



R.R. “Bob” Greive

R.R. “Bob” Greive began his political career in 1946 at the age of twenty-seven when he won his first election for the state senate. A Democrat from West Seattle representing the Thirty-Fourth District, Greive quickly moved up in his party’s leadership ranks. He was an active campaigner and fundraiser for fellow Democrats and ultimately served sixteen years as the Senate majority leader. Greive’s attention to detail and dedication to his political goals also made him a master of the redistricting process. Over three decades he served as “Mr. Redistricting” for the Democrats in the Legislature.

Read the full text of an interview with Senator Greive, *R.R. “Bob” Greive: An Oral History*, on the Oral History Program’s Web site.

fix Mr. Greive.” That’s a quote from Martin Durkan. So I protested what they were doing.

Ms. Boswell: So, what did you do then?

Sen. Greive: Of course, I didn’t want the initiative to pass; I hoped it wouldn’t. It barely passed. Let’s see, it got some 448,121 to 406,287 statewide. So it was close, no matter what they did.

They said that I was the leading opponent to it. Well, I was a pretty quiet opponent until after it passed. But at that particular point, I felt that I was going to both have to move or run in a district that I would have to fight each time, and so I could afford to take chances.

Ms. Boswell: So beforehand, what was your rationale? Why wouldn’t you be a vocal opponent before it passed?

Sen. Greive: For one thing, what little I knew about it was unfair. But I also was concerned. I didn’t have a lot of information, truthfully. Nobody had much information. In other words, it wasn’t anything you could focus on. When you read Gordon Baker* and some other articles, they talk about stuff that they got confused with things I said after the whole thing occurred.

Before it passed, I didn’t go around making any speeches or trying to line up any votes or anything like that, in the precincts of King County. I talked to Mike Gallagher some, who was the county Democratic chairman, a real hard-bitten politician who knew his way around, and he was against it. I talked to Rosellini. I talked to some other people, but I wasn’t out there pounding the deck. And I never did attempt to get myself—make public—my views anymore than I had to.

My attitude was, I think, that I was on the unpopular side, and the more I associated myself with the unpopular side, the more trouble I had. So my attitude was that the next best thing to do was keep my mouth shut, and speak only when I had to, and do most of my negotiating with the legislators on a one-to-one basis or in caucus.

Ms. Boswell: So once it did pass, what was your plan of action?

Sen. Greive: Well, we didn’t know there was nothing else we could do. Prior to 1956—I think it was the election prior to that one—they had passed an initiative that said we could amend initiatives. We had some initiatives put up by the pension union and the more radical forces, and they had quite a success in getting some things passed that allegedly broke the state. The state didn’t have the money to take care of these things. The newspapers and the more conservative elements felt that they had to be for an initiative because before that, you couldn’t repeal an initiative; it was good for two years. I guess that they still didn’t take that away.

An initiative had to be good for two years; however, they said you could amend it. So we set out to draw up an amendment. Even then we had to have a two-thirds vote.

Ms. Boswell: So, did you do the legal work first of all, to determine that you could, in fact, amend it?

Sen. Greive: I don’t know that I did it. We had a number of different lawyers available to us down in the Legislature. I’m sure I didn’t brief it; even today I don’t do a lot of briefing. I usually hire

**Editor’s note: Senator Greive refers to a pamphlet entitled “The Politics of Reapportionment in Washington State” by Gordon Baker (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960).*

that out. So I'm sure I had it briefed, but we were convinced we could do it, and so we set out to draw up an amendment. In order to do that, you had to first assemble a staff and get down to work.

Nobody else in the Democratic caucus wanted the responsibility. In fact, as far as I could tell, nobody in the Legislature was willing to make a whole plan, but they all wanted to put in something for their district. Well, somebody had to look at all the districts and make them fit. You can't leave some out.

So we began to assemble a staff, and we had to go to each precinct, each district. Then we tried to convert the census tracts to precincts so that we had some sense of how it was going to go, which was a monumental task. For one thing, the census tracts frequently cut right through districts and precincts, so you wouldn't know how much to allot one and how much to take off from another. So you had to create a grid first, and that was a big job.

Once we got that, we began to draw lines. We'd have people come down one by one and try to see how many we could please. Of course, at first you got unreasonable people who would come down and say, "I don't care what you're doing, leave me alone." Well, if you're ten thousand or fifteen thousand short like John Ryder was, you probably couldn't do that because you wouldn't be within the limits. And then little by little, our limits got wider and wider. We found we couldn't draw it that way and so we erred. Some districts were considerably larger than others, but they were all within twenty percent, which is what we aimed for.

Ms. Boswell: The philosophy was that you wanted to have the same proportion of legislators to voters, right?

Sen. Greive: Yes, in the precincts. I had three or four tenets that I believed were essential.

The first one was that you had to make a deal with whoever was there. You couldn't compromise with somebody to help somebody waiting in the wings to run against them. Sometimes two people would come down and they'd say, "Well, I'll tell you what to do. I'd do this and I'd do that." Well, very often it was somebody who wanted to run because they had a power base there or where they lived was a strong area and so forth. But you had to deal with the people who were there whether you liked them or not. And you had to do as much as possible to try to satisfy as many as you could. If you didn't do that, you couldn't get the support, because it was not a popular vote, especially in the House.

Ms. Boswell: Why was it so unpopular?

Sen. Greive: Because the big gains were all in King County—King or Pierce County and some in Snohomish. Those counties had shown the lion's share of the gains since they were redistricted in 1930. That's quite a period of time; that's twenty-some years.

Ms. Boswell: So the population growth had been in the cities and not the countryside?

Sen. Greive: The cities and the bedroom communities, yes.

Ms. Boswell: In the old redistricting, were the rural areas favored?

Sen. Greive: There was a popular movement at that time, and it persisted for a while. We could make each county representative; I mean each district would have representation: one senator and then they could have House members. In some states they're not the same. In some states the county borders and the district borders for the House are different than the Senate, so it's hard to run for the Senate. And some states have done all kinds of things, and at

that particular time there were a number of states that had a district, and the district had one senator, and the House members would be divided. In other words, one district would have one or two or three parts or something like that.

So there were all kinds of different ways proposed, and they justified the one senator on the basis that the senatorial seat should not be proportional anymore than Congress should be. Why should the United States have two senators for each state, if you stop to think about it. We think that's a great system here in Washington, but New York and California don't. They would think that they should have ten or fifteen senators, but they don't.

So we've got people who are a little schizophrenic. So these people, especially the rural people said, "Land should play a part, and you should have one representative for each county or we should have, in the big counties, one for each district." Some of them wanted one for every county; well, with thirty-nine counties, that would take up pretty near all of them. But then that would mean some legislators with three or four thousand people in their district would have as much say as a district in King County, so as we negotiated, they came away from that perspective. Instead, they said, "No, we can't make that stand up, but we want some form of rural representation."

And that became more of a factor during the second redistricting when Don Moos came up. He was from Eastern Washington, and he came up with the idea of rural representation and thought it was a great plan. In fact, he tried to get the plan passed over the one we were working on.

So we had all of these different forces converging in different ways. You had to offer them something; you had to offer them a plan that was better than what they had. By now they were all so terrified because they figured they had to go back and run in areas they weren't familiar with. Even if it was still

Democratic or Republican, and they were either Democrats or Republicans, different people would take part. Maybe it would be a PUD [Public Utility District] commissioner, or maybe it would be a sewer commissioner or the mayor of a city, or something like that. Maybe it would be a county commissioner who was going to run against him. It just wasn't real simple for either the Democrats or Republicans, and they had all these different fears.

Somebody would come down and want it redistricted a certain way, and he'd say, "I'm not as much interested in how it goes politically because it's Republican, and it will be Republican anyway they go, but get him out of my district." Well, that might be a motive, so the motivations were different in each case.

Ms. Boswell: I kind of sidetracked you. You were talking about the four basic tenets that you followed. So the first is deal with the people who are already there.

Sen. Greive: Number two was to be trustworthy. If you told them it was so, it was so, and you could back it up. They might understand their own district and might even understand the district next to them, but they were not going to understand the impact statewide, countywide and so forth. They had to trust you for that. And if you said it was going to go a certain way, they had to really believe you were telling them the truth.

Ms. Boswell: How do you convince them of that?

Sen. Greive: The only way you could do that was unquestioned integrity over a period of time. If they believed you, that was all that counted. Who else were they going to believe? You'd have people that argued with you, but then when somebody would argue with you,

what you would do was take up the map and look over there and say, “What about this place or that place?” Well, they would only know about a couple of districts, and they hadn’t done their homework. And if you had a reputation for telling them the truth before, then they’d believe you. They wouldn’t otherwise.

Ms. Boswell: You were majority leader at that time?

Sen. Greive: Yes, I was elected majority leader. I’d been the caucus chairman before—that’s the number two man—for two terms. And then I became majority leader when Rosellini got to be governor.

Ms. Boswell: Did you feel that redistricting was part of your duties to handle, then?

Sen. Greive: Yes. That was one of my principles. One of my principles was that I was essentially the floor leader for my colleagues in the Senate. Apart from everything else, I was their leader; I was the Democratic leader. I wasn’t chosen by God to be leader; I was chosen by these people, and I felt I had to do what I could to protect them.

Ms. Boswell: When redistricting came about, on the other hand, you said earlier it wasn’t truly a partisan issue.

Sen. Greive: I’ll give them that. I don’t know how partisan they were. Anybody who got involved like Ed Munro or John Ryder or Bill Howard—they took care of themselves and their interests. But generally, the others had nothing to do with the drafting. They just took it the way it came. Sometimes redistricting did things to their districts they didn’t want, or it did something to their bosom buddy’s district that they didn’t want. Then it became

unpopular in the district.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about the process that you developed in order to do your own redistricting.

Sen. Greive: First of all, I had to assemble a staff of five people. And I never thought to myself that I was all that bright. I know how to pick them, and I got a person who was a brilliant, absolutely brilliant young man. I’ve known him for years. Hayes Elder was Phi Beta Kappa and so forth. He was on the Law Review when he went to law school, and he had a real grasp of politics, a really young genius. And so I brought him down, first as a page and then we got him other jobs because he was interested.

In all the time I was down there, I only had a page once. Traditionally, legislators brought pages down there, but I always took the attitude that it was a little lazy. I moved my family down when I went down, and I said, “It may be good for legislation, but it’s a terrible place to try to bring kids up morally.” And I didn’t think paging did any good because they would see all kinds of sexual advances—maybe just shocking for the period, maybe it wouldn’t be anything now—but little “footsy” things going on. There was an awful lot of drinking, and so I normally didn’t want a page.

Ms. Boswell: Was Hayes Elder a West Seattle person?

Sen. Greive: He was a West Seattle person. He eventually became a CIA member. He was secretary of the World Youth Conference, but he worked for the CIA at the same time, and we figured he was murdered in Europe just before he was supposed to come home.

Ms. Boswell: Oh, no! When was that?

Sen. Greive: That was many years later—maybe like ten or fifteen years later. As an actual matter, he and his wife were both murdered. The official story is that it was one of these streets that had a cutoff, and he went over the side of it in his car. I don't believe that. But I knew he was secretary of the World Youth Conference. He never told me he was CIA, but I found out later what I had suspected at the time.

But he served as a state representative from this district before he did that. He got elected after he helped me. We went all out, and he did a lot of it himself. He was very brilliant.

In fact, one time he was my campaign manager, and I had him and I had some others. I don't know whether Dean Foster was a part of that deal or not; I think he was. Eventually he became secretary, but he was later. When Hayes graduated to other things, why then Dean Foster took over as my right-hand man. And then we assembled a staff of people who knew what they were doing and could run the adding machines and so forth and so on.

First, you had to convert a district into blocks and then precincts to know where you were. And, of course, we found all kinds of horrible examples—precincts cut through people's bedrooms and so forth.

The people who drew the census tracts didn't do a very good job. They had no interest in doing a good job. It wasn't like it was going to be an official boundary; it was just for their purposes for accounting. At first, they didn't worry too much about it because what they wanted was something more flexible than counties and political boundaries. They wanted to study urban effects of populations, poverty, race, and things of that sort. They felt they had to have finer units, so they just went out and almost recklessly or off-handedly made decisions that they would draw this district maybe this way and that way, and they used existing borders. For instance, they'd

be trying to use the district borders of a city, and if the city gained a lot of population, why then they wouldn't know whether that population that they added belonged to the new district.

Theoretically, when you passed an initiative, the borders should be what they were as of that date. But that's not the way it was drawn before or intended to be before. Well, the city of Seattle borders had changed. And all in all, there were 120,000 people that the Secretary of State, Earl Coe, couldn't figure out what district to put them in. We discovered that and brought it to their attention, and the Secretary of State didn't like what they did anyway, so I'm not saying that there weren't other factors involved.

Ms. Boswell: The federal employees who did the census districts had one agenda, and then you decided to use the precincts as a more understandable boundary?

Sen. Greive: We decided to use precincts because we knew how they went. Now I suspect—nobody's ever told me so I can't prove it—but I suspect that part of the reason they used census tracts was that they didn't want people to figure out what was going on.

A legislator, no matter how intellectually slow he was—because a lot of people were just running because they were popular, so consequently they had less tools and expertise at running—could understand the importance of changing precinct boundaries. You were the local jeweler, or you were the local grocer, and you had run some ads, and you were active in the Kiwanis Club or the Lions Club, or you belonged to the St. Patrick's Catholic parish, or you were a Congregationalist, or whatever you were, it gave you enough status, and you just ran and got elected. And a lot of them didn't understand precincts, particularly, or care. It wasn't necessary in their election. Even the ones who had made a study of it,

didn't make a thorough voting study. They'd only look at their race. They wouldn't look at two races, so we had to figure out and do it different ways.

It was difficult to track districts that went Democratic or Republican in our particular state. We've got a long history of people who cross party lines and jump different ways and vote inconsistently. There's no straight party voting. For instance, in that particular election in which Initiative 199 was passed, Eisenhower won the state by 100,000 votes. There were six Republicans and one Democrat who made Congress. They just happened by a landslide victory. You remember the Eightieth Congress before them? They all came in then, and they all got reelected.

Magnuson ran for United States Senator against the most popular Republican in the state of Washington—Arthur Langlie, three times governor—and yet he won by a quarter of a million votes. Now, when you've got the president winning by 100,000 votes, Magnuson by 250,000 votes, and a bunch of Republicans being elected to Congress, you can see how hard it was to figure out. So you had to go to lesser races. You had to go to things like Secretary of State, or you had to find some criteria that you could use. I don't remember the criteria, but I know we struggled mightily with that, so that we would have some uniform way. So when we explained it, we'd say, "This is a Democratic or a Republican precinct." You couldn't go by the people who were elected because you might have poor opposition. So, we had to work out a criteria that could be applied across the board because if John Cooney was running, and he was very popular, and he didn't have much opposition in the primary, or if he had no opposition and the Republican had just filed to fill up the ticket, he'd get a huge margin. He might not get that huge margin in a contested race.

So we had to work out a grid—something

that we could apply as well in Stevens County as we could in Clark or Whatcom or King County. That consumed quite a little of our time, and I had various devices we used to do that, but I think it's all technical now. So for one thing, Gordon Baker had written his thesis on this topic, and I got a copy of that to see how he tried to analyze it. He was a big Republican, an advisor to the Republican Party and so forth, but he was doing it at Washington State University. He was attempting to get a doctoral degree. We felt that was very good.

Ms. Boswell: Did you essentially develop a formula, which you could use then to predict the political affiliation of the districts?

Sen. Greive: Well, we tried to make some sense of it. We would come in and some legislators would say, "Well, I wanted that because my sister-in-law lives down there." "Well, did she carry it for you?" "Well, I'm sure the reason I did well down there was my sister-in-law." And we could look it up and decide whether his sister-in-law did any good for him or not, or if he did just as well as the other legislators who didn't have a sister-in-law. It wasn't that picky in most cases, but when people worry about their districts, and they want to know what's going to happen to them and ask you all kinds of questions, you've got to be able to answer them.

Ms. Boswell: So, you developed this grid, and I'm assuming you had to just play around with maps and boundaries all the time.

Sen. Greive: And then our next step would be to try and eliminate no one if we could help it. I don't care if it was my worst enemy, you would have to be careful trying to change their district. If I took on Slade Gorton, for example, and tried to keep him out with some sort of a maneuver, it would become an issue.

And, in fact, it did become an issue, subsequently, because he got a Republican elected from my district, and that became a problem. I was a Democrat and the House member was a Democrat, and then we had a Republican. He and I became good friends through the years, and that's not the whole story.

The important thing was that no matter how you did it, it was going to be controversial. But my attitude was that if we knew what we were doing, and we had a rationale, what did they have?

Ms. Boswell: "They" meaning the initiative framers in the beginning?

Sen. Greive: Yes. They came down and wanted to testify before the legislators and so forth, and I understand that they were denied that chance. I didn't actually do that. John Cooney, I understand, argued with them, and there was some rhubarb about it. Cooney drew the part for Spokane, but I was very happy that he did, and I'm not trying to sell you the idea that I was all that wonderful. I wanted to win, and I didn't want to have them generating more publicity in the newspaper.

Ms. Boswell: Did they ever get to testify?

Mr. Greive: I don't know.

We had to defend our plan when they came in. My attitude almost from the beginning, but especially later on, was that you couldn't do a thing like this in secret. If they wanted to come down and talk to you, you had to let them.

Now the first time around we were probably pretty secretive because we had to offset the ladies, and we didn't want to argue. But they would come in and they'd argue with us a little because when we finally published some borders, and they could see as well as we could—and we had it converted to

precincts—they could see how it was going to go. But they didn't know enough about it to be specific. Most legislators didn't either.

Ms. Boswell: You had mentioned to me earlier that legislators of both parties would come down and go over it with you.

Sen. Greive: Especially the first time we tried redistricting because it was a coalition. Either that or we'd pick some Republican out, Bill Goodloe or Tom Copeland, or somebody, and he'd go back and sell his people and talk to them about it. But I had to develop it. It was developed for the Senate, but then it was sold by myriads of other people.

Ms. Boswell: How were you able to build this coalition of both Republicans and Democrats?

Sen. Greive: Stark-raving fear! They all were afraid of what would happen to them if they had to run in these new districts, and they were in a mood to accept some compromise. And they were in the mood, in some instances, to give up a little power. And even if I didn't happen to need it, my seatmate or my best buddy might—you see, the Legislature's all shot through with friendships—they're buddies. You get people that you deal with—mostly it was people that voted with you—and you'd vote with them, and they'd get your bill out of committee. They'd go out drinking with you, or they'd go to parties where we'd have big dances, or there'd be a certain camaraderie, and that went a long ways. And they might be afraid that their buddy would get knocked out, so they would be willing to accept something in order to be sure he was taken care of.

Ms. Boswell: Who were your more vocal public supporters?

Sen. Greive: Nobody was publicly supporting the idea except the people in Eastern

Washington. Mike Gallagher said a lot of things because he was King County chairman, but he kept a low profile. Everybody kept a low profile because they simply felt that it wasn't popular. At least that was my philosophy, and I think I sold it to all of them. If John Cooney or August Mardesich or somebody in Eastern Washington who was popular wanted to take credit for it, more power to them. We had considerable support from people all over the state. One man, for instance, who was very helpful was a fellow by the name of Robert Timm. He was from Central Washington. I don't know if he's still alive or not, but he was a wheel—a good leader.

Now, at this point in my life I can't without more study—I could if I had more time—know some of the events from one redistricting on into another redistricting. There were three of them, three major efforts.

Ms. Boswell: Was there much public opposition to the first effort?

Sen. Greive: Well, the newspapers didn't like it very well, and so the only thing we could do then is keep it under wraps. We had to sell it individually and so forth. Now, I'm not saying that we never had some sessions where we showed these people first, but we felt that if they were from the Seattle area, or King County, or Pierce County, they were going to be "anti" anyway. So we weren't going to lose anything if they just got mad at us once.

Ms. Boswell: Why would they particularly be against you?

Sen. Greive: Well, they were enamored of the women in the League of Women Voters, and rightly so. The whole process made a wonderful story. This is the sort of thing that novels are written around. The ladies going out on their own, putting their own money up

to file, and working hard on getting the signatures. The hard-bitten politicians sat back and said, "You can't do it." They sneered and said, "You're cutting out paper dolls." The whole little scenario that they'd go around the politicians was popular.

Many, many things are popular at first until you get on the inside of them. It's popular if you cut the budget or balance the budget—absolutely, very popular. It became popular, like Medicare. Congress wants to cut Medicare to give a break to the wealthy people. Now it gets much more complicated and it gets even more complicated if you're young enough so you may not ever get Medicare, because you're so young you're better off doing it another way.

So you get all these interplays. None of these were a factor in redistricting, but I'm just showing you how they proliferate. Part of the skill of being a legislator is getting to know the people and seeing what they'll do. It is somehow persuading them to see your point of view. It may not always be the prettiest thing in the world, but it's essential.

Ms. Boswell: Was other party leadership helpful?

Sen. Greive: At that point we had the leadership from all the parties. Everybody was concerned. King County legislators weren't. They were against this effort, generally, because the Republicans were all going to support Initiative 199; they liked what it did. To some of the Democrats, it didn't make much difference, but it was, as I recall, six and six—we had six and they had six legislators. Myself, Al Rosellini and Mike Gallagher were three of them, and Frank Conner took Rosellini's place and we had Patrick Sutherland. Who was the other one? We had one more—no, that's six. You had to sit down with each of them and show them what the initiative did to them, and what kind

of trouble they were in.

For instance, one of the things that this Initiative 199 did was to put seven legislators from Spokane County in the same district because they all couldn't get reelected. And incidentally, one of my tenets then always was that you had an investment in a legislator. It's all right to defeat somebody you don't like on a particular individual basis, but let's be realistic. If you want the thing to run differently, you get rid of the legislator. You also get rid of an awful lot of naval bases or business for your state: dams and bridges and so forth. Right out here in West Seattle we have a bridge that was paid for because Warren Magnuson, who was at that time chairman of Ways and Means, decided to back it. They had a bridge fund, and he took half of it for West Seattle. Somebody complained and he said, "That's right, half for West Seattle, and half for the rest of the United States." That's the way the system works. Maybe it isn't pretty, but that's the way it works.

And so you want to have some people with some expertise, people who know how to make it run. When you get a bunch of idealists and there are too many of them, they get all wound up and nothing happens. They do a lot of crazy things. In a sense, I think that's part of what happened with the Republican's "Contract with America," but that's another whole story.

Ms. Boswell: So, you developed your own plan for redistricting, and then what did you do?

Sen. Greive: Well, I didn't develop it all by myself. I developed it with constant talks and consultation with Republicans and Democrats—anybody who was willing to be in on the thing. You had to have two-thirds, so we couldn't afford to leave anybody out. Anybody that would listen, we'd tell them what we were going to do, unless they had

some other motive.

Ms. Boswell: Can you explain how that worked? Tell me a little more about the boundaries and borders themselves.

Sen. Greive: I saw an article in *USA Today* once that showed some of the congressional districts that were drawn to accommodate race, and how ridiculous they looked. Nobody in the state of Washington, whether the League of Women Voters or Republicans or Democrats, would have guts enough even to suggest such weird combinations. You had to make them look compact, and I think all of us did that. I don't think that there was ever a Democratic or a Republican plan that did it perfectly.

We were probably more careful than anyone else because we were under a lot more scrutiny. We did ours in the open. The Republicans conducted most of their efforts, in all instances, behind closed doors. But it had to look reasonable when you saw it on a map, and we all tried to do that. In so far as possible, you tried to follow rivers and major streets in the city. You tried to follow county lines or you tried to develop a rationale. It could be east of the mountains or west of the mountains—we ran into that problem eventually in subsequent efforts to redistrict. We had districts that we couldn't quite make fit, and we had to run part of them across the Cascades. Republicans didn't want us to do it; we didn't want to do it, but it was a question of how you did it and where, what was the rationale for it, and how it came out.

Ms. Boswell: So generally speaking, not only does it need to be compact, but does it need to have a common economic base or anything?

Sen. Greive: Now, we talk about my differences with some of the Republicans. I've always felt that there should be some

economics as a basis and so forth. In other words, you try to keep city districts together; you try to keep rural districts together. If there are bedroom communities, you try to keep them together. It doesn't mean you always succeed, but it makes better sense. One of the things about a democracy is that it works best when people are represented, not when people are ignored. Just to put them all in a block and say, "That's it," is a little ridiculous. You also had to be concerned because if you made too many heavily Democratic districts, then the rest of them would all be Republican, or vice versa. Too many Republican districts and the Democrats would get angry, so if you packed all of them in, it might be fine with the incumbent or the person who got that kind of a district, but it might be a horse of another color who ends up with the final representation.

Now, in Europe, for instance, and in Australia—a prime example—they have minority representation. You vote for three or four, and you get your first choice, or if you don't get your first choice, your second choice or your third choice; that way minority parties can emerge. Is it good to have minority parties? I don't know, but that didn't get to be much of an issue here. Philosophically, this is not the greatest system in the world, but it's the system we use.

Ms. Boswell: When you developed the plan for redistricting with all these other people, what happened to it?

Sen. Greive: In the first place, we had to get it through the House and the Senate. When we came to the Senate, we got a lot of cooperation, but we put so many controversial things on that bill that we couldn't accommodate the newspapers that day. So we got some publicity, but it couldn't make the headlines because we wanted to extend the closing hours for taverns, and we had a lot

of other controversial things that we did at the same time. We'd be criticized, but tomorrow's another newspaper day. The House didn't do it that way and they had more trouble.

Ms. Boswell: What do you mean when you say "trouble?"

Sen. Greive: Well, they got more publicity and there was more heat on them and so forth.

Ms. Boswell: And you got the two-thirds? Was that expected? Did you expect that much?

Sen. Greive: No. The big advantage was that nobody thought we could do it.

Ms. Boswell: And was that a big challenge? Did you take that as a challenge?

Sen. Greive: Very much so. Very much so. I kept telling them we could do it. Every once in a while somebody would come and say, "That's impossible, you can't do it." And if they were an enemy of redistricting like Web Hallauer, or if it was a supporter of the League women like Ed Munro or somebody, I'd just as leave have them think we couldn't do it. But we thought we could do it.

Ms. Boswell: To what do you attribute that, ultimately?

Sen. Greive: Fear, number one. We had a receptive audience. Number two, an awful lot of hard work. Some people had different prices. Somebody would want something of their own, and it might be more important to them than redistricting, but if I agreed to support that, then they'd support me. Insofar as I was able, I never made any deals like that. But I know this is what they wanted us to do. That'll come into play the next time around, next redistricting.

There were all kinds of motivations. You just didn't know. That first time nobody thought we could do it, so it was kind of an advantage. Everybody got a shock. They knew we were going to try, but nobody ever thought we'd get two-thirds. But then we challenged the public to vote for or against.

Ms. Boswell: And so when you got that two-thirds, then what happened?

Sen. Greive: We had taken control of both houses. Then our redistricting plan became the plan that was adopted. They took it to court because there was a question of whether it was an amendment or a repeal—in other words whether it was really an entirely new law. An initiative had to stand for two years, but you could amend it. The legislature did that because some years before they had some disastrous financial initiatives, so they said you had to have two-thirds. Nobody had ever done that before. It's only been about four years or something since we've done something like that.

Ms. Boswell: So the League of Women Voters, then, took you to court?

Sen. Greive: Well, they did. I think that George Prince, if I recall, he and his wife and the League of Women Voters, they'd probably say they did, yes. I don't know that the League of Women Voters as a group really understood it. What they understood was that they redistricted and the politicians did it. Did they understand whether it was better than theirs or different? I don't think they did, generally. One or two might.

Ms. Boswell: And were you fearful that the courts would knock it down?

Sen. Greive: Of course we were. We hoped they wouldn't, but we didn't know. And the

court decided it just before Christmas, I think—Christmas Eve, or a few days before Christmas. There wasn't much business, and they just sort of floated over it.

Ms. Boswell: And the Supreme Court's verdict was?

Sen. Greive: That it was legal. To amend is to change, and we made changes, and that was well within the meaning of amendment. The decision seemed to revolve around that particular phrase.

It was kind of interesting. The minority and the majority were both written by former legislators or justices, one from Spokane County and one from Ritzville.

Ms. Boswell: Who had been legislators before?

Sen. Greive: The one from Ritzville had; I don't know if the other had or not, but I think he'd always been a judge. I think it was the only elective office he'd held, but I don't remember. I just know that he wrote the dissenting opinion. Incidentally, I think our plan was quite a little better than theirs.

Right or wrong, you could argue whatever you want. Number one: we accounted for everybody. Number two: people knew where they were. They could look at precincts and they could decide where they were. Number three: I think that we listened to the incumbents. The people were better represented because they knew who was representing them. When you're cutting paper dolls out and you don't even know who is across on the other side of that ravine, there's going to be a whole different class of people.

Look at the city and the difference between the fanciest housing and the poorer districts. Hell, look at the differences between the richest districts in the city. Some areas, just by the nature of where they are located or

because they have restrictive covenants, have a certain attitude. But if you look at a place like Washington Park or just north at Broadmoor, an area of beautiful homes, they're right next to the Black section, so how do you represent the people? If you have a little pocket of people who were out of sympathy with their neighbors, then those people are essentially unrepresented. Insofar as possible, you try to keep groups together that see eye to eye.

It is a natural process that happens. When you call in the legislators because they have more information, they may not know exactly how they got elected or where they got their votes, but they have a feeling for what this area is and that area is and what it does.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever see race entering into any of these decisions?

Sen. Greive: No. It will eventually. The last time around we had racial groups get into it quite deeply because they were under-counted.

Ms. Boswell: That was a different redistricting fight? In terms of this particular one, I just wanted to clarify about the extra people involved in the Secretary of State's counting.

Sen. Greive: I don't have the letter, but what happened was that they drew census tracts along what seemed to them at the time to be logical boundaries. And they loved city limits. Well, there was a vast influx of population, especially in Western Washington. For instance, all of Lake City wasn't in the city of Seattle at that time. It is now. So they left out thousands of people there, and these people didn't know whether they were in the old census boundaries or whether they were within the city limits when they drew the census boundaries or not. Theoretically, they were really messing with the old boundaries, but they didn't say that. When you read the

Initiative 199, it just says the census boundaries. Well, the census boundaries speak as of the date that they're interpreted. They don't speak as to what's in the back of somebody's mind. And that's one of the reasons why the Secretary of State felt justified. He didn't like the fact that they hadn't followed precincts, and nobody in the whole election process liked that. The county auditors and the politicians didn't like it. Everybody would like to know where he or she was. But that wasn't the rationale. The rationale was they were left unrepresented.

Ms. Boswell: So the number of people who, because of growth and other things, weren't counted fell into some gray area?

Sen. Greive: They probably would be counted if you pulled the count in the precincts, but they just took what was there by census tract. Well, a part of that census tract may not have been in that district. In other words, if the borders had been moved and there were 5,000 people involved, then those 5,000 should be counted in the next district. They shouldn't be counted in that one. But they hadn't looked at the problem.

Ms. Boswell: So as a result, what did the Secretary of State do?

Sen. Greive: All they would have had to do to solve that problem was base the census tract districts as of whenever the census was taken—1950 or whenever it was. They'd say, "All of them shall be interpreted with the census borders as of that date," and that could have solved it, but they didn't. That's the important point. Certainly, the legislators were fearful. The only problem we had is that some people thought we could beat it in court and wanted to keep what we had and not do anything. So we had the task, of course, to convince them to go along. In other words, if

you had a pretty good district and you were sixty years old or sixty-five years old, and you enjoyed being a state senator or state representative, what the hell. Your attitude might be: “If I get four more years then I’m not going to worry about anything else.”

We had a certain amount of that.

Ms. Boswell: What did this letter from the Secretary of State say?

Sen. Greive: This was the first letter written by Earl Coe in which he points out the problems with the census districts. While he doesn’t get down into detail, there’s certainly enough here so that you can understand what the issue is, and I’m sure there are follow-up telephone conversations and things that went with it. But he was alerting them to the fact that he felt that this plan was not viable, that they had made a mistake when they’d drawn it. The unfortunate thing is that in all of our discussions—and I’ll challenge you to read anything—you’ll probably never even hear of this letter. The press wasn’t a bit interested in publishing it, and of course the only way we could get it published was if we had a news conference and waved it around and so forth. But then we’d have been tagged, and I didn’t want to be tagged; I’d rather just hope for the best.

But we had this rationale, and it was a very important part in our operation because we were able to take this letter and show it to the various legislators, many of them who wanted to do it and wanted to know what their rationale could be. They weren’t concerned about anything else, but they were concerned about overriding the ladies who had done such a wonderful job for humanity and mankind and all that sort of thing, and this gave them some ammunition, some protection. In effect, this was like the big artillery protecting the ground troops as you were going along.

Ms. Boswell: Now, was this an issue at all with the court when they took it up?

Sen. Greive: I don’t rightly know. I’d have go back and read it in detail. But I don’t think that that would have been an issue anyway, because the question of whether we had an amendment or not—whether this process was legal—would be another one.

There were several actions that were examined. But this was the big one because the chief election officer in the state is the Secretary of State, and the job then had two functions. One is the corporate function, the corporate seal, and the other is the elections division. So this is better than the governor or anybody else saying something about somebody whose job it is to do the same. And everybody knew that Ken Gilbert wrote this letter. In other words, there was never any question. Well, at this particular time, 1957, I think Earl Coe had cancer and didn’t run again. He died shortly after that. And when the position was open, Vic Meyers got elected. But Ken Gilbert was the chief election officer for the State of Washington for many, many years under both of them. See, Ken Gilbert was respected as being the election officer who got along very well with both sides.

Ms. Boswell: In looking back at this whole first redistricting fight, how do you assess your role and what came out of it?

Sen. Greive: You have to separate your feelings from winning and losing, just like playing the World Series, and so forth. I thought I won a major victory as far as legislators were concerned, and they were, of course, happy and I was happy. On the other hand, I was scared as hell because I felt that it would probably be used against me personally.

As you know from reading those articles, I hardly appear in the newspapers at all. I ran the show, but I didn’t run it publicly, that’s for

darn sure. Because I felt that I could never get a good break. To be known as the guy who redistricted some incumbent out of his or her district—everybody would hate you. So the less attention I received, the better I was. So my best bet was to keep my participation quiet, even when we went to things, like conventions and so forth. We made no real concerted effort to do anything there because otherwise it would have generated publicity that we were trying to override the ladies and so forth and so on. We kept our mouths shut. Very much hush-hush. We may have objected on parliamentary or technical grounds for some reason, but we certainly weren't going to get out in front. At least I wasn't, and I don't think Mike Gallagher was either. We just tried to keep our heads down, and the bomb wouldn't explode on us. And incidentally, we were all re-elected.

Ms. Boswell: All of you were?

Sen. Greive: Yes, all of the Democratic legislators. And that's because we all kept our heads down.

It's a good deal like the pro-choice and abortion debate. Nobody in their right mind gets themselves out in front unless they happen to be somebody who is protected or else is running for president. You have no choice. You have to take a position on one side or the other, or you can't get the nomination. Nobody likes that issue because it's just fraught with people you can't convince. The more publicity you get, the worse you are—and there wasn't a popular side to this.

See, in abortion, there's a popular side both ways, depending how you look at it. But nobody had any sympathy with legislators. "Defeat them all. What difference does it make to us? Let them take care of themselves. They're just a bunch of politicians."

Ms. Boswell: So, in a lot of ways, it's really

an in-house issue, then?

Sen. Greive: That's right, yes. But we still got lots of publicity. You can tell it got a lot of articles. It was written up a lot because it had permeated everything that happened that session. You could hardly separate anything from that issue. I've got all kinds of stories that I can tell you about things that happened as a spin-off from redistricting—all three redistrictings. That's where the action was. It may not have been a popular side to be on, but it was a fascinating side simply because that's where it took place.

Ms. Boswell: Now, you have mentioned to me about articles that had been written about it, particularly the Gordon Baker article. Can you tell me about that?

Sen. Greive: I honestly feel that Baker had a bias before he started and had definite thoughts about how he wanted the issue to come out. All of the newspaper reporters had the same feeling, all of them. They liked the idea that a few ladies on their own could upset the powers and the wheels of government, and they could change it, and they could be determined. They were lonely, and they were in the minority. They took those politicians and grabbed them on the front of their shirt and shook them hard, and all of this. They never got into any of the side play of who benefited and who didn't. They just always portrayed how hard it was to get the signatures and that they had to have cookie sales, and all of the minutia that goes with a story. The technical details ruin the story. The most they would say is that we weren't pleased with it or something like that.

But I had good staff. Hayes Elder was steeped in politics. He knew what it was all about, and he understood it more thoroughly than almost anybody I have ever known. He got in there and actually did the technical work. I had to have somebody who was bright

and good, but even then we had plenty of people to help. We had a staff of three, four, or five people working on it.

Ms. Boswell: How do you find staff like that?

Sen. Greive: You don't. They just come as part of the Legislature. These people all have other jobs in the Legislature.

Ms. Boswell: And they're just willing to help?

Sen. Greive: Well, with an issue of this importance, you just commandeer the people you want. You simply say, "I want so-and-so." "Well, you can have him," they'd say. "Fine." You had to have some place. I don't know whether Judge Faith Ireland was involved. She was down there for quite a while and I don't know whether she got into this fight or not, but she got hit in the next one. But I had a lot of talented people down there.

Ms. Boswell: I have heard it said, however, that if anybody did all the hard work, it was you. I don't know how you would respond to that.

Sen. Greive: True in a sense. I made the deals, contacted the people. I was the salesman, but I didn't do the technical work. I certainly supervised and had something to do with it, but I had given them orders to be straight. The last thing I wanted in any redistricting that I had anything to do with was for anybody to juggle it and make it different than it is. If the precinct went that way, we'd go that way. We had to have some criteria because secrecy was the worst thing we could do. I never was out to screw the Republicans. That, I think, was the worst mistake I could have made.

Another thing is, we didn't try to attack people on the floor, at least not publicly, because I felt that was bad, too. We had to

stick to our single issue. You don't shake your fist at somebody you disagree with. When we talked to people and they couldn't see it our way, we didn't say, "We'll see you in hell," or "We'll get you," or anything like that. If they didn't see it that way, we tried to change their minds by negotiating and leaving the door open, and we did that.

Now, in the sense that I lined up the votes, and I talked with the leaders and that I sold the plan, I did an awful lot of work day and night. But I don't think I worked any harder than any of the staff people. They all worked hard, too. Legislators didn't spend a lot of time with them. They wanted to know what happened to their district, and they wanted to know what kind of district they had. They'd look at what they had before, and if it looked a lot better to them than that, then they were sold. We didn't get into who won and who lost so much that first time. You'd be getting very political if you started to do that. But I decided to please enough people to get a two-thirds majority.

Ms. Boswell: Was there any particular direct fallout after it was passed?

Sen. Greive: I worried about it when I went out for re-election, and so did Mike Gallagher and so did all of us, but we all got re-elected in King County. I don't know other parts of the state; I'd have to make a lot more analysis.

Ms. Boswell: But you didn't have many of your constituents coming up and saying, "You did this."

Sen. Greive: I had it a few times. My attitude was, "Well, they wanted to take this away from me." If it was a Democratic meeting, they wanted to take the Democrats away and give us Republicans. Well, that's enough for them. You know what I mean? Or somebody would complain and say, "They wanted to cut you

out of my district.” “Oh, oh!” So, it wasn’t that hard.

The bad part would be that you did terrible things to the ladies who cut out the paper dolls or who changed the world. That was the issue: were you or weren’t you against the League of Women Voters? I’m certainly not against the League of Women Voters; I never have been. They certainly have got a place in the world and I think that they’re doing generally a good thing. They probably did a good thing there, because without them we wouldn’t have redistricted.

Somebody who brings up an issue and takes on the issue may not always succeed, but then they’ve got a real place in the history of the situation.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever hear from them afterwards, the women themselves? How did they react?

Sen. Greive: When we tried the second one, they were all mixed up in the second one, too. Some of them became quite interested. Things run together, and I don’t recall Lois North ever coming down the first time, but she certainly was down the second time when it was happening to her district. She ran for state representative or state senator and then King County Council. She had ambitions for a political career. Mary Ellen McCaffree did the same thing, and she was active in the second redistricting.

In this business, everybody’s human. And when you get to how they are elected, they’re awful human. Nobody wants to commit suicide, and nobody wants to give an advantage away that may help him or her achieve office. Now, what they do after they’re in office is another story. But you’re talking about getting elected.

Ms. Boswell: Well, it makes sense. If you were going to start your process with these

individuals who were already in office, why would they fight their own election?

Sen. Greive: That’s right. You try to give them a better deal than they had before. We tried to iron out some of the difficulties, but one thing that the ladies did is that they put up some horrible examples because there were great needs. It’s easier to sell people on something when somebody else has done it. In other words, the problem was before them and they could see that you had to do something.

Just like we have to balance the budget now. Well, we haven’t balanced the budget for what is it, twenty years? Maybe it will be another twenty years if somebody doesn’t make an issue out of it. Once it’s made an issue, then you begin to feel like you’ve got to tighten your belt, and you’ve got to do something. Now, do you want to do exactly what Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House, wants to do? But the question is that you’ve got to do something, and you can’t knock people like that. Sometimes they do a service; they become part of the plan to solve the issue.

The hardest thing about redistricting is that there are individuals involved, and they get hurt. And then some people see a chance to achieve notoriety by attacking or by doing this or that because they know the newspapers will publish what they say. Anytime a politician thinks he’s got a thing of sufficient importance or popularity, he’s going to say all kinds of things because then he gets publicity out of it. It may not be the right thing to do.

This particular plan was easy to attack if we got to the facts, but we didn’t get into the facts anymore than we had to because once we sold it, we just had to get it through. The reason why it was so predominately Democratic was because of Initiative 198, “the right-to-work” initiative of 1956. We had two right-to-work initiatives here, and they were overwhelmingly defeated. They got thousands

of people out to vote who would never have otherwise voted. There was a large turn-out. So the districts that were heavily Democratic because the Democrats had made big sweeps, and then the governor was a Democrat.

Ms. Boswell: So when the redistricting happened, it helped to solidify those Democrats?

Sen. Greive: Well, when they were all elected, then every one of them wanted to look at their districts. Even somebody elected for the first time has considerable interest in what we were going to do in this part of their district or another part, and how they carried it, and so forth. In other words, when we sat down and talked to my people after we developed our plan, why, we could tell them what the precincts were and we could tell them how we arrived at them. I don't remember at this point in my life, thirty or forty years removed, exactly what we did, but I know that our knowledge was vastly superior to theirs. We had actually looked at the thing and did the study. Then somebody comes in cold and just knows they got elected from Grant County. Well, that's easy because Grant County's a rural community, but if you're elected from Seattle then it goes all kinds of different ways, Democratic or Republican, depending on who you put in that district.

Ms. Boswell: Once you'd finished all this, did you think it was over and you wouldn't have to deal with it for another ten years?

Sen. Greive: I think so. I don't think I ever thought that far ahead. I started thinking of it

ten years later, or whatever it was the next time around. It wasn't quite ten years.

I'd like to put on the record some of the other things that this bill did that the women concocted and I'm sure they didn't intend, but it turned out to be very difficult. First, we had two senators in Snohomish County at the time. Well, as the women were adjusting and drawing the borders, they put both of them in the same district. Now, that would have been one thing if they could have run against each other, but the more powerful of the two—the guy with the greater seniority—was Senator Bargreen. They chopped his term off in this way. His term would expire, but the number was on Bill Gissberg's district. They transferred it over, and it didn't expire for two years, so he had to be out of office for two years before he could run again for reelection. And that was just one of the mistakes that they made.

It's like putting the seven legislators in one district. What we did is pinpoint every legislator so we knew where the legislators were, and then we took that into consideration.

Then, I also said that there was some argument over the Cowlitz Dam.* It was Tacoma's dam, which they said they needed for public power purposes, but the fish people, especially the sportsmen, had said that they were cutting off the fish run. I was never a direct part of that controversy. I don't recall right now absolutely how I voted; I may have voted with the sportsmen, but the fact remains that they made some sort of a deal in the House that I wasn't a part of, and that became a part of redistricting. The price for supporting the dam was to pass the redistricting bill.

**Editor's note: The Tacoma municipal power company wanted to build a dam on the Cowlitz River in adjacent Lewis County.*

Ms. Boswell: And that was to get Tacoma senators in particular?

Sen. Greive: Yeah. I think they would have gotten them anyway, but now forty years later, I can't tell you for sure.

Ms. Boswell: And then, what about the role of Governor Rosellini?

Sen. Greive: Governor Rosellini had said that he was for what the League of Women Voters had done. Governor Rosellini had said that he was for the initiative because he was running for re-election as governor at the same time, and he said that he supported it. He was in a very difficult position for a variety of reasons. Most of the legislators were for our plan, and he finally let it become law without his signature based on this rationale. He said that two-thirds of the people had voted for it, and they could have overridden his veto. However, there was not going to be another session for two years, and it would be too late for the next election—they'd have to use the other districts. So, he felt that the only fair thing to do was to let it stand, since it had such overwhelming support. His action made no difference anyway. He let it become law without his signature.

Ms. Boswell: You told me a great story about how you encouraged him along. Would you like to tell that story?

Sen. Greive: It seems that we were concerned about him signing it, so what we did—what I did really—was to get hold of the leaders. We got all of the legislators we could find who were on our side, and in this case it was close to a hundred—if it was two-thirds, then great. Well, we had a conference with the governor and when we opened the door, all of us trucked into the governor's office, but we couldn't all

get in. And he was just shocked. There's a boardroom next to his office, and you could see all the faces.

I said to the governor, "Governor, about this veto of this legislation?" And he told us at that time that he wasn't going to veto it.

Ms. Boswell: That was an added incentive, all those people staring at him?

Sen. Greive: I'm sure that he had a lot of things that they wanted him to do, and it was the most difficult position for him to be in, but he gave a pretty good rationale, I thought.

Ms. Boswell: Was John O'Brien, at that time, heavily involved in this issue?

Sen. Greive: Yes. He was on our side. He was concerned because, of course, these were the people who elected him Speaker, just like we were. He was the Speaker, and he supported it. But I don't know that he played a very vital part in putting the plans together.

Gordon Sandison did more. He was the majority leader, and a fellow by the name of Robert Timm was the Republican leader, and was very heavily involved in it.

Ms. Boswell: And you said also that both Republican and Democratic organizations supported it?

Sen. Greive: Yes. First of all you have to understand that at that time the central committees of both parties were chosen one or two from each county, so it was not unusual that the small counties had a vote. So the Democratic and Republican central committees were both asked if they approved of what we were doing and supported the changes, which gave us more cover. You could say that it didn't truly reflect their views. Maybe it did and maybe it didn't; we'll never know.

In King County they voted to support Initiative 199, but I don't think there were three people on that floor other than maybe the one or two of us, like Mike Gallagher and myself, who knew what it did. All they knew it was good for King County and gave us more representation. The Republicans, I think, were a good deal better informed. They unanimously supported it.

Now the Young Democrats also didn't support it, but that was because of a Young Democrat House member by the name of Andy Hess, who later became a senator from Ed Munro's district. He went before the Young Democrats and gave them a big speech and so forth, and as far as I know there was no opposition or no intelligent discussion of exactly what the district did. So he had the interest, and he got an awful good district.

Ms. Boswell: The League of Women Voters believed that the changes you made to the redistricting plan far exceeded the powers to amend an initiative granted to the Legislature. They filed suit in the state courts, but the state Supreme Court ultimately upheld your amendment. Can you tell me a little bit about that action?

Senator Greive: In the final analysis when this went to court, we had a funny situation.

George Prince was appointed as a special assistant attorney general and compensated by the Attorney General to bring the action, because the Attorney General never approved of what we were doing. Before the initiative the Attorney General was pretty much on the other side every chance he got. He was about to run for governor, and, in my opinion, was very prejudiced and wanted to be on the popular side.

Ms. Boswell: And that was John O'Connell?

Sen. Greive: Yes. From our point of view,

we didn't, of course, agree with John O'Connell. He also got a chance to appoint the lawyers to defend the state, and he appointed Marshall Neill. Now Marshall Neill was a state senator. He was with us, and he eventually became a judge. I knew him very well, and he wasn't particularly an expert on constitutional matters and played little or no part in the thing. I objected to being in a position of having our own defender be from the state Senate. And so they finally agreed to name Lyle Iversen. I don't know whether they took Marshall Neill off or not, but basically Lyle Iversen had represented the election department from the attorney general's office in years gone by and was an expert in election matters; he handled our case. And that was because I asked them to. I went over and made an issue out of it.

Ms. Boswell: And so John O'Connell got involved enough to have Prince be the attorney for whoever sued?

Sen. Greive: Yes. Well, Prince's wife was very active in the League of Women Voters, and, interestingly, he also played a part in later redistricting actions.

After the redistricting battles of 1956 and 1957, the heated conflict surrounding redistricting cooled for a few years. But 1962 saw the reemergence of redistricting as a major divisive issue in Washington State politics, with new players and new pressures such as the involvement of district and federal courts.