

### Excerpt from *Robert C. Bailey: An Oral History*

*Robert C. Bailey was a member of the Washington State Legislature from 1951 to 1977. During his first Senate term in 1957, he recalls the feud that developed between the Legislature and the League of Women Voters over the effectiveness of Initiative 199. See the full text of [Robert C. Bailey: An Oral History](#) on the Oral History Program's Web site.*

**Ms. Bridgman:** You've already mentioned Initiative 199, which was the redistricting initiative sponsored by the League of Women Voters. And you mentioned also your attempt with others to prevent its being put on the ballot in November. It was finally allowed on the ballot by the state Supreme Court, but in that legislative session, the first time you were in the Senate, you succeeded in retaining your own district boundaries, but with one fewer representative. How was all this accomplished?

**Mr. Bailey:** Redistricting is a painful process. You can't take anything away from anyone easily. At the same time, though, people want to be represented, too. The initiative passed and it took two thirds of both houses to change that initiative, and it was quite a job. Senator Greive was the legislative mastermind of redistricting. In fact, he could ruin more sessions with redistricting than anyone I knew.

He managed to do it by just plain pushing and pulling and hanging up every bill in the session. Senator Raugust was a Republican and member of the Highways Committee and had been in on our lawsuit. With Senator Raugust's vote he got the support of quite a few rural Eastern Washington senators, and eventually votes, the two thirds necessary to change the initiative.



Robert C. Bailey

It was a behind-the-scenes battle always bitter and deadlocked. I know at one time, on a later redistricting, I met with Governor Evans and he said, "We want to split your district right down here," pointing to a line he had drawn. I said, "You can't. I won't go for that." And he said, "What do you go for?" I said, "You move that line over so the county seat of Grays Harbor County votes with the city of Aberdeen. I just can't see splitting the county up like that."

He said, "Well, if that's all you want," and he just moved it over. Those were behind-the-scenes negotiations. They had to be. When you pleased one, you displeased another.

**Ms. Bridgman:** Well, now who were your opponents in this rewrite of the initiative? You described this as a compromise, that is redistricting, so the districts now reflected population, but you kept the boundaries of your district.

**Mr. Bailey:** They didn't truly represent population, because my senatorial district would be much less than one in Seattle.

**Ms. Bridgman:** So those in the large urban areas were the opponents?

**Mr. Bailey:** We usually had very few opponents and proponents. You had proponents, in this case the League of Women voters. They had passed the initiative and defended it. We finally came to this compromise, which was the only thing that we could settle on which we could pass and get a two-thirds vote. It lasted only a few years until it was changed again. There really wasn't great opposition in the Legislature to the revision. You didn't have a clear-cut, party-line vote either.

Under Greive and those drawing lines that year, they had to be very careful that they didn't ruin a Republican district, make it Democratic, or take a Democratic district and make it Republican. That's very vital in redistricting, and so they had a real tough job.