

Redistricting draws fire from irate Republicans

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Pick an answer to complete this statement:

Democrats in the State House of Representatives will push through a legislative redistricting bill.

A. Only if Republicans take part in further recall campaigns against Democratic legislators who supported the personal income tax increase. "House Speaker (Gary) Owen (D-Vulcan) has given his word he will not if Republicans stay out of recall," said Sen. Patrick McCollough, D-Deerborn.

B. At their own peril. "If it goes through, another 10 or 12 Democrats will be recalled," according to Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy. "Gary Owens has his finger on the trigger, and if he pulls it there will be all-out war."

C. But Republicans will go to the voters. Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville said Republicans will "go statewide with an anti-gerrymandering petition drive forcing a referendum on the redistricting bill."

D. After the November 1984 election. At that time, it will be impossible for Republicans to retaliate, speculates Sen. Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield.

AT 1:30 THURSDAY morning, the state Senate passed, on a 19-18 party-line vote, a redistricting bill which Republicans say will help Democrats hold onto four Senate seats and take over one or two others.

The measure also is expected to enable Democrats to pick up four to six more seats in the House, where they already hold a 63-47 edge.

Senate Majority Leader William Faust, D-Westland, unveiled the plans only five hours prior to passage, when it appeared that Sen. David Serotkin, D-Macomb, was about to be recalled by a 3-1 margin. Serotkin will not leave office until the election result is certified by elections officials in a week, so he was eligible to vote.

Faust had only a brief time to act because Serotkin's downfall will knot the Senate in an 18-18 tie. Faust spent all day Wednesday closeted with Democratic senators, reportedly showing them maps only of their own districts.

Irate Republicans stewed and were able to see nothing until the session began at 8:30 p.m.

THE MEASURE goes to the House, which has until Dec. 31, 1984, to act.

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— Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy.

"I think it will come out of the House in November of 1984," said Fessler. "It's a life preserver (for Democrats). If they perceive they're losing their grip, he (Owen) will pass the reapportionment plan to regain control in 1984. If they survive, there will be no need to pass reapportionment."

McCollough, who could be the next Democrat to face a recall election, took credit for arranging an "unprecedented meeting" between political leaders, who promised a truce: no Republican involvement in recalls and no Democratic pushing of reapportionment.

McCollough deplored a reapportionment-recall duel as resulting in "unreasonable chaos." But he admitted to "voicing my party" for reapportionment.

"There's some question whether the governor (Democrat James J. Blanchard) will sign it. If it's signed and becomes law, Republicans will put together 152,000 signatures (for a referendum) to let voters decide," said McCollough.

The third-term senator, whose district includes Garden City, was reportedly one of the last to agree to a reapportionment plan.

BUT GEAKE is distrustful of any promises by Speaker Owen. "Republicans are outraged because Faust and Owen told us they would not run redistricting if we didn't support recalls. They betrayed us," he said.

Cruce added, "Republicans haven't been involved in recalls. Their (Democrats') supporters — the blue collar auto workers — feel ripped off by the tax increase. It was 88 1/2 percent of the voters who turned out Serotkin. When has any Republican in Macomb County got 88 1/2 percent of the vote?"

Cruce said he "did my best to convince the Macomb Republican Party not to give \$3,000 to the Serotkin recall effort. But he said no state officials or GOP legislators took part in the effort."

"We have no deal with them," Cruce said. LOCALLY, THE reapportionment bill appears to hurt no incumbent senators of either party.

Quite the opposite. Fessler called it a

plan to protect incumbents except in one or two outstate areas.

Republican Sens. Norman Shinkle of Monroe County and Nick Smith of Hillsdale County would be thrown into the same district, with most of Shinkle's former constituents going into a Democratic district, Fessler said.

Republican Sens. Harmon Crosey of DeCatur and Robert Welborn of Kalamazoo would also be pitted against each other, though it is doubtful Crosey's former district could be gained by Democrats.

HERE IS A rundown on how local Senate districts would be affected:

• 8th, Geake — a trivial change. It would lose only a few precincts in normally Democratic Redford Township. Geake feels his position is stronger.

• 8th, formerly Mastin's — would lose Republican areas such as Rochester and Avon Township and pick up Holly, Independence, Rose, Springfield and White Lake townships.

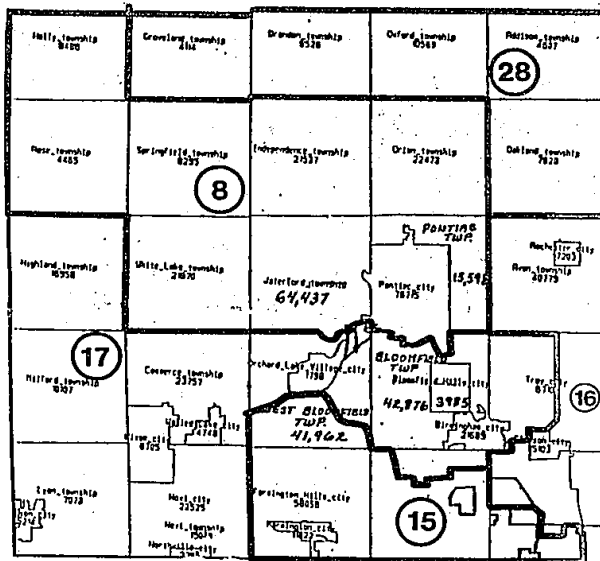
• 10th, McCollough — almost entirely unchanged. It includes a small corner of southwest Detroit and several western suburban Wayne County cities.

• 15th, Faust — minor changes. A small tract of Taylor is lost, and Flat Rock is added. Wayne, Westland and other Faust strongholds are retained.

• 15th, Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills — small changes. Dropped are part of Northville, Novi, Novi Township and Westland. Added are the southern one-third of West Bloomfield Township and part of Southfield Township. The two Farmingtons, Southfield and southern Oakland Democratic strongholds are retained.

• 16th, Cruce — Republican Rochester and Avon Township are added, the west side of Troy and Birmingham are lost. Cruce thinks his position is probably strengthened.

• 17th, Fessler — many small changes, but nothing to affect Fessler's position. Five rural townships are dropped: Birmingham, the west side of Troy, Keego Harbor, Novi, Novi Township and part of Northville are added.



In Oakland County senate districts, move out of Cruce's district and into Fes- chester-Avon moves into Cruce's 16th District. Western Troy and Birmingham move out of Cruce's district and into Fes- cher's 17th. Faxon's 15th picks up south- ern West Bloomfield.

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