



5-1-1928

# Misrepresentation in Government

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## Recommended Citation

Edmund F. McClarnon, *Misrepresentation in Government*, 3 Notre Dame L. Rev. 264 (1928).

Available at: <http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol3/iss5/7>

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## MISREPRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT

“Taxation without representation is tyranny.” All of us recognize this phrase as the slogan used by our forefathers in their revolution from the tyrannical King of England. This principle was dear to the hearts and foremost in the minds of the founders of these United States. And very soundly so, because without representation in government, our great nation would never have attained the heights she now holds.

Let us change the scene and come down to our present day and age. Is the principle of our liberty loving forefathers still the basis for our government? Regretfully we must admit, that we have refused, or failed, to follow the axiom that was so dear to the colonists, that they were willing, and did shed blood in its defense.

Once again, the majority of the citizens of the U. S. can honestly cry, “Taxation without representation is tyranny.” Of course not in a literal sense, because we do have representation. But the evil of this day is misrepresentation.

Our governmental departments are in the control of the minority of the people. Such a statement may seem absurd to the ordinary citizen, but upon inquiry into the facts we are forced to the conclusion that the people of the United States are grossly misrepresented in regards to their federal government.

Let us first consider the House of Representatives. This body was instituted in order to give the people a chance to have a direct say in governmental affairs. It was a body of the people and its members were elected by the people. It was given certain primary powers, among which was one dear to every citizen, that was the sole power to originate any tax bill.

Our present House membership is based on an apportionment bill passed by Congress in 1910. Which provided one representative for every twenty-one thousand persons. Such an apportionment was fair and just, and permitted the majority of the House to represent the majority of the people.

But this representation is all out of joint with present day conditions. Due to a shifting of our population, the minority are steadily gaining a greater control of the House.

There are 435 members in the House. Basing our figures

on the 1920 our last census we find that 218 or a majority of representatives from districts with the fewest inhabitants, represent a combined population of some 44 million people. While the remaining 217 representatives represent a combined population of some 69 million. In order to explain this more fully I will cite a few notable examples. The seventh Illinois district, the largest in the United States, has a population of some 565,000 persons, while the eight Illinois district has a population of some 185,000 persons,—and has equal representation in the House. The State of California under the 1910 bill has 11 representatives in the House, although applying the unit used in 1910 to present day conditions is entitled to 17 members. The cities of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, St. Louis, find there representatives among the 217 constituting the majority. The largest cities in the United States have shown an average gain of forty-one per cent since 1910, while the rest of the country has shown a gain of only six per cent. Yet their representation remains the same now as it was in 1910.

Summing up these conditions, it is maintained that such a state of affairs is unjust and contrary to our American institutions. To permit a district like Nevada with 77,000 people to be on an equal basis and have the same representation as districts with 400,00 and 500,000 people is manifestly unjust.

It is a mooted question whether the Constitution makes reapportionment mandatory or not. But it is the conscientious duty of the House to live up to its purpose as fairly representing the people. The census mentioned in article one, section two, of our constitution, was surely not meant to be mere statistical information but it was ordained as the basis of representative government, and to prevent the misrepresentation that we have today.

Next we will consider the Senate. The Senate is composed of 96 members, two senators from each of the 48 states in the union. Still using the 1920 census as our criterion, we find that, the senators from the 25, or a majority of the states with least population, represent a combined population of some 20 million people. While the remaining senators or the minority represent a combined population of some 93 million people.

Originally this condition was proper as the Senate was not a body of the people, but rather a body representing and

protecting the individual states. Its members were not elected by the people, but by the state legislatures. But since the adoption and ratification of the 17th amendment to our Constitution, the cause for and the reason of our original Senate has been destroyed. The Senate now is the same as the house, it is a representative of the people and not of the individual states. Its members are now elected directly by the people and not by the state legislatures. Consequently, since we have destroyed and deviated from the original purpose of the Senate why do we not go all the way and let it represent the people equally and fairly, and not as unequitably as it does. That is permitting the representatives of one-fifth of the people, to be in a position to dictate, overrule and outvote the representatives of the other four-fifths of the people.

Theoretically it is possible by the vote of the electoral college that two-fifths of the people can elect a President of the United States. In other words a president could be elected contrary to the popular vote of the nation. Our electoral college membership is based on our congressional representation. Consequently representatives from 36 states with a combined population of some 44 million people would constitute a majority. While the minority members would represent 12 states with a combined population of some 69 million. Furthermore in case a candidate does not receive a majority of the college vote, the House of Representatives votes and decides the presidency. Still leaving the power to select our chief executive in the hands of representatives of 44 million, over the wishes and choice of representatives of 69 million.

Truly we are grossly misrepresented.

—E. F. McC.