

Court Upholds Redistricting

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The U.S. Supreme Court closed the book yesterday on the two-year fight over reapportionment of Washington's legislative districts by refusing to change the plan approved by a three-judge federal court.

"No comment," said Joe Davis, state AFL-CIO Labor Council president, whose organization sought to overturn the court-ordered redistricting plan.

"The people have won," said State Atty. Gen. Slade Gorton. "This is a great triumph, not so much for my office, as for the State of Washington."

The labor council and State Sen. John Cooney, D-Spokane, were attempting to get the Supreme Court to hear their argument that the court-approved redistricting plan showed "a consistent pattern of political bias" in favor of Republicans.

The battle over redistricting began in the 1971 legislative session and failed to reach a resolution even after the 1972 Special session.

Seattle attorney George Prince filed a suit in U.S. District Court here asking for relief. The court appointed a University of Washington geographer to draw the new lines and ultimately adopted them.

Labor's appeal against the new district map was unanimously set back without comment by the high court.

In a counter brief, Secretary of State A. Ludlow Kramer found his challengers spinning a "demagogic theme" of a conspiracy to engineer a Republican gerrymander.

No evidence, Kramer argued, was furnished to support the claim.

Cooney and the Labor Council claimed the court overlooked thousands of permanent military personnel in its population count, failed to follow its own guidelines, based its plan on faulty census count and erred in its procedure.

Kramer maintained to the court that the questions raised in the appeal are so "insubstantial as to require no further argument."

The state and Prince, who initiated the reapportionment suit, asked the high court to uphold the decision of the three-judge court.

Cooney was defeated in a bid for re-election to the Senate Sept. 19 when he lost a Democratic nomination battle to Sen. James Keefe.