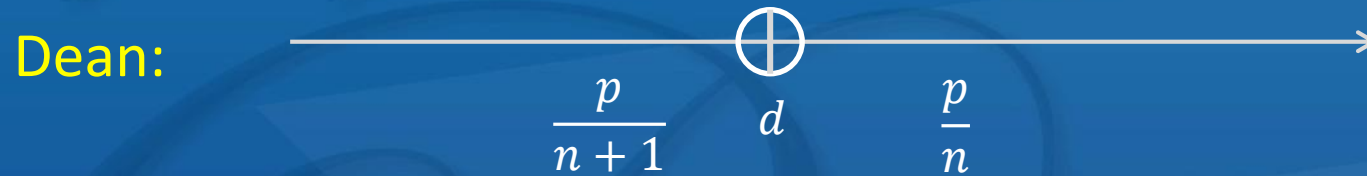


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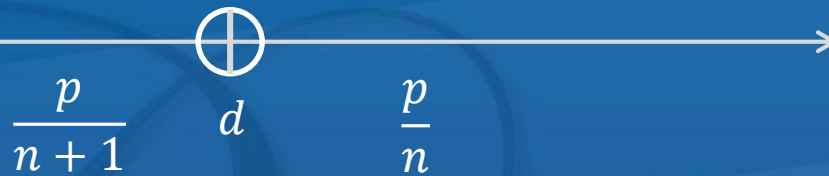
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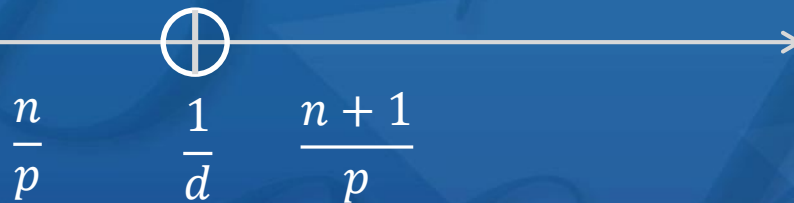
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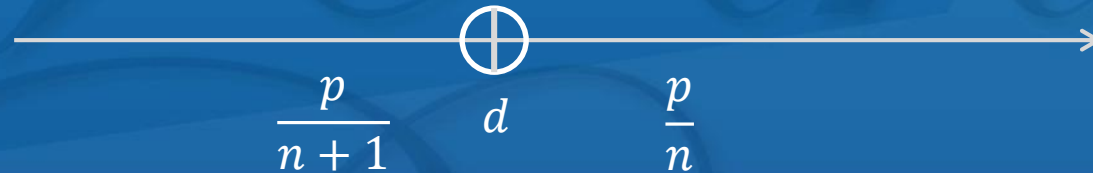
Dean and Webster

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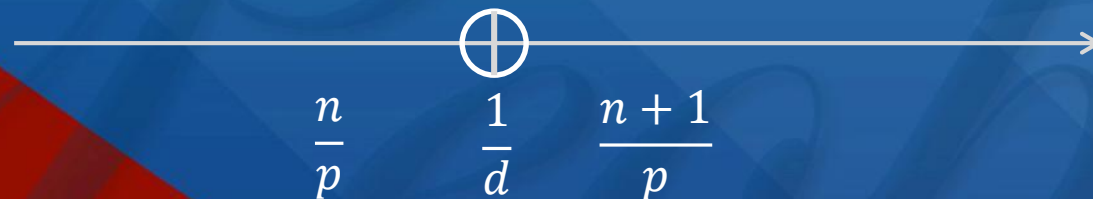
Step 3: Let the apportionment be either n or $n+1$,
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Dean:



$$\text{Dean: } a = n+1 \iff \text{HM}(n, n+1) \leq q.$$

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$$\text{Webster: } a = n+1 \iff \text{AM}(n, n+1) \leq q.$$

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Jefferson: round down (min).

Adams: round up (max).

Dean: round by closest constituency (HM).

Webster: round normally (AM).

In a Round About Way

Census 1810		$d = 35000$				
State	Population	Quotient	min	AM	HM	max
CT	261818	7.4805	7	7	8	8
DE	71004	2.0287	2	2	2	3
GA	210346	6.0099	6	6	6	7
KY	374287	10.6939	10	11	11	11
MD	335946	9.5985	9	10	10	10
MA	700745	20.0213	20	20	20	21
NH	214460	6.1274	6	6	6	7
NJ	241222	6.8921	6	7	7	7
NY	953043	27.2298	27	27	27	28
NC	487971	13.9420	13	14	14	14
OH	230760	6.5931	6	7	7	7
PA	809773	23.1364	23	23	23	24
RI	76931	2.1980	2	2	2	3
SC	336569	9.6163	9	10	10	10
TN	243913	6.9689	6	7	7	7
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$261818/7 =$
37403; over by
2403.

$261818/8 =$
32727, under by
2273.

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NC	487971	13.9420	13	14	14	14
OH	230760	6.5931	6	7	7	7
PA	809773	23.1364	23	23	23	24
RI	76931	2.1980	2	2	2	3
SC	336569	9.6163	9	10	10	10
TN	243913	6.9689	6	7	7	7
VT	217895	6.2256	6	6	6	7
VA	817594	23.3598	23	23	23	24
US	6575234	188.1222	181	188	189	198

1830 Census

In the 1831 apportionment bill, politics played the key role. In the House, a divisor of 48,000 was originally considered to be applied to the US population of 11,931,000.

What came out of the House apportionment committee was a bill using a divisor of 47,700.

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The change of divisor of 48,000 to 47,700 significantly changed the quotient of three states:

Georgia: 8.954 to 9.011

Kentucky: 12.955 to 13.036

New York: 39.970 to 40.222

Politics

How did this 1830 census based political event occur?

President: Andrew Jackson

Vice-President: John C. Calhoun

Politics

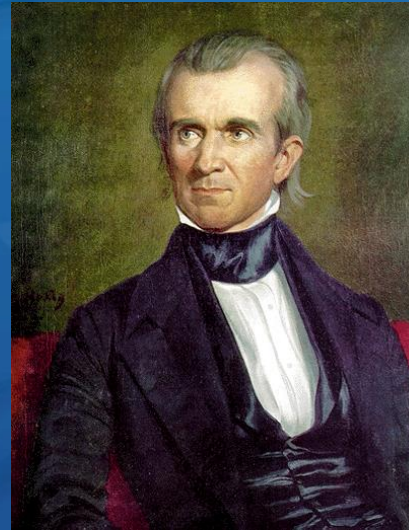
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James Knox Polk



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The Apportionment Act of 1842 used a basic divisor method with $d = 70680$ and **Webster's method** of rounding. This yielded $h = 223$, the only time in U.S. history that h decreased as a result of a census-based re-apportionment.

The Vinton Act

The Vinton Act of 1850 (Representative Samuel Vinton, Whig-Ohio) was passed to head off politicizing the census figures. The idea was to adopt a permanent appropriation act.



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But experience exposed problems with the Vinton Act.

Lessons from History

The quota method is subject to three counter-intuitive paradoxes

- The Alabama Paradox
- The Population Growth Paradox
- The New States Paradox

Alabama Paradox

When the number of House seats is increased,
a given state's apportion may decrease.

The Deal Breaker

Results from the 1890 census doomed Hamilton's Method.



MAINE

House Size	Seats
350 – 382	3
383 – 385	4
386	3
387 – 388	4
389 – 390	3
391 - 400	4

1910

Apportionment based on the 1910 census came from another mutation in apportionment methodology.

Congress abandoned the Quota Method and used a **modified divisor method**.

Ad-hoc Modified Divisor

Step 1. Decide the House size: h .

Step 2. Apply a basic divisor method to obtain the preset h .

Modified Divisor Methods

- Step 1. Select the House size h .
- Step 2. Select a constituency, d .
- Step 3. Calculate $q = p/d$ and $n = \text{int}(q)$.
- Step 4. Let $a = \max(1, \text{rnd}(q)) \in \{n, n+1\}$
- Step 5. If apportionments add to h , then DONE;
else, modify d and GO TO Step 3.

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1830: Jefferson: $a = n$
Adams: $a = n + 1$
Dean: $a = n + 1$ iff $q \geq \text{HM}(n, n+1)$
Webster: $a = n + 1$ iff $q \geq \text{AM}(n, n+1)$

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1910 : $h = 433$ and Webster's method of rounding.

1920 Census

In the 1920 decade there was so much confusion and politics that for the only time in U. S. History no census-based re-apportionment act was passed.

Congress could not agree on either the size of the House or on the method of apportionment.

Further, the politics of prohibition played a significant role: the dries would not consider any allocation giving the wets more power.

Today

The current method, described in Title 2 of the U.S. Code, consists of the Apportionment Act of 1929 (which froze $h = 435$) along with its 1940 and 1941 amendments. The 1941 amendment was signed by President Franklin Roosevelt and specifies the apportionment method of

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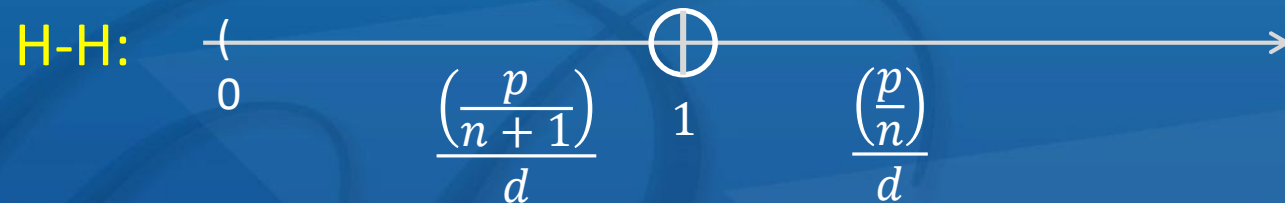
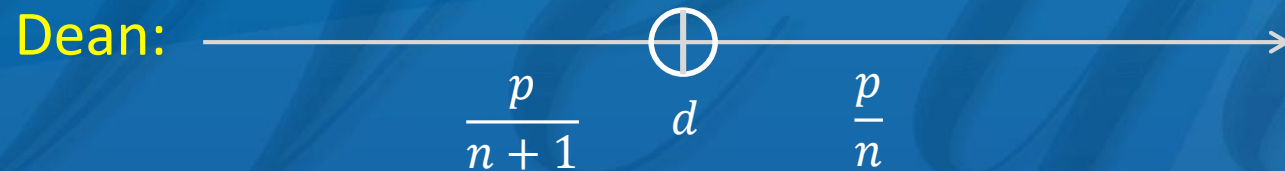
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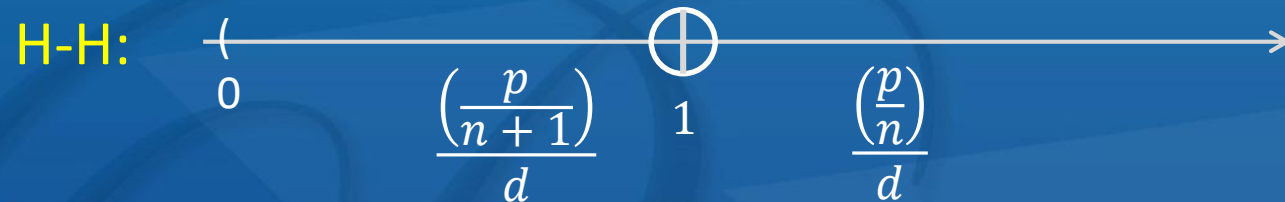
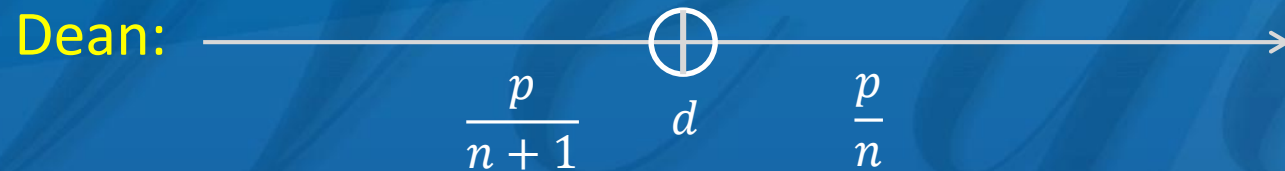
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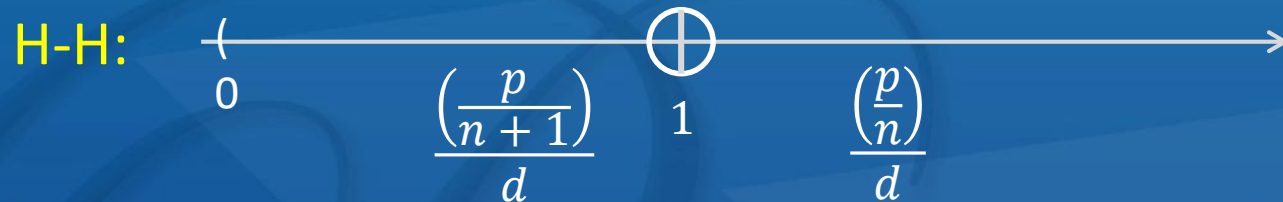
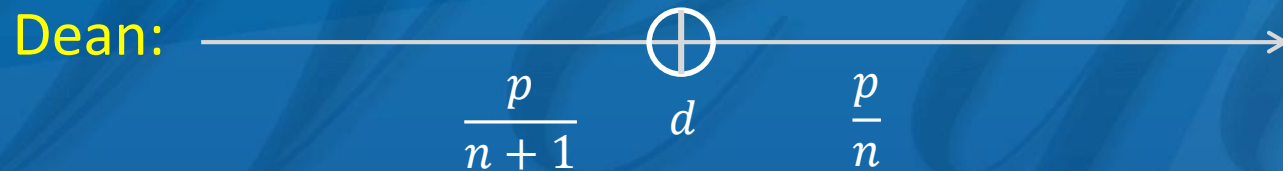


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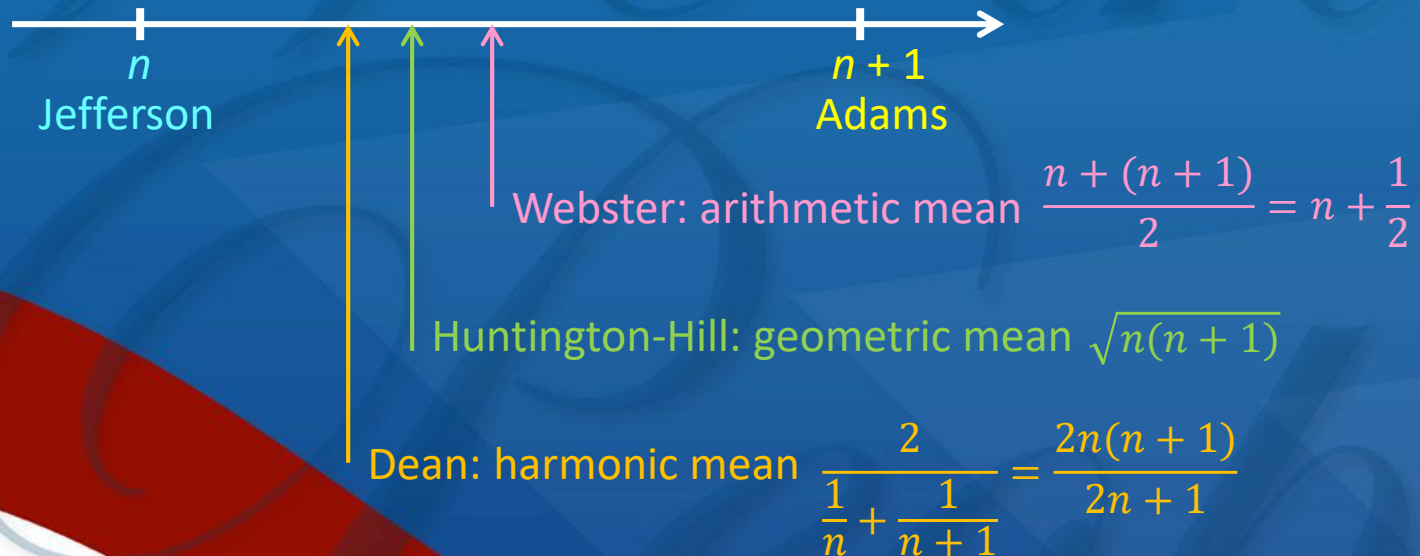
Any method that satisfies the quota rule produces paradoxes; any method that is free of the Alabama paradox may violate the quota rule.

They Mean Well

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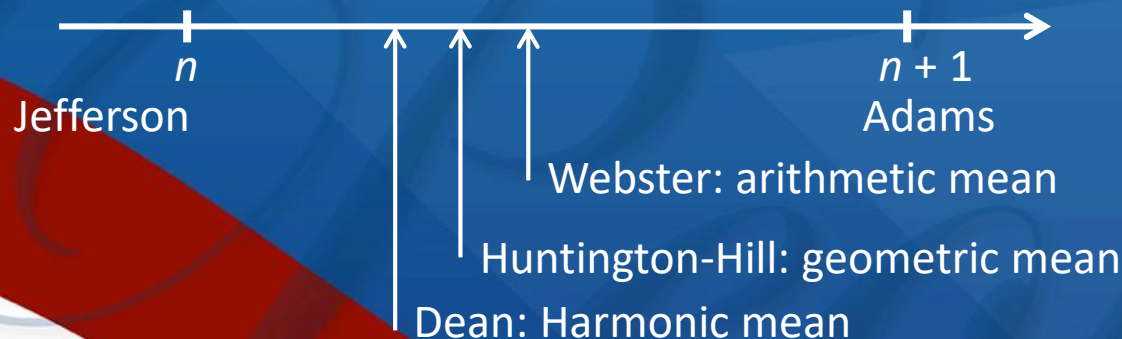
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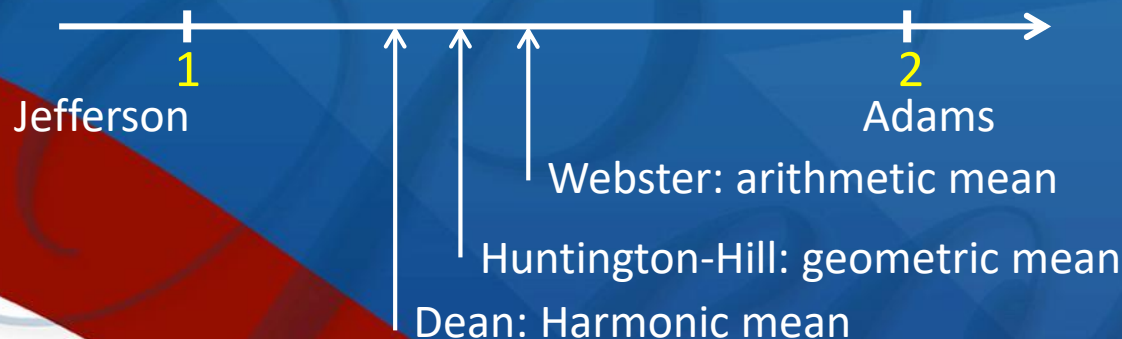
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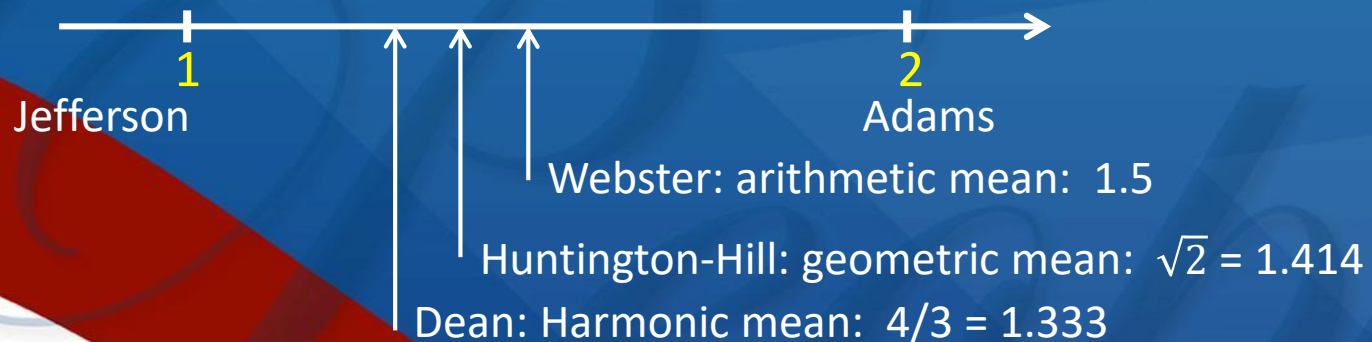
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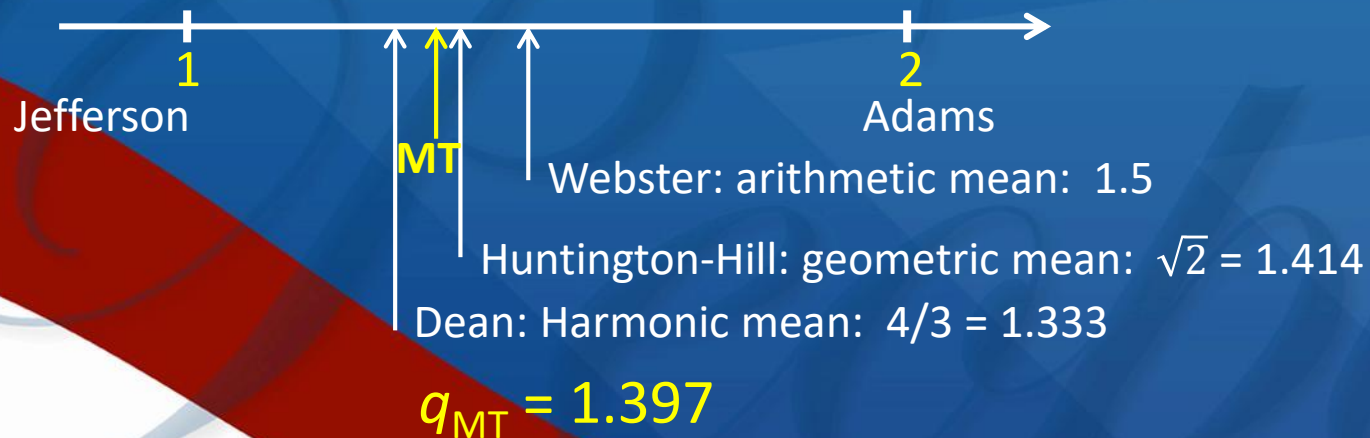
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Apportionment Problems

On appeal the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the H-H method was constitutional. The district court's decision was overturned.

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/91-860.ZS.html>

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=503&invol=442>

Thank You

It is time that I took my seat in this House!

<http://www.nia977.wix.com/drbcap>

Bonus Resources

Washington's Veto

United States [Philadelphia] April 5 1792.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives

I have maturely considered the Act passed by the two Houses, intituled, "An Act for an apportionment of Representatives among the several States according to the first enumeration," and I return it to your House, wherein it originated, with the following objections.

First—The Constitution has prescribed that representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers: and there is no one proportion or divisor which, applied to the respective numbers of the States will yield the number and allotment of representatives proposed by the Bill.

Second—The Constitution has also provided that the number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand; which restriction is, by the context, and by fair and obvious construction, to be applied to the seperate and respective numbers of the States: and the bill has allotted to eight of the States, more than one for thirty thousand.

George Washington.

Copy, DNA: RG 233, Second Congress, 1791–1793, Records of Legislative Proceedings, Journals; LB, DLC:GW. (from Philander Chase, et al., eds., *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series, Vol. 10: March–August 1792* [Charlottesville, Va., 2002], 213-14).

First Apportionment Act

CHAP. XXIII.—*An Act for apportioning Representatives among the several States, according to the first enumeration.*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the third day of March one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, the House of Representatives shall be composed of members elected agreeably to a ratio of one member for every thirty-three thousand persons in each state, computed according to the rule prescribed by the constitution; that is to say: Within the state of New Hampshire, four; within the state of Massachussetts, fourteen; within the state of Vermont, two; within the state of Rhode Island, two; within the state of Connecticut, seven; within the state of New York, ten; within the state of New Jersey, five; within the state of Pennsylvania, thirteen; within the state of Delaware, one; within the state of Maryland, eight; within the state of Virginia, nineteen; within the state of Kentucky, two; within the state of North Carolina, ten; within the state of South Carolina, six; and within the state of Georgia, two members.

APPROVED, April 14, 1792.

1790: Why 33000?

State	Population	$d =$	30000	31000	32000	33000	34000	35000	36000	37000	38000	39000	40000
CN	236841		0.8947	0.6400	0.4013	0.1770	0.9659	0.7669	0.5789	0.4011	0.2327	0.0728	0.9210
DE	55540		0.8513	0.7916	0.7356	0.6830	0.6335	0.5869	0.5428	0.5011	0.4616	0.4241	0.3885
GA	70835		0.3612	0.2850	0.2136	0.1465	0.0834	0.0239	0.9676	0.9145	0.8641	0.8163	0.7709
KY	68705		0.2902	0.2163	0.1470	0.0820	0.0207	0.9630	0.9085	0.8569	0.8080	0.7617	0.7176
MD	278514		0.2838	0.9843	0.7036	0.4398	0.1916	0.9575	0.7365	0.5274	0.3293	0.1414	0.9629
MA	475327		0.8442	0.3331	0.8540	0.4038	0.9802	0.5808	0.2035	0.8467	0.5086	0.1879	0.8832
NH	141822		0.7274	0.5749	0.4319	0.2976	0.1712	0.0521	0.9395	0.8330	0.7322	0.6365	0.5456
NJ	179570		0.9857	0.7926	0.6116	0.4415	0.2815	0.1306	0.9881	0.8532	0.7255	0.6044	0.4893
NY	331589		0.0530	0.6964	0.3622	0.0482	0.7526	0.4740	0.2108	0.9619	0.7260	0.5023	0.2897
NC	353523		0.7841	0.4040	0.0476	0.7128	0.3977	0.1007	0.8201	0.5547	0.3032	0.0647	0.8381
PA	432879		0.4293	0.9638	0.5275	0.1175	0.7317	0.3680	0.0244	0.6994	0.3916	0.0995	0.8220
RI	68446		0.2815	0.2079	0.1389	0.0741	0.0131	0.9556	0.9013	0.8499	0.8012	0.7550	0.7112
SC	206236		0.8745	0.6528	0.4449	0.2496	0.0658	0.8925	0.7288	0.5739	0.4273	0.2881	0.1559
VT	85533		0.8511	0.7591	0.6729	0.5919	0.5157	0.4438	0.3759	0.3117	0.2509	0.1932	0.1383
VA	630560		0.0187	0.3406	0.7050	0.1079	0.5459	0.0160	0.5156	0.0422	0.5937	0.1682	0.7640
US	3615920		8.5307	8.6426	6.9975	4.5733	6.3506	7.3120	9.4422	9.7276	8.1558	5.7159	9.3980

Unrepresented: 255920 267920 223920 150920 215920 255920 339920 359920 309920 222920 375920

Alabama Paradox

How is this possible?

State	House 299	House 300
AL	7.646	7.671
TX	9.640	9.672
IL	18.640	18.702

With the House size at 299, Alabama was the last state to be allotted an extra representative to make the House size because of its decimal. When the House size was increased to 300, all states' quotas were increased by 0.33%. And there were two states that got the extra representatives; and, this time, Texas and Illinois beat out Alabama.

US Census Bureau

The U.S. Census Bureau is housed within the Department of Commerce.

Check out the U.S. Census Bureau for what it says about apportionment.

<http://www.census.gov/>

Summary 7-page brochure:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-08.pdf>

History of Legislation:

[http://www.census.gov/history/www/reference/apportionment/apportionment legislation 1790 - 1830.html](http://www.census.gov/history/www/reference/apportionment/apportionment_legislation_1790_-_1830.html)

More!

For playing around, learning or teaching:

<http://www.cut-the-knot.org/ctk/Democracy.shtml>

Key Decades

The key decades in the history of the Congressional apportionment problem are 1790, 1840 and 1850, and 1920. Here are some excellent resources for each of these periods.

- Edmund J. James, *The First Apportionment of Federal Representatives in the United States*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 9 (January 1897): 1-41.
- Johanna Nicol Shields, *Whigs Reform the “Bear Garden”*: *Representation and the Apportionment Act of 1842*, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 5 (Fall 1983): 356-82.
- Charles W. Eagles, *Democracy Delayed: Congressional Reapportionment and Urban-Rural Conflict in the 1920s*, University of Georgia Press, 1990.

US History

For any serious research of U.S. history, one must know about the Journals of Congress which includes the House Journal and the Senate Journal:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwhj.html>