



R.R. "Bob" Greive

R.R. "Bob" Greive began his political career in 1946 at the age of twenty-seven when he won his first election for the state senate. A Democrat from West Seattle representing the Thirty-Fourth District, Greive quickly moved up in his party's leadership ranks. He was an active campaigner and fundraiser for fellow Democrats and ultimately served sixteen years as the Senate majority leader. Greive's attention to detail and dedication to his political goals also made him a master of the redistricting process. Over three decades he served as "Mr. Redistricting" for the Democrats in the Legislature.

Read the full text of an interview with Senator Greive, [R.R. "Bob" Greive: An Oral History](#), on the Oral History Program's Web site.

CHAPTER 9

REDISTRICTING: 1962-1964

One of the few published accounts of redistricting efforts in the state of Washington is Howard E. McCurdy's A Majority of the People: Factional Politics and Redistricting in Washington State (1970). McCurdy was an assistant to then-State Senator Slade Gorton during the redistricting period and offers his perspective on the process as well as the behind-the-scenes motivations of participants. In this interview Senator Greive often refers to McCurdy's work, sometimes agreeing and other times disagreeing with its conclusions based on his own remembrances. Relevant passages from Howard McCurdy's manuscript have been added to this transcript so that readers can have a fuller understanding of Senator Greive's commentary.

Ms. Boswell: Earlier, we talked about the first phase of redistricting, and now I would like to discuss the second big redistricting effort in Washington. Shall we begin with the *Baker v. Carr* decision, handed down by the Supreme Court in March 1962, and the impact of judicial decisions about redistricting?

Senator Greive: Basically, *Baker v. Carr* told the various states that they had to have one-man, one-vote districts, and the districts had to be within certain proportions. They didn't set out the proportions. All they did was enunciate the principle of one man, one vote. This state, along with every other state, felt they had to redistrict. I think by now all of them have been through it. This is just our second big redistricting in the state's history.*

Ms. Boswell: So this new redistricting effort, *Baker v. Carr*—I think the decision was in March of 1962—had a case in this state follow it later that same year: *Thigpen v. Meyers*. In the Thigpen case the court said that redistricting didn't have to result in absolute equality among districts, but that there had to be a rational basis for the distribution. I believe the court argued that the districts drawn in 1957 were not "rational." Is that what forced you into redistricting so quickly?

Sen. Greive: I don't know. We just knew we had to do it. I don't think that we put a lot of

**Editor's Note: In the 1962 case of Baker v. Carr, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that malapportionment of legislatures served to debase the votes of citizens and thus denied them the equal protection of the laws. The court held that the Federal courts have the power and the duty to pass upon the validity of distribution of state legislative seats. Prior to that time, it had been assumed that such matters were political in nature and thus beyond the jurisdiction of the courts. In a subsequent series of decisions, especially Wesberry v. Sanders (1964), the Supreme Court set forth the standard which would henceforth apply to all state legislatures, as well as the U.S. House of Representatives: that, as nearly as practicable, "one person's vote is to be worth as much as another's." This is the principle of "one man, one vote."*

effort into it. It was an accomplished fact as far as we were concerned.

Ms. Boswell: The League of Women Voters had been the impetus behind the earlier redistricting move that we discussed. What was their involvement this second time?

Sen. Greive: They again tried the initiative route in 1962, Initiative 211. They had various people in to consult with them. One of their advisors, Ed Munro, came back and talked to them. Bull Howard—he was a lobbyist for the pinballs and a variety of other issues down there, former Republican district chairman and so forth—spoke with them as well. Yes, they eventually, as I recall, did put together another initiative and try it in the Legislature. I'm not sure about all my facts and my memory on this, but they couldn't get enough signatures for it, so it didn't go anywhere.

But by the time we got to Olympia for the 1963 session, we knew that we had a problem. In other words, this was no surprise to us. We had assembled our staffs and we began working on it.

Ms. Boswell: You said you got your staff assembled. Who was involved this time?

Sen. Greive: This time it was Dean Foster. It had been Hayes Elder the time before. But he was a state representative by now, and Foster had worked with him or for him. I forget exactly which it was, but I think Foster was involved with both redistrictings. He was my principal man here this time. The next time it would be Cough. Steve Cough was my wife's cousin.

Ms. Boswell: So you were prepared that you were going to have to deal with redistricting?

Sen. Greive: Oh yes. We knew we'd have to deal with it. It was never a question of putting

it off. We just felt that there was no question that we had to do it, and we might as well get it over with. Of course, we didn't realize it was going to be so dominant and hard to do, or that we were going to have to go after it on two different sessions of the Legislature. All of the discussion would take place, but we knew we had the job and we set out to do it.

By now I was majority leader, and I wanted to keep my majority together, and I wanted to be responsible to it. Furthermore, I felt that I was by far the most experienced person around.

Ms. Boswell: The most widely known account of this whole redistricting effort was in a thesis by Howard McCurdy called *A Majority of the People: Factional Politics and Redistricting in Washington State*. He essentially indicates that your motivations in getting involved were very political. He argues that the margin that you had to keep you as majority leader was very slim, and that redistricting was a way of getting more loyalty. How did you feel about that?

Sen. Greive: I think that's in part true. First of all, let's talk about McCurdy. McCurdy was the staff advisor and chief of staff for Slade Gorton. Mary Ellen McCaffree, who was a state representative, later replaced him, but he started out as the chief of staff for Gorton. His loyalty was to Gorton, and Gorton and I, of course, were squarely on opposite sides. Gorton was in control of the redistricting issue.

It's impossible to talk politics without making it political. We're not talking about some statute that takes care of poor people, or some tax thing because you need revenue, or about repairing a bridge or something like that. We're talking about the make-up of political office, and you have to be political. It wouldn't be worth anything if you weren't.

Ms. Boswell: Did you feel at that time that your hold on being majority leader was rather tenuous?

Sen. Greive: I don't know. I always had problems from the very first time I ran until the last time. There was a group of people that I didn't necessarily get along with, that I had to get along with. We made peace pretty well in the Senate, but they were always out to see a change. When you've been there twenty-eight years or so, as I was, and sixteen as majority leader, why I'm sure that could have been a part of it. I just don't know. I think that McCurdy assumed some things he doesn't know.

Ms. Boswell: McCurdy kind of characterizes you as somewhat of an independent in the whole spectrum of Democrats at that time. How do you feel about that characterization?

Sen. Greive: Probably true. I got along well with Rosellini, but I didn't feel that I had any great overpowering reason to follow him. In other words, I always felt this way: if you added up the balance sheet, I did an awful lot more for Rosellini than he ever did for me. He was the governor.

He did help me once when I was in trouble. I don't know whether I was in trouble at that particular time or not. I had various times when they would rise up and try to put together a coalition. I never did get along very well ideologically with the people in Central Washington. I also didn't get along well with Martin Durkan and August Mardesich and that group. They were powerful people. It may very well be that they were after me, I don't remember.

Ms. Boswell: In the characterization of you as an independent, where did you see yourself fitting into the whole spectrum of Democrats?

Sen. Greive: Independents are relative. I was always a Democrat, and I voted down the Democratic line pretty much. Was I part of their drinking group or various activities? The people in Central Washington—I eventually became fairly friendly with Washington Water Power and the private power people. As the differences evaporated, toward the end you understand—the people of the PUDs were all together with Washington Water Power and Puget Power and Light. They wanted legislation they would agree on. There was little or no controversy. Well, that metamorphosis was taking place at the time, and there again, unless I see an independent line as to when that was taking place, it's hard for me to match it up now.

So I had my problems with Central Washington: with Nat Washington, with Wilbur Hallauer, with Jerry Hanna and with Mike McCormack. There are four votes there. I had my problems with Durkan and I had my problems with Mardesich, so there're two there. We had about thirty people in the caucus, and I've talked about four, five, six, seven very powerful ones. And that's where my opposition would come from.

Did I need redistricting? Actually those people were not very interested in redistricting. Only Hallauer was. Eventually McCormack became interested, but I think that was more to make him a leader than anything else—to give him presence. He wanted to run for Congress, as did Moos and several other people at the time. I felt redistricting was necessary for that reason, but I may be wrong. I'd be willing to admit that if I could research a little and determine where I was in the caucus. I've got to remember how the caucus felt. That isn't recorded anywhere, it's a secret vote—a written ballot, but a secret ballot. But I did have a couple of close elections, and that might have been one of them, I don't know.

Ms. Boswell: What about the forces arrayed against you in this particular redistricting fight? Slade Gorton was involved. Tell me how he became the other side.*

**In 1962 leadership in the Republican Party was shifting from the business-oriented 'old guard' to a progressive 'new breed' team...They were young and vigorous, generally well educated, and many were politically active. For many reasons they found no room in the Democratic Party, although at that time its policies were closer to their own interests. So they made their own party...revitalized local political clubs and began to run candidates for the state legislature. In 1962 they aimed to control the House of Representatives, wanting a base of power from which to capture the governorship in 1964.*

McCurdy: 6-8

Sen. Greive: Let's step back one step. No matter who had been floor leader, I would be the redistricting chairman. There would be no contest to that. I had the experience and I was recognized as the one that knew what it was. I'd assembled a staff, I knew about the figures, and I knew the weaknesses of the people. Even Gorton said that I had a sixth sense or something, but I tried to understand each guy and what he needed. And I usually had all of the lesser people with me. That is why my strength was what it was with the leaders.

Ms. Boswell: Can you tell me why Slade Gorton got involved in redistricting?

Sen. Greive: Well, for one thing, he wanted to change the make-up of the Legislature, which they eventually did. You want to remember that they were out of power, and as I see it, he felt that if he could get more Republican districts, they had a better shot at it. Plus the fact that I think he felt that he was talking for the new majority. He thought that the "new breed"—McCurdy called it that in the book, although I never heard anyone else refer to it in that way, but that's what McCurdy says—why, that new breed consisted of people who were ambitious politicians. Look at them: Pritchard retired from Lieutenant Governor, Slade Gorton was a U.S. Senator, and Evans got to be an U.S. Senator. They were all allied.

Ms. Boswell: You had a different name for them besides "new breed?"

Sen. Greive: I called them the "tennis court Republicans." I didn't think they were any new breed at all. They were a bunch of rich kids, so to speak, from rich parents and a rich constituency that was solidly Republican, and they were going to get re-elected. And this was their new advertising gimmick, just like you launch a new advertising campaign for a soap, or for tobacco, or whatever you're doing. Why you paint it all up, you give it a name, and you sell it. That's what they were selling. They sold it first to the newspapers and media, and then they used that to sell it to the people.

Ms. Boswell: So, you don't really think they were a "new breed" at all?

Sen. Greive: No, they had this in common: they were pretty intelligent people. They weren't dumb, and they were reasonably pleasant as far as getting along day to day, but they were determined to control. The House and Senate was a battleground, and I just happened to be one of the gunmen that got

caught in the crossfire.

Ms. Boswell: So, they could see redistricting as being an area where they could really make a public impact, or an in-house impact?

Sen. Greive: If they could control it, then they'd get the jobs and the Speakership, and they'd be the big operators of the Legislature. They wanted to take it over. It isn't like a storybook, which is why I say there was nothing very unusual about them. I'm sure that there were other people who acted like that before. I've been a part of coalitions like that, myself, on occasions.

Ms. Boswell: What was their relationship to the League of Women Voters?

Sen. Greive: I don't know that they had any great relationship with the League of Women Voters. As an actual matter, I didn't have any trouble with that group the time before in redistricting, when we overrode the League of Women Voters. But they had made a temporary alliance with Mrs. North—Lois North—who incidentally was a damn good legislator and a pretty competent politician, although I disagreed with her. And Mary Ellen McCaffree, I'd say the same things about her. They meant to be politicians, and their way of entry into politics was the League of Women Voters, in my opinion. Pure and simple. They kind of became part of the new breed or the coalition to accomplish their ends. But I don't think that there's anything unusual about that. They just wanted to control.

You see, Mary Ellen McCaffree came from a very questionable district, and Lois North had no place to run. They carved a new district out, and she ran in that.

Ms. Boswell: So both of them were Republicans?

Sen. Greive: That's right, they were Republicans. When you've got as many legislators as you have in the House and Senate, everyone works in groups. You don't do much as an individual. Somebody may make a speech and make a sensation on occasion, like in the movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, but the day-to-day workings of the system are such that you have to deal with somebody and you have to have colleagues. You've got to have friends. And if you've got any brains, you've got to have friends on both sides of the aisle, even if they don't vote with you.

Ms. Boswell: But technically, when the League of Women Voters took this project on, wasn't it supposed to be a nonpartisan effort?

Sen. Greive: Originally it was their plaything. They wanted to dabble in politics, and they were looking for an issue that was unique, an issue that would catapult them into the public eye where they could be somebody. They would not just be a group of women who studied issues and did nothing about it. That was the reputation they had before—they studied things to death, but you never really got any bang out of them. They wanted to change that image, and they did through redistricting. It became a vehicle. There's nothing wrong with that—that's one of the levers of power.

Ms. Boswell: And because you had essentially opposed them in the past, you were their target now?

Sen. Greive: Of course, I opposed them in the past. I felt that they were wrong, plus they were trying to shake my world down. That's all. Maybe not my world, but certainly my legislative world, and I didn't think they were any holier than anyone else. But they had to have this; they wanted to have redistricting done.