



MARK O. HATFIELD
GOVERNOR

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SPECIAL MESSAGE

To a Special Session of the 53rd
Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Fifty-Third
Legislative Assembly:

This special session of the 53rd Legislative Assembly has been convened because it is probable that the federal court would find our present congressional districting in violation of federal requirements.

The redrawing of congressional district boundaries is a responsibility of the states. We should not allow such a public trust to pass by default to federal officials. To do so merely contributes to the further erosion of the role of the states in our federal system.

It is my belief men and women of good faith can find a common ground of understanding if given proper circumstances, and although this session may be inconvenient it need not be inconclusive. Because of the many other issues before the Regular Session, there were, inevitably, stumbling blocks in the path to consensus. These can be put aside as we now address our minds and hearts to but a single issue.

To offer a point of departure, but with no intention of trespassing upon the legislative function, I forwarded to each of you a plan for redrawing the boundaries that is different in some respects from the plans considered by the last conferees at the Regular Session.

Since the call for this Special Session, many of you have also been busy with maps and tables and drawing pencils. I presume those who have not been activists in this regard have at least devoted serious thought and discussion to the matter at hand.

Obviously, any plan must provide recognition of community interest and a compactness of geographical area, insofar as this is possible, and to the extent permitted by the facts of population. It must meet all legal requirements as we know them to be. It must avoid gerrymandering. And it must look to future population growth.

This is the task before you. It cannot be avoided. There is a vital principle at stake. Will you do your job here at home or abdicate it to the federal judiciary?

I have done my duty as I have seen it.

Let us be about our unfinished business. The people of Oregon await and the federal court awaits your action with confident patience.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Mark O. Hatfield
Governor

May 21, 1965