

STATEMENT SUPPORTING A UNICAMERAL
LEGISLATURE FOR NEW JERSEY

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A unicameral legislature, in my opinion, can be more easily and simply adapted to meet the requirements of the Court's one man-one vote rule than a bicameral system. It seems to me that we are only complicating our problems and making it more difficult to find solutions when we insist that New Jersey must continue with the old historic and traditional two house legislature. Now that representation in both houses must be based primarily on population factors, the reasons that long sustained the arguments for a bicameral system have become moot. Many in the past have unquestionably felt that a smaller upper house, with representation based on geography and regions, served as a brake or a buffer against hasty ill-considered legislation passed by a lower house, where representation was based on population. In view of the Supreme Court's decision, whether we agree or disagree, these justifying arguments can no longer be considered by us in designing a proposal or plan for submission to the voters in November to apportion on the basis of equal representation for equal numbers of people.

In my discussions with interested citizens and other delegates in this Convention, I believe that a considerable majority prefer a plan that would preserve the integrity of county lines and avoid the many and varied problems that arise when several or more counties are merged to form a single legislative district.

A unicameral house could easily be designed, conforming to the standards and guide lines delineated by the Courts and still retain 21 county political subdivisions as separate and independent legislative districts. The very method by which the varying number of votes based on population were assigned to the 21 counties in this Convention could well serve as a precedent to follow in apportioning a unicameral legislature. In this Convention, every county has at least one vote and the median, based on the 1960 Census, is 54,168 people per vote, with the highest deviation of minus 17 occurring in my own county of Gloucester, which has been assigned three votes. However, as Senator William V. Musto has pointed out in his statement filed with this Committee, many plans have been discussed that could easily be adapted to a unicameral legislature, but I too am refraining at this time from recommending a specific plan.

Much has been written about the advantages and disadvantages of unicameralism versus bicameralism and therefore, it is not my intention to burden this record with repetitious time-worn arguments, nor do I feel we should necessarily be controlled in our judgments by the experience, be it good or bad, that the State of Nebraska has had since 1937 with a unicameral legislature. But again, I repeat that logic and common sense should lead us to the conclusion that since the Courts have now declared that the predominant basis of representation in both legislative bodies is required to be the same, namely population, then the most cogent and persuasive arguments for bicameralism have been destroyed.

I sincerely urge that the members of this Committee give this ^{subject} ~~suggestion~~ their most serious consideration and permit this issue to reach the floor of this Convention and eventually, the citizens of this State for their determination.

Respectfully submitted,

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Delegate, Gloucester County

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New Jersey State Library

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

112 Delegate Votes

1. County	2. County Population	3. No. of Votes Assigned	4. Population Per Vote	5. Deviation Per Vote	6. Relative Deviation Per Vote	7. Total County Deviation
Atlantic	160,880	3*	53,627	- 541	- 1.0	- 1,623
Bergen	780,255	14	55,733	+1,565	+ 2.9	+21,910
Burlington	224,499	4*	56,125	+1,957	+ 3.6	+ 7,828
Camden	392,035	7*	56,005	+1,837	+ 3.4	+12,859
Cape May	48,555	1*	48,555	-5,613	-10.4	- 5,613
Cumberland	106,850	2*	54,425	+ 257	+ 0.5	+ 514
Essex	923,545	17*	54,327	+ 159	+ 0.3	+ 2,703
Gloucester	134,840	3*	44,947	-9,221	-17.0	-27,663
Hudson	610,734	11*	55,521	+1,353	+ 2.5	+14,883
Hunterdon	54,107	1*	54,107	- 61	- 0.1	- 61
Mercer	266,392	5*	53,278	- 890	- 1.6	- 4,450
Middlesex	433,856	8	54,232	+ 64	+ 0.1	+ 512
Monmouth	334,401	6*	55,734	+1,566	+ 2.9	+ 9,396
Morris	261,620	5*	52,324	-1,844	- 3.4	- 9,220
Ocean	108,241	2	54,121	- 47	- 0.1	- 94
Passaic	406,618	8	50,827	-3,341	- 6.2	-26,728
Salem	58,711	1*	58,711	+4,543	+ 8.4	+ 4,543
Somerset	143,913	3*	47,971	-6,197	-11.4	-18,591
Sussex	49,255	1*	49,255	-4,913	- 9.1	- 4,913
Union	504,255	9*	56,028	+1,860	+ 3.4	+16,740
Warren	63,220	1*	63,220	+9,052	+16.7	+ 9,052
	6,066,782	112	54,168	±1,785	± 2.9	± 9,519

1. 112 votes allotted to 21 counties.

2. 1960 Federal Census

3. Per method of Equal Proportions (Same result attained by Vinton Method, by Method of Major Fractions and by Method of Harmonic Mean.)

4. Col. 2 ÷ Col. 3.

5. Average, or ideal, population per vote (i.e., State population, 6,066,782, ÷ total number of seats assigned, 112, or 54,168) ± Col. 4.

6. Col. 5 ÷ 54,168.

7. Col. 5 x Col. 3.

* Each county is allotted a number of delegates equal to number of votes assigned to it, except that in each county assigned an odd number of delegates an additional delegate is allotted and 2 delegates in that county shall be entitled to cast 1/2 vote. This results in a total of 126 delegates.