



# POLIDATA Political Data Analysis

DATABASE DEVELOPMENT, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION;  
POLITICAL AND CENSUS DATA; LITIGATION SUPPORT

---

CLARK BENSEN

---

POLIDATA ù 3112 Cave Court, Suite B ù Lake Ridge, VA 22192-1167  
Tel: 703-690-4066 ù Fax: 703-494-4061 (24hrs) ù email: polidata@aol.com

PUBLISHER OF THE POLIDATA ® DEMOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL GUIDES AND ATLASES

website: [www.polidata.org](http://www.polidata.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

Dec. 31, 1998

### **Congressional Reapportionment: Winners and Losers in 2000 Population Estimates for July 1998 Detail Seat Shifts, Adjustment Still an Issue**

Two years from today the Commerce Department will deliver to the President the population numbers which will form the basis for the next peaceful transition of political power in America. Population estimates released today by the Census Bureau provide a perspective on what those final numbers will entail for the constitutionally ordained shift of seats in the U.S. House. If the apportionment were made today, Arizona and Texas would be the biggest winners with a gain of two seats each. New York and Pennsylvania would be the biggest losers, with a loss of two seats each. Fourteen states would be directly affected by a gain or loss of a seat.

The Bureau released *projections* several years ago for the 2000 population, which are still the most current official projections for 2000. These *estimates* reflect another perspective on population growth state to state. Based upon the projections for 2000, seventeen states could be affected by a gain or loss of a seat, representing a shift of 11 seats among states.

The new 1998 estimates largely reflect the population patterns indicated by the 1997 estimates released a year ago. Georgia is the only state projected by the 2000 numbers to gain two seats which would not already have gained two seats by virtue of these 1998 estimates. Nevertheless, Georgia is still on track towards gaining two seats, being ranked 441st in the overall seat ranking. Georgia gained 2.0%, or 152,000 persons from July 1, 1997 to July 1, 1998. It was only 75,000 persons shy of getting its 13th seat on these 1998 numbers.

The new estimates also mark the entry of Arizona to the list of states expected to gain two seats by 2000, and add both New York and Pennsylvania to the list of states expected to lose two seats. NY ranked 436th and PA 437th in the overall seat rank.

visit our website at  
<http://www.polidata.org>

The general shift of population from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West, a trend established a generation ago, continues. California was the biggest gainer after 1990 with 7 new Congressional seats yet its growth rate stagnated at the outset of the current decade. It's growth has now rebounded, gaining 1.5%, or 484,000 persons, over the last year. Based upon the 1998 numbers, California would already be entitled to one new House seat. It's rank for a 54th seat is 443rd and calculations indicate that it was 390,000 persons short of this 54th seat in 1998. Therefore, if the current growth rate continues it is likely that California will receive only two new House seats in the 108th Congress.

It is important to understand the limitations on the use of the annual estimates for apportionment analysis. The actual assignment of seats will still require a full Census in April of 2000. In fact, it is this apportionment for which the Constitution requires an "actual Enumeration" once a decade. These annual estimates are based upon a different timeframe, that is, July 1 and not the April 1 census date. These estimates also do not reflect any addition or subtraction to the apportionment population based upon overseas residents. Also, of continuing significance, these estimates do not reflect any adjustment of population numbers which would likely be caused by the Clinton Administration's plan to only count 90% of the population and to adjust the final numbers for an undercount. Nevertheless, the recent estimates, based upon the 1990 Census (a 100% count) and updated through a review of births, deaths and migration, still provide a good clue where the shifts of seats will occur.

**Apportionment under 1998 Estimates.** In general, the 1998 estimates once again confirm the earlier annual estimates. If the apportionment were held today, 7 states would gain 9 seats from 7 states. The 1998 numbers represent the same states gaining or losing with the last year's 1997 estimates except for Illinois. Based upon the 1997 estimates, Illinois would have dropped one seat, from 20 to 19. Based upon the 1998 estimates, Illinois would currently retain its 20 seats. However, the rank for this 20th seats is the last (435th) of all seats apportioned under the method of equal proportions and Illinois' claim is based only on an additional 33,000 persons. Illinois is still projected to lose one seat based upon the 2000 projections.

The 7 states gaining would be CA, FL, GA, MT, and NV at +1, and AZ and TX at +2 each. The 7 states losing would be CT, MS, OH, OK, and WI at -1 and NY and PA at -2 each.

**Apportionment under 2000 Projections.** Based upon the 2000 projections, the shifts from 1990 would affect 17 states, with 8 states gaining 11 seats from 9 states. States gaining seats over 1990 would be: AZ, GA and TX at +2 and CO, FL, MT, NV and

UT at +1. States losing seats over the 1990 census would be NY and PA at -2, and CT, IL, MI, MS, OH, OK and WI at -1 each. These 2000 projections were released in November of 1996 and thus do not reflect any trends found in the 1998 estimates.

**Impact of Adjustment on Apportionment.** The impact which the much discussed census adjustment issue would have on apportioning the U.S. House is another factor about which political stakeholders are greatly concerned. From a mathematical perspective, it is clear that the winners and losers can only come from certain states. The factors to consider here are a) the population of the state, as evidenced by the current number of seats in the House, and b) the Net Differential Undercount rate from 1990 (estimated by the 1990 Post-Enumeration Survey, the so-called PES), and c) the actual number of persons which would be added by an adjustment process. Given the large minority elements in the undercount, the most relevant factor is not just the actual minority population in a state but also the percentage which this minority is of the total state population.

The 1998 estimates confirm the fundamental result of an adjustment through sampling and estimation on apportionment: between states, the shift is likely to be only 1 seat, though it is possible that there could be a shift of 2, or even 3 seats.

**States which would lose seats under an adjustment.** Our analysis from previous years indicated the apportionment effect of adjustment would most likely affect IN and MS. By this we mean that if the Clinton plan was implemented for 2000, based upon the adjustment factors found in the 1990 PES, a seat would shift from IN to MS. This was the case for the 1996, 1997 and now the 1998 annual estimates as well.

Likewise, based upon the projections for 2000, the shift would be from IN (down from its current 10 to 9) to MS (up from 4 to keeps its current 5). Other states which have been in this shift group most often include WI (for 5 of the 7 estimates), losing 1 seat and MS (for 5 of the 7), gaining 1 seat. Illinois, which was in this small group of states for several years, but escaped for the 1997 estimates, has rejoined this subset of states. Under an adjustment of the 1998 estimates, Illinois would lose a seat to California.

A review of annual estimates and projections through 2000 creates a list of the following states as potential losers through adjustment: IL, IN, OH, PA, and WI. Each of these states is indicated as losing a seat, by adjustment, in more than one set of state population estimates or projections.

It is important to bear in mind that the mathematical formula by which the seats in the U.S. House are assigned, the so-called "method of equal proportions" can be very

susceptible to small differences in population between any pair of states. In fact, based upon the 1998 estimates, there are two states which are above the 435 cutoff by virtue of fewer than 50,000 persons and five states whose claim to a seat above the 435th was lost by fewer than 50,000 persons.

A numerical difference caused by an adjustment (by whatever name the Clinton Administration calls their plan, this is what it is), or an error in the implementation of an adjustment (as occurred in 1990), could cause a seat shift. This is one of the real dangers of using statistical inference, and not physical evidence, to account for, and not count, the population, which determines the votes in our legislative chambers.

**Let History be the Guide.** Adjustment, whether done after the fact, or integrated into the process, as proposed for 2000, could affect two, or more states. A review of the situation in 1990 outlines the potential problem.

Contemporaneous with the decision to *not* adjust the 1990 head count numbers, a set of adjustment factors was released in June 1991. Had the adjustment gone forward with this first set of numbers, there would have been two losers for Congressional seats, WI and PA, and two gainers, CA and AZ. When a second set of revised adjustment numbers were released in July 1992, the number of states had dropped to 2, leaving WI losing a seat to CA (which would have made CA 53 and WI 8), solely by virtue of an adjustment. There is still a substantial likelihood that the shortend timeframe and a more complex plan will foreshadow a return to a similar situation for 2000.

**Questions Remaining.** The Supreme Court heard oral argument on the census case on November 30, 1998. While a decision could be months away, it was clear that the Justices understood the importance of the Census to the constitutional transfer of political power and the impact of delay to all concerned. Therefore, it would not be surprising to see a decision within the next 60 days. However, the case may still have several outcomes. The case may be thrown out for lack of standing of the parties, it might be affirmed, killing the Clinton plan, or reversed, returning adjustment to the front burner, or sent back for trial.

Regardless, questions remain about the Clinton initiative and those directly involved in the apportionment process in every state will be monitoring this closely. Concerns about the quality of the data used for apportionment and its redistricting portion are paramount to those responsible for facilitating the peaceful transfer power which results from the largest participatory event of our experiment in American democracy.

-####-