

In House District 63, the vetoed plan attempted to make a broken field run nearly half-way across the state, away from the community of interest established between central Clovis and central Portales. This was done for the sole purpose of adding additional members of various minority communities to the district. In so doing, the vetoed plan completely abandoned any concept of a community of interest. Clearly the predominant factor in the drawing of this district was ethnicity a potentially unconstitutional racial/ethnic gerrymander that could jeopardize the entire plan in court. The proper approach to drawing this district, which lost population in the past decade and is now under the ideal population, is to build upon the existing core community while still maintaining the majority-minority status of the district. This reasonable goal is perfectly attainable as plans have been introduced which do just that.

Redistricting is a political process, so our elected political officials are the appropriate persons to decide district lines. We need not draw judges into this political thicket unnecessarily. Therefore, I look forward to the House promptly passing a new districting plan that focuses on fairness for all of New Mexico's citizens. I hope that this Legislature will have the wisdom to pass plans ensuring that New Mexico citizens have an equal opportunity to elect the representatives and senators of their choice. When I receive a bill with such a plan from the Legislature, I will promptly sign it.

CS/H 10 2001 EDUCATIONAL REDISTRICTING ACT/CONCEPT C1

October 3, 2001

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 4

I have this day VETOED and am returning HOUSE VOTERS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 10, enacted by the Forty-Fifth Legislature, First Special Session, 2001.

As I have repeatedly stated throughout this redistricting process, the citizens of New Mexico deserve redistricting plans that provide for fairness and electoral competition. This plan, which proposes to redraw the State Board of Education districts, is neither fair nor competitive.

This plan was designed to create at least seven safe Democrat seats. I understand that there were other Board of Education plans presented to the interim committee and to the Legislature that provided for more political competition. As with the other redistricting plans I have vetoed, this partisan power grabbing will not be permitted to override concern for the voters of this state.

Moreover, this plan fails to address Native American concerns. Specifically, this plan creates only one Native American district, District 5, containing a population of 52.28 percent

voting-age Native Americans. As with other plans, Native Americans have little chance of electing a representative of their choice unless a district contains at least 65 percent Native American voting-age population.

Once again, I am forced to veto a redistricting bill that places politics before people, that hinders real choice at the voting booth, and that evidences a wasted special session and hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayers' money.