

Excerpt from *Robert F. Goldsworthy: An Oral History*

Robert Goldsworthy, an Eastern Washington Republican, served in the Washington State House of Representatives during the redistricting efforts of the 1950s and 1960s.

Representative Goldsworthy had high praise for Slade Gorton, who was the Republican redistricting leader in the House. In this excerpt from an oral history conducted with him, Goldsworthy comments on the 1957 session, and the redistricting battles between Gorton and Democratic leader Bob Greive. Read additional portions of [Robert F. Goldsworthy: An Oral History](#) on the Oral History Program's Web site.

Ms. Boswell: During your first couple of terms, or right after your first couple of terms, one of the big issues that had come up was redistricting—Baker v. Carr. Can you tell me about your perspective on redistricting?

Mr. Goldsworthy: Of course, everybody is very selfish about his district. The first debate that came up when I was a freshman in 1957 was redistricting. We had to redistrict and we had quite a fight on that. We so desperately wanted to protect our area, and as it turned out, our district stayed pretty intact. We lost a member here in Spokane, James Winton lost his seat, because we were looking out for ourselves too much. But later on, when we'd get into redistricting fights, when the Democrats had control, they wanted to push through gerrymandered redistricting. And when we had control, we were trying to do the same thing on the Republican side.



Bob Goldsworthy

You've talked with Senator Greive quite a bit and he worked on redistricting. I'll tell you, his districts were something to behold! None of them were taken very seriously because of the gerrymandering that he was doing.

Slade Gorton was our redistricting master. Slade, a brilliant mind, knew the little precincts across the state. I could mention a little precinct down here by the Snake River which I hardly knew about, and Slade would know the boundaries of it. He was a smart son of a gun. Greive had that same knowledge with his redistricting, but he was changing quite a bit because if one wouldn't go, he'd write something else. I met with the redistricting committee just a few times.

But we kept trying different people, trying to get something together that would go. Anything we did could not be passed in the Senate anyway, and nothing Greive could do could pass in the House, but he was always calling us down to look at his latest plan. We'd just go and look at our own plan, and reject it, and they'd look at what Slade or what we had done, and reject it.