

April 3,
1935

Honorable J. Craig Smith,
Avondale Mills,
Birmingham, Alabama.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Your letter of March 28, reached me during the weekend at Athens.

I will sometime during the present week try to get copies of the re-apportionment bills for you. They all have been referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. No date has been set for a public hearing for any of these bills.

I am delighted to know of the formation of a group in Birmingham for the purpose of studying our state government. I think it is an excellent sign when men of your standing and character in a community devote attention to such matters. I long had the friendship of your father, and, as you probably know, I was an active supporter of your grandfather, Honorable B. B. Comer, I consider him the ablest Governor the state has had since Governor Houston of Limestone.

You possibly noticed in Sunday's News that I am working on a re-apportionment bill that will provide for a House of 90 members and a Senate of 30. I believe it will be very helpful in matters of legislation to reduce the membership of both houses to some extent. I am convinced that the only way we can secure practical and equitable re-apportionment is by such readjustment. You know one of the great bugaboos is the large percentage of the membership Jefferson County would secure in a House of 106 members based solely on population. I can readily appreciate the position of the smaller counties in objecting to Jefferson County having 15 or 16 members.

My bill contemplated and is formulated on the theory of a Grouping Plan--one representative for each 45,000 people, observing the Constitutional mandate of one representative for each county. I think this would work out with about 9 members for Jefferson, two for such counties as Madison, Dallas, Etc., and 3 or for Mobile and Montgomery.

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It will not be so easy to re-apportion the Senate because we have to observe the mandate of the Constitution that the Senatorial districts shall be of as nearly equal population as possible and each district contiguous.

As soon as my bill is completed I hope to have a conference with some of the members of the various sections of Alabama and agree on such a bill as outlined above. If this can be done and the Governor will adopt it as an administration measure I feel sure it will pass without a great deal of difficulty.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

RHW:fm

R. H. Walker.