



Wilbur G. Hallauer

[Wilbur “Web” Hallauer](#) was elected to the Senate in 1956 after serving eight years in the House. Hallauer, a Democrat from the First District, was an expert in budget matters and water issues. He later became the Director of Ecology under Governor Dixy Lee Ray.

around for a long time.

TK: I take it, then, that the League did not come out as enthusiastically for SJR 12 as you had hoped?

WH: They certainly supported it, but they didn't put on any big drive to get it approved.

TK: Did anyone from the League explain to you why they didn't do more? Or were they possibly burned out after the Initiative 199 debacle?

WH: When the war was over, I think I called up Mrs. Thomas and talked to her about the whole thing. She was as horrified as I was when the Ross Cunningham editorial came out in the *Seattle Times* but there really wasn't anything anyone could do about it. It was late in the campaign season and there wasn't much time to react. It would not have been easy for the League, with its own internal politics, to get something moving at that stage of the game. Things just don't happen that quickly.

TK: Aside from the *Seattle Times*, what other newspapers opposed it?

WH: I rather expected that the *Spokesman-Review* would be against it and, as I remember, it was. And I don't think that the *Seattle P-I* did a damn thing to help it along. They should have supported it.

TK: Did any organized groups, other than the League, become involved?

WH: Labor people should have been out there, too. The League should have been working with them. But it just didn't happen, and I hadn't foresight enough to think that approval of SJR 12 would be much of a problem. So I share some guilt in it myself. I could have gone to union leaders like Ed Weston, Joe Davis and the AFL-CIO and tried to convince them that the measure was in labor's long-term interests. I felt pretty strongly that they would have an easier time of it with their legislation in Olympia if the state were properly districted.

TK: So would you attribute the defeat of SJR 12 to the fact that there really was no focused and committed leadership in support of it?

WH: In retrospect it was a lost war. You can Monday morning quarterback it all you want. But we just didn't anticipate opposition to SJR 12, and so we failed to do what was necessary to get it approved.

TK: Well, of course, the redistricting issue did not disappear. It returned with a vengeance, starting in 1962, when the U.S. Supreme Court began to make a whole series of rulings on the subject of legislative apportionment. Do you recall your reactions when these decisions started coming down?

WH: I remember debating personally with Bill Gissberg, who sat in front of me in the Senate. He was totally convinced that the Supreme Court would never touch the subject of apportionment because he felt it was intrinsically political and that the court would therefore not intrude there. My position was that misrepresentation because of malapportionment was so egregious that the court would sooner or later do something about it. And, of course, there were court cases that were already making their way through the federal court system and it was only a matter of time before decisions were made that they weren't going to like. So my view was that we really ought to get our own house in order in the state of Washington before the thing hit us. I couldn't convince him. I couldn't convince Greive either; he was a lost cause from the beginning. But Bill Gissberg was a pretty smart cookie, and he was very active in the Bar Association.

TK: Isn't it interesting that people with formidable legal talents and abilities, such as Senator Gissberg, would so readily dismiss the argument that malapportionment could be seen as a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which is what the Supreme Court would ultimately find? At least in retrospect, the argument seems quite obvious.

WH: Back in the late fifties there were articles in

the *New Republic* magazine and several other journals that analyzed the whole situation. As I remember, the articles from *New Republic* were the most on point, and I used those arguments in my debate with Gissberg. It seemed to me that it all added up to the fact that things had gotten badly skewed because many states had not done any redistricting since the turn of the century. So you had those crazy situations where one legislator would be representing a district with three thousand people in it, and another would be representing a district with three hundred thousand people in it. It just defied common sense that this would stand.

TK: Well, when decisions began to come down, for example the Washington case of *Thigpen v. Meyers*, did you sense that people in the Legislature had begun to grasp the fact that these decisions were pointing to a wholesale redistribution of political power?

WH: Oh yes. They got the point then.

TK: In 1962, the League of Women Voters tried to get another redistricting initiative on the ballot, but failed to secure the required number of signatures. Slade Gorton was a consultant for them on that attempt. Were you also involved?

WH: No. I'd been through the mill.

TK: You'd had enough?

WH: Yes.

TK: Let's move along to the 1963 legislative session. By then, the U.S. Supreme Court had mandated redistricting and so the Legislature had no choice but to meet the problem head on. What do you remember about the political lay of the land at that time?

WH: I'm having a hard time getting back to 1963.

TK: Well, that was the year that John O'Brien was ousted as Speaker by the coalition of "new breed" Republicans and dissident Democrats from Eastern Washington.

WH: That would be William Day and his group of private power Democrats.

TK: It was also the year in which Bob Greive was re-elected as the Senate majority leader, but very narrowly. In fact, he was almost defeated.

WH: That effort to defeat Greive began 1959. I was involved in it, but each time he beat us by one vote.

TK: Could you tell me about that?

WH: Well, let's see. Pat Sutherland was our candidate for majority leader in 1959 and, of course, Pat was a state senator from the Seattle area. The way Greive campaigned for the position was to collect money from his lobbyist support group and then spread that campaign cash around to people who he figured would support him. And then there were those of us, like myself, who raised our own campaign money and didn't want to be dependant on somebody on a *quid pro quo* basis. With Greive, it amounted to a situation where a person might say, in effect, "Okay, you hand me the cash and I'll give you my vote." In 1959 I think he defeated us seventeen to sixteen. We failed again in '61 and '63. Gissberg undertook to do it in '63. We thought we had it all wrapped because I had gone out and raised money, about \$25,000 and handed it out equally to all of the senatorial candidates. It only amounted to about \$1,000 a piece. It was kind of interesting because at our caucus I told people that I had a document that showed where all the money came from, and that if any of them wanted to look it over, I'd be available to show it to them after the caucus adjourned. I also told them I would not give them a copy, nor would I allow anyone to make a copy. You know, when we broke up there was not a single person who came to look at it.

TK: Why didn't you want them to make any copies of the list?

WH: They could look at the list, but I didn't want it to get in the newspapers or anything. But I still thought they should have the opportunity to know

where the money came from.

TK: Well, what did that tell you about their state of mind?

WH: I leave that one to you to judge! I thought a few of them would come, but none did. Greive, of course, did the same thing. He raised money and he told people where the money came from. But he only gave the money to the people who supported him. I gave it to everybody, friend and enemy. I figured that if we were all Democrats, that was the way we had to do it.

TK: I suppose that when it comes to money, some people would just as soon not know too much. It's like the old suggestion that there are two things that people may be better off not knowing how they're made: laws and sausages.

WH: Well, I know how sausages are made. I'm a farm boy!

TK: Well, getting back to the dynamics of the redistricting effort in that 1963 Legislature, was Slade Gorton providing the leadership on the Republican side?

WH: Oh yes. I thought he did a marvelous job. And, of course, he cooperated with McCormack and me and some of the other Democrats who weren't part of the group led by Greive. Since we were under the gun from the Federal courts to get on with the business of redistricting, he and a number of us were looking at what the alternatives were.

TK: Mike McCormack was an important actor in this issue. Can you tell me about his involvement?

WH: Mike's primary concern was his own legislative district. He had never been a supporter of Greive, and Greive was trying to figure out ways to undo him.

So when Mike had the alternative of cutting a deal with Slade, in terms of protecting his district, he was willing to do it. And of course, the whole thing finally got ironed out in the wash.

TK: At that time, Slade Gorton was a member of the House. Did he have someone in the Senate who might be attempting to advance his redistricting plan?

WH: Well, Mike would go directly over to the House and deal with Slade. And there were other people in the Senate who knew what the plan was. But Slade was the driving force in the House, just as Greive was in the Senate. House members would regularly come over to see Greive. They had a war room downstairs and there were 17,000 maps, all in conflict. Greive ran an outfit like that over on the Senate side, and Gorton had one over on the House side. I had attended both war rooms, but I can't tell you that I was particularly affected by it, or anything.

TK: The 1963 legislative session produced a deadlock on the redistricting problem and there was even some discussion of calling a special session to deal with it, although that never happened. Can you recall what efforts were made and by whom to break up the log-jam?

WH: I know that there were several different redistricting plans put before the Senate and they were voted down. The court finally relented and allowed more time.

TK: The redistricting issue spilled over into the 1965 legislative session, at which time it was at least partially resolved. Your own Senate district was very much affected by all that, and it would be most interesting to hear your own memories of that session.

WH: Well, in 1965 we knew we had the redistricting gun against our head. Essentially, we had only so much time to do it in, and nothing else was supposed to happen—although, of course, people talked about the other things anyway. The main activity was carried on by Representative Gorton and Senator Greive, and the war rooms were at full output, with maps by the billions it seemed. Everybody was taken in for personal interviews to try and line them up for the appropriate side. A legislator would go through the Gorton shop and be informed about