

**State Defendants' Response to Brooks, LULAC, and
MALC Plaintiffs' Joint Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

Exhibit H

Thomas B. Edsall, Georgia Democrats May Gain Up to 4 Seats in House, WaPo
(Sep. 28, 2001),

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/09/29/georgia-democrats-may-gain-up-to-4-seats-in-house/e489f9c3-4fe6-406b-804e-c985a671362c/>.

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Georgia Democrats May Gain Up to 4 Seats in House

September 23, 2001 More than 23 years ago

Summary

By Thomas B. Edsall

Georgia Democrats survived racial fights, political bickering and regional conflicts to give final approval yesterday to new congressional district lines that could give the party as many as four new House seats in a crucial victory in the national redistricting struggle.

The national redistricting -- which really involves a collection of state-by-state battles, most involving marginal shifts of one seat -- is roughly one third complete. For Democrats, Georgia offered the best chance to make a substantial gain and, until yesterday, the prospects for success had appeared slim as the state legislature approached a deadline of last night.

"It matters not whether the road is straight, but just that you get where you want to go," said John Kirincich, executive director of the Georgia Democratic Party. Under the plan approved by the legislature last night, the new lines could result in one of "the single biggest pickups from redistricting that any party has gotten," he said.

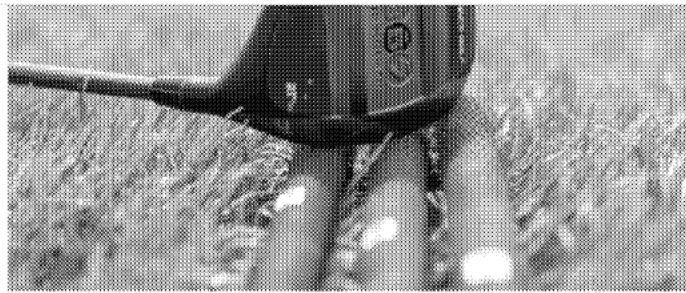
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Ralph Reed, the Georgia Republican chairman, acknowledged that the Democrats had produced a plan that on paper looks like a major setback to the GOP, but, he argued, incumbent Republican House members have shown an ability to win in Democratic-leaning districts. "I've had members look me in the eye and say, 'I will take the \$750,000 to \$850,000 I've raised, move to a district across the state, and I'll win it,' " Reed said.

Because of population growth recorded in the 2000 census, Georgia will pick up two new House seats. Currently, the Georgia delegation has eight Republicans and three Democrats. Democrats contend that the post-2002 delegation could be 7 to 6 Democratic. They note that in the new configuration, seven of the 13 districts have Democratic voting histories, or a "performance" of 55 percent or more, leaving only six secure GOP seats.

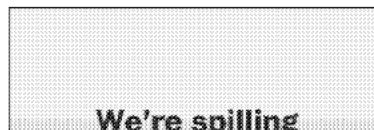
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The Georgia setup would balance the solid Republican redistricting victory in Michigan, where a 9 to 7 Democratic majority delegation is likely to become a 9 to 6 GOP majority. Michigan lost a seat because of its shrinking population.

California has already proven to be a disappointment to many Democrats. Pressures to protect incumbents and avoid a referendum challenge prompted Democrats in control of the process to adopt a plan with only a one-seat Democratic pickup, frustrating those who saw an opportunity to gain as many as four seats because of the state's population growth.

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With Republicans hoping to make gains of two to three seats each in Pennsylvania, Ohio and perhaps Florida -- where the GOP controls the legislature and the governorship -- Georgia has been viewed by Democratic Party strategists as an essential linchpin to their national plans.

Nationally, Republicans say they are likely to pick up eight to 10 seats as a result of redistricting, while Democrats contend that the outcome will be a wash. Democrats note that the expected GOP gains in Ohio and Pennsylvania will be countered by a collection of one-seat Democrat pickups in North Carolina, New Mexico and Iowa, along with Republican losses in Oklahoma and Indiana.

Republicans bolster their prospective numbers by arguing that Democrats are likely to suffer single-seat losses in Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin and, perhaps, Utah as the lines are redrawn.

There are strong incentives for Democrats and Republicans to exaggerate their prospects of redistricting success: The party that is expected to control the House after the 2002 elections will have a much easier time recruiting strong candidates and raising money.

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One of the most striking trends has been a reduction in the number of competitive seats. Mark Gersh, Washington director of the National Committee

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One of the most striking trends has been a reduction in the number of competitive seats. Mark Gersh, Washington director of the National Committee for an Effective Congress, has estimated that out of the 137 districts that have been redrawn, the number of marginal seats has fallen from 23 to 15.

If this pattern continues for all 435 districts, there will be a number of significant consequences. The national outcome of House elections will be less reflective of overall political trends, and the "coattail" effects in presidential election years will be weakened because fewer seats will change hands.

The state where there is a potential for the largest partisan swing of seats is Texas, where legislators failed to agree on a plan and the issue is before a Democratic state judge in Austin.

Texas Democrats control the delegation by a 17 to 13 ratio. They have proposed protecting all incumbents and giving each party one of the two new districts that must be added because of population growth -- one a Democratic Hispanic seat in South Texas and the other a Republican seat north of Dallas.

The GOP, however, contends that the state has moved dramatically toward the Republican Party and has proposed plans that would add from four to eight Republican seats, while eliminating a number of seats held by white Democrats.

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The state court is expected to issue a ruling early next week, which will then go before a federal court in East Texas for review.

In Georgia, both local and national Democrats had been worried that this year could turn into a repeat of the post-1990 census redistricting, when state House Speaker Tom Murphy (D) was determined to use redistricting to defeat then-Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). The Murphy plan not only failed to force Gingrich out of office, but it set the stage for the 1994 elections, when the Democratic losses in Georgia were among the most severe in the nation.

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losses in Georgia were among the most severe in the nation.

This year, Murphy sought to end the House career of Rep. Robert L. Barr Jr. (R-Ga.), undermining, in the view of Democratic strategists there, the larger goal of creating the maximum possible number of Democratic-leaning districts. At one point, black Democrats in the House voted against the 2001 Murphy plan.

The plan approved by the legislature, according to Democrats, puts Republican Reps. John Linder and Jack Kingston most at risk, while Barr and Rep. C. Saxby Chambliss, another Republican viewed by Democrats as a threat in a Democratic district, are both likely to choose to run in Republican-leaning districts.

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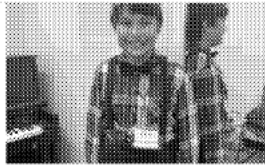
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