



Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention

To: Chris Byers
From: Bernard Zimmerman
Subject: Reapportionment-Effect of Cap
Date: May 29, 1995

MEMORANDUM

Please let me know, by return fax if possible, whether a summer clerk could research the following issue:

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) consists of three principal islands, Saipan (population about 40,000), Rota and Tinian (population each about 4,000). Historically, each of the islands has been seen to have strong local interests which deserved representation. Currently, the Constitution provides for a 14 member legislature, including one member from Rota and one from Tinian. This presents an issue of whether the population deviations are such that the one person-one vote rules are violated. Given the strong sentiment that Rota and Tinian must have at least one representative, if a court were to rule the current apportionment unconstitutional, what effect, if any, would be given the 14 member cap? Would the court rule that the legislature must be expanded? Would the court rule that Tinian and Rota must share a representative? Are there other possibilities?


Bernard Zimmerman

cc: Legal team