State of California
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

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SEP 24 1991
Ans'd.....

PETE WILSON
GOVERNOR

TELEPHONE
(916) 445-2841

WILSON VETO MESSAGES FOR REDISTRICTING BILLS SB 287, AB 2239, AND SB 587

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 23, 1991

CONTACT: Bill Livingstone
James Lee
Franz Wisner
(916) 445-4571

SACRAMENTO -- Attached are veto messages for the three redistricting bills (SB 287, AB 2239, SB 587) passed by the Legislature on partisan votes last Thursday, September 19, 1990.

NOTE: The messages are similar except for information under the heading, "Partisan Gerrymandering."

# # # #

PETE WILSON
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September 23, 1991

To the Members of the California Senate:

I am returning without my signature Senate Bill 287, relating to the redistricting of the State.

Redistricting is the most important legal enactment to be made this year, not just because it endures ten years, but because it is the framework upon which our entire system of representative democracy is based. Uncompetitive districts can preordain a certain outcome, denying the People of this State their legitimate right to choose their representatives.

As a result, in July, I requested that the Legislature carefully deliberate in drawing up fair districts which meet all constitutional and statutory criteria in time to allow the public adequate time to review and comment on them and to permit the legislation to be precleared under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act prior to the statutory commencement of the 1992 election campaigns.

The present bill has not produced fair redistricting, although the Legislature has been afforded ample opportunity to achieve a fair result. In fact, it fails to meet even the most fundamental standards of fairness. Nor does it comply with the mandatory legal requirements for redistricting.

Indeed, this bill falls so short of a serious effort at fair redistricting that a list of each flaw would make this message unduly long. Accordingly, I will instead state only my principal objections.

Lack of Due Process. First, the procedure by which this bill was passed fails to satisfy the fundamental principles of due process. Quite properly, several public interest organizations have complained bitterly about the inadequacy of the legislative process in the Assembly. Despite the fact that the Legislature has had full opportunity to deliberate on the preparation of new districts -- indeed, the Legislature received the official 1990 census data from which new districts would be drawn back in April 1991 -- the Assembly Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Committee did not release its first version of proposed districts for the Assembly and Congress until September 9, less than 24 hours before the scheduled public hearings, thereby preventing members of the public from having an opportunity to meaningfully comment on those districts. The legislation was thereafter amended in private and the final version of the bill was not distributed to the public, nor even to members of the Legislature until the very day of the vote, depriving them of the opportunity to make a considered and informed vote on this most important piece of legislation.

In sum, the process by which this bill was passed falls far short of a good faith effort to deliberate upon and draw new districts for the Assembly and Congressional districts.

Deprivation of Voting Rights. Second, this bill draws various Assembly, Senatorial, and Congressional districts which fragment geographically compact and politically cohesive minority communities. This gives those minority populations less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice. This is not only fundamentally unfair, but a violation of the federal Voting Rights Act, as amended.

Partisan Gerrymandering. Third, the districts have been drawn with the objective of unduly protecting incumbents, thereby largely preserving the results of the prior decade's outrageous gerrymander and depriving the public of competitive districts.

There are a multitude of examples of contorted, misshapen districts, each drawn for the purpose of packing Democratic or Republican voters. For instance, proposed Assembly District 20 starts at the South San Francisco line and winds itself all the way to Watsonville, unnecessarily breaching communities of interest and county lines, solely to preserve an incumbent. Proposed Senate District 18 unnecessarily includes parts of three different counties through the device of a narrow strip that runs from Santa Maria to Canoga Park to maintain a Democratic district. And proposed Congressional District 26 begins in Cerritos, meanders through Diamond Bar, draws a narrow corridor through Pomona, and winds over to the Covina - Claremont area, with the sole purpose of packing Republicans into the district.

In short, the bill is an attempt by the majority party to continue an unfair partisan advantage, rather than honor voter registration figures which would result in an entirely different configuration of the Legislature and the enactment of fair districts.

Abdication of Legislative Responsibility. Finally, I note that instead of informed deliberations resulting in legislation which draws a single set of districts, the Legislature has passed three bills establishing three alternative sets of districts for the Assembly and California's congressional delegation. This suggests that even the majority in the Legislature has been unable to arrive at a determination of a single set of boundaries for the Assembly and congressional districts, and has thereby abdicated its responsibility.

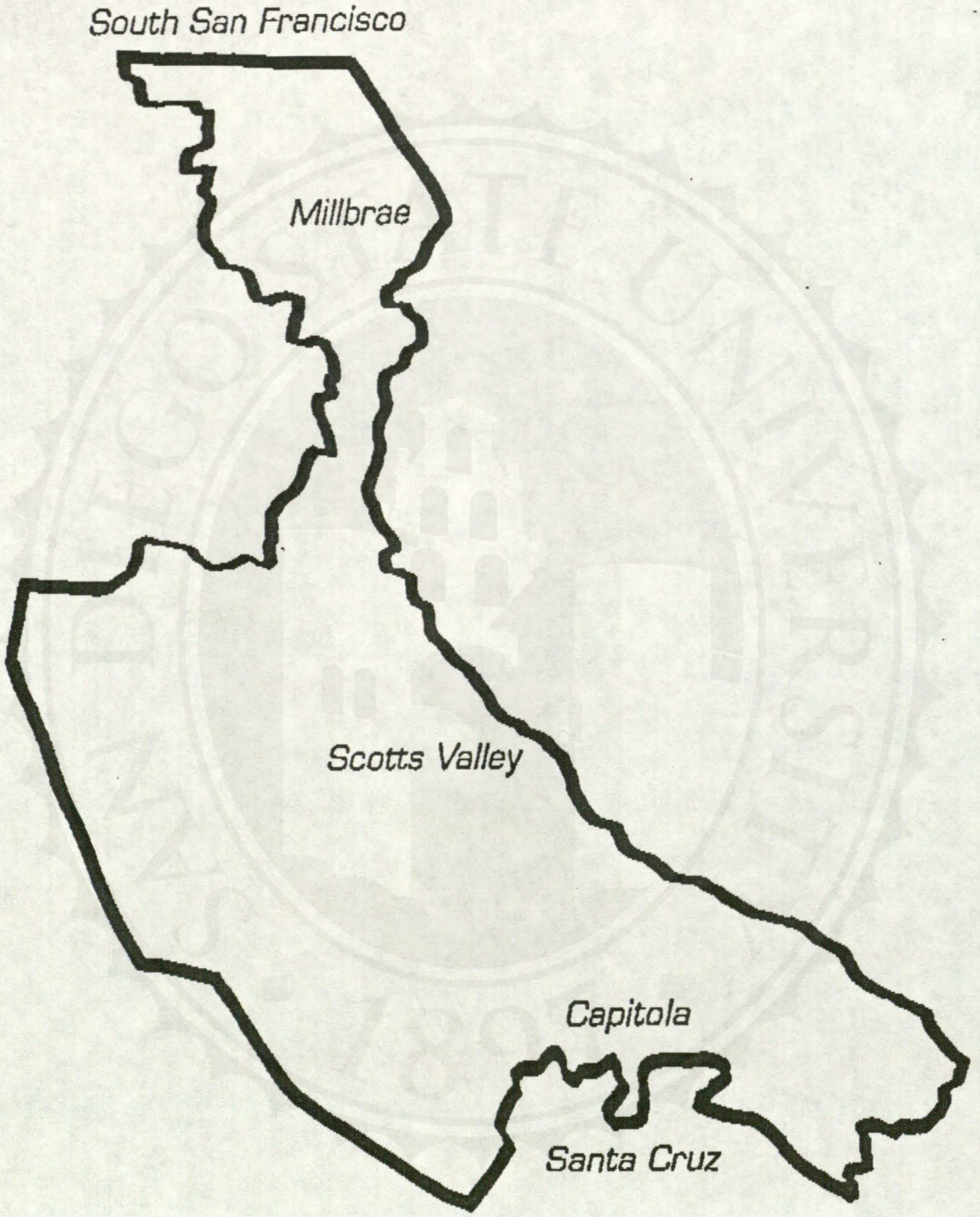
In sum, this bill falls so short of a fair and lawful redistricting plan that it cannot be considered a serious attempt to redistrict the state and must be summarily rejected.

Accordingly, I am returning the bill unsigned.

Sincerely,

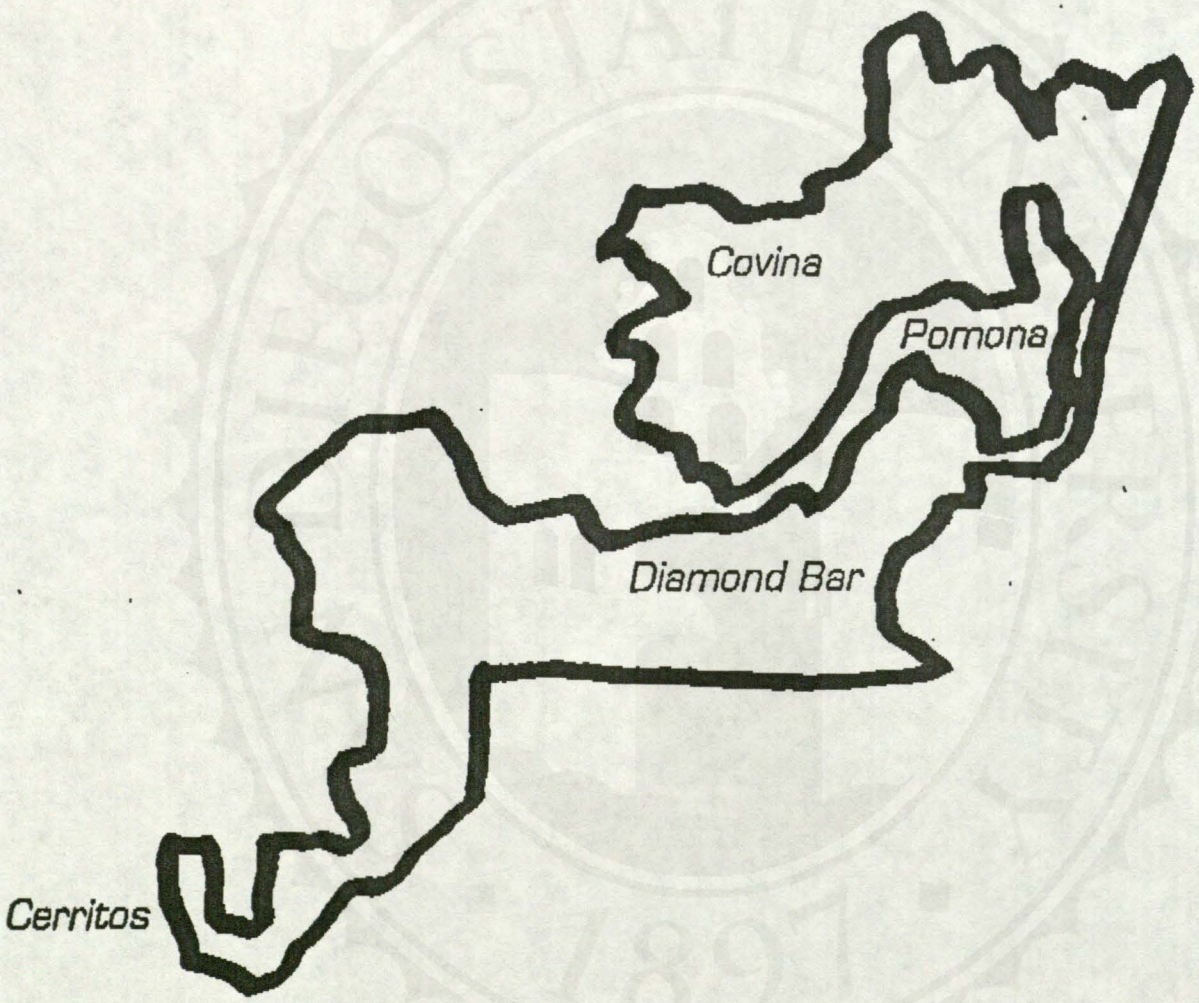
PETE WILSON

Proposed Assembly District 20



Proposed Senate District 18

Proposed Congressional District 26



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September 23, 1991

To the Members of the California Assembly:

I am returning without my signature Assembly Bill 2239, relating to the redistricting of the State.

Redistricting is the most important legal enactment to be made this year, not just because it endures ten years, but because it is the framework upon which our entire system of representative democracy is based. Uncompetitive districts can preordain a certain outcome, denying the People of this State their legitimate right to choose their representatives.

As a result, in July, I requested that the Legislature carefully deliberate in drawing up fair districts which meet all constitutional and statutory criteria in time to allow the public adequate time to review and comment on them and to permit the legislation to be precleared under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act prior to the statutory commencement of the 1992 election campaigns.

The present bill has not produced fair redistricting, although the Legislature has been afforded ample opportunity to achieve a fair result. In fact, it fails to meet even the most fundamental standards of fairness. Nor does it comply with the mandatory legal requirements for redistricting.

Indeed, this bill falls so short of a serious effort at fair redistricting that a list of each flaw would make this message unduly long. Accordingly, I will instead state only my principal objections.

Lack of Due Process. First, the procedure by which this bill was passed fails to satisfy the fundamental principles of due process. Quite properly, several public interest organizations have complained bitterly about the inadequacy of the legislative process in the Assembly. Despite the fact that the Legislature has had full opportunity to deliberate on the preparation of new districts -- indeed, the Legislature received the official 1990 census data from which new districts would be drawn back in April 1991 -- the Assembly Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Committee did not release its first version of proposed districts for the Assembly and Congress until September 9, less than 24 hours before the scheduled public hearings, thereby preventing members of the public from having an opportunity to meaningfully comment on those districts. The legislation was thereafter amended in private and the final version of the bill was not distributed to the public, nor even to members of the Legislature until the very day of the vote, depriving them of the opportunity to make a considered and informed vote on this most important piece of legislation.

In sum, the process by which this bill was passed falls far short of a good faith effort to deliberate upon and draw new districts for the Assembly and Congressional districts.

Deprivation of Voting Rights. Second, this bill draws various Assembly, Senatorial, and Congressional districts which fragment geographically compact and politically cohesive minority communities. This gives those minority populations less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice. This is not only fundamentally unfair, but a violation of the federal Voting Rights Act, as amended.

Partisan Gerrymandering. Third, the districts have been drawn with the objective of unduly protecting incumbents, thereby largely preserving the results of the prior decade's outrageous gerrymander and depriving the public of competitive districts.

There are a variety of examples of misshapen, twisted districts, each drawn for the purpose of packing Democratic or Republican voters. For instance, proposed Assembly District 5 consciously captures the incumbent's residence through a narrow finger and then wraps itself around an adjacent district, taking it from Placer County through Alpine, Mono, and El Dorado, and finally crossing into Madera County. Proposed Senate District 18 unnecessarily includes parts of three counties through the device of a narrow strip that runs from Santa Maria to Canoga Park to maintain a Democratic district. And proposed Congressional District 20 splits the Latino community in Fresno and grabs pockets of other voters as it winds some 150 miles to connect with the southern portion of Bakersfield to preserve an incumbent.

In short, the bill is an attempt by the majority party to continue an unfair partisan advantage, rather than honor voter registration figures which would result in an entirely different configuration of the Legislature and the enactment of fair districts.

Abdication of Legislative Responsibility. Finally, I note that instead of informed deliberations resulting in legislation which draws a single set of districts, the Legislature has passed three bills establishing three alternative sets of districts for the Assembly and California's congressional delegation. This suggests that even the majority in the Legislature has been unable to arrive at a determination of a single set of boundaries for the Assembly and congressional districts, and has thereby abdicated its responsibility.

In sum, this bill falls so short of a fair and lawful redistricting plan that it cannot be considered a serious attempt to redistrict the state and must be summarily rejected.

Accordingly, I am returning the bill unsigned.

Sincerely,

Pete Wilson

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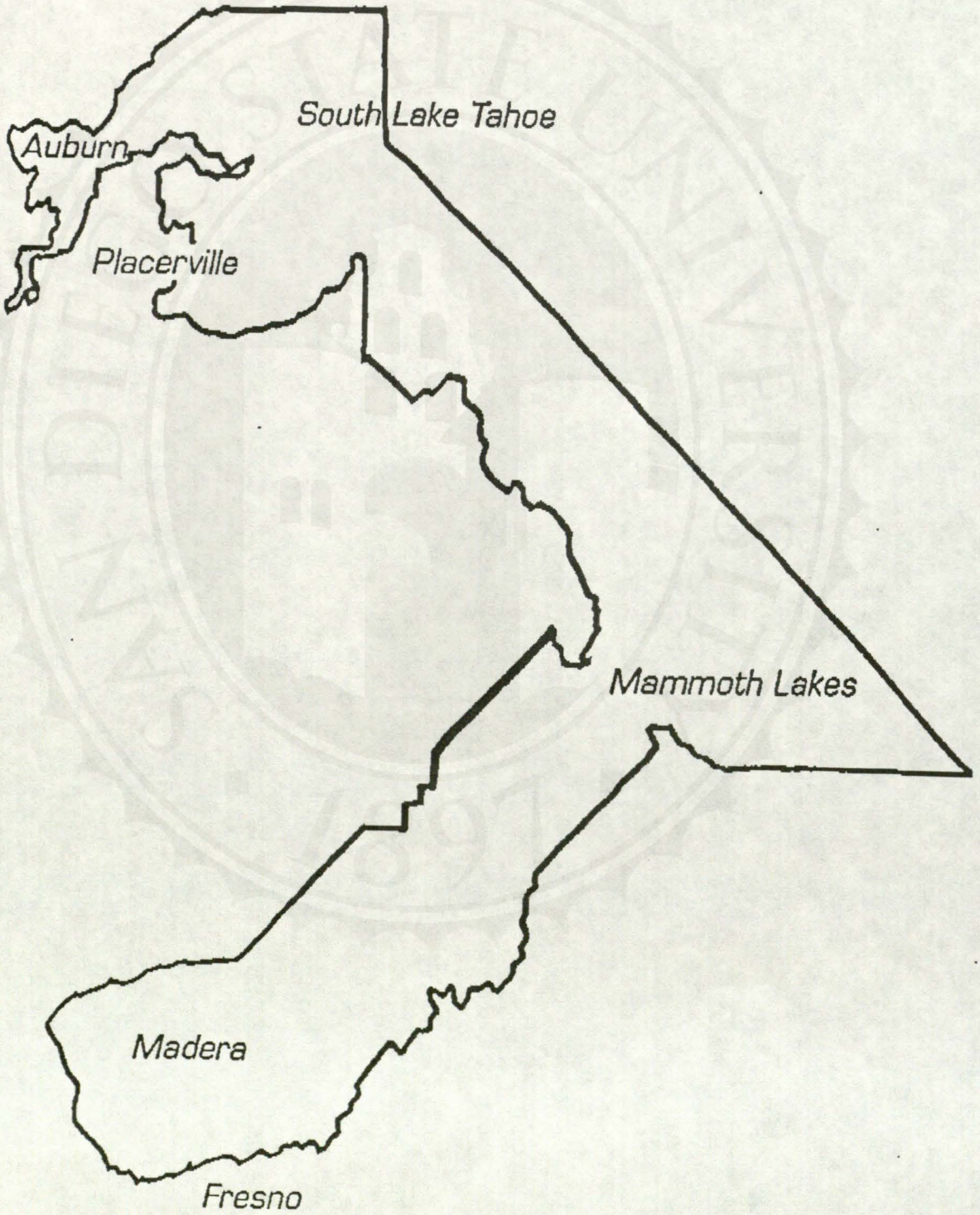
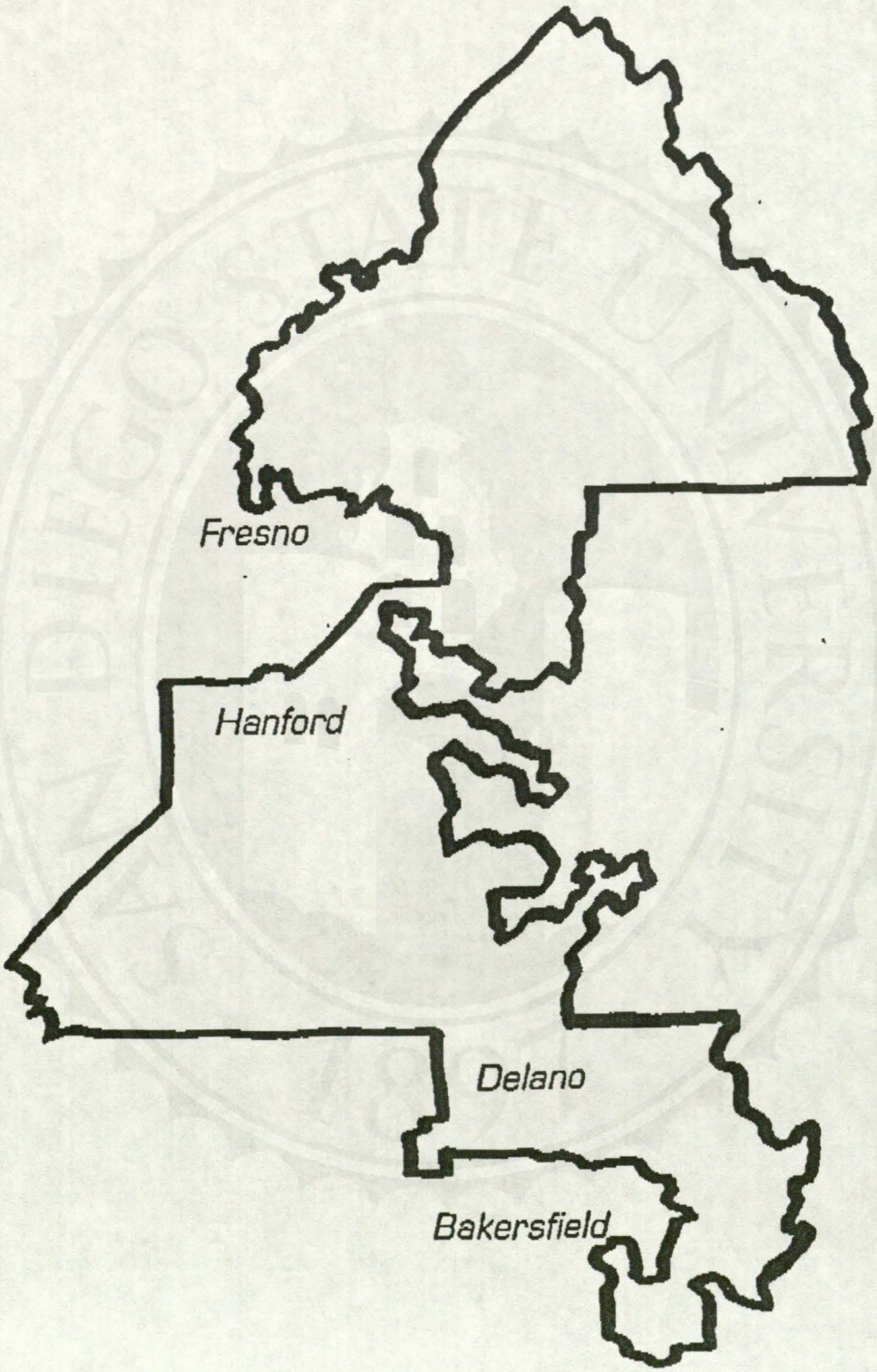
Proposed Assembly District 5



Proposed Senate District 18

Proposed Congressional District 20



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September 23, 1991

To the Members of the California Senate:

I am returning without my signature Senate Bill 587, relating to the redistricting of the State.

Redistricting is the most important legal enactment to be made this year, not just because it endures ten years, but because it is the framework upon which our entire system of representative democracy is based. Uncompetitive districts can preordain a certain outcome, denying the People of this State their legitimate right to choose their representatives.

As a result, in July, I requested that the Legislature carefully deliberate in drawing up fair districts which meet all constitutional and statutory criteria in time to allow the public adequate time to review and comment on them and to permit the legislation to be precleared under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act prior to the statutory commencement of the 1992 election campaigns.

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Deprivation of Voting Rights. Second, this bill draws various Assembly, Senatorial, and Congressional districts which fragment geographically compact and politically cohesive minority communities. This gives those minority populations less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice. This is not only fundamentally unfair, but a violation of the federal Voting Rights Act, as amended.

Partisan Gerrymandering. Third, the districts have been drawn with the objective of unduly protecting incumbents, thereby largely preserving the results of the prior decade's outrageous gerrymander and depriving the public of competitive districts.

There are a number of egregious examples of misshapen districts, each drawn for the purpose of packing Democratic or Republican voters. For instance, proposed Congressional District 5 runs from San Ramon all the way to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains at the Nevada/Placer County line, bypassing Sacramento and Antioch/East Contra Costa in order to pack as many Republicans as possible. Proposed Senate District 18 unnecessarily includes parts of three counties through the device of a narrow strip that runs from Santa Maria to Canoga Park to maintain a Democratic district. And proposed Assembly District 38, while starting at Thousand Oaks, proceeds to dip down into Calabasas, crosses the mountains into the northern San Fernando Valley communities of Northridge and Chatsworth, and then stretches two fingers, one into Castaic and the other into Sunland/Tujunga.

In short, the bill is an attempt by the majority party to continue an unfair partisan advantage, rather than honor voter registration figures which would result in an entirely different configuration of the Legislature and the enactment of fair districts.

Abdication of Legislative Responsibility. Finally, I note that instead of informed deliberations resulting in legislation which draws a single set of districts, the Legislature has passed three bills establishing three alternative sets of districts for the Assembly and California's congressional delegation. This suggests that even the majority in the Legislature has been unable to arrive at a determination of a single set of boundaries for the Assembly and congressional districts, and has thereby abdicated its responsibility.

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Sincerely,

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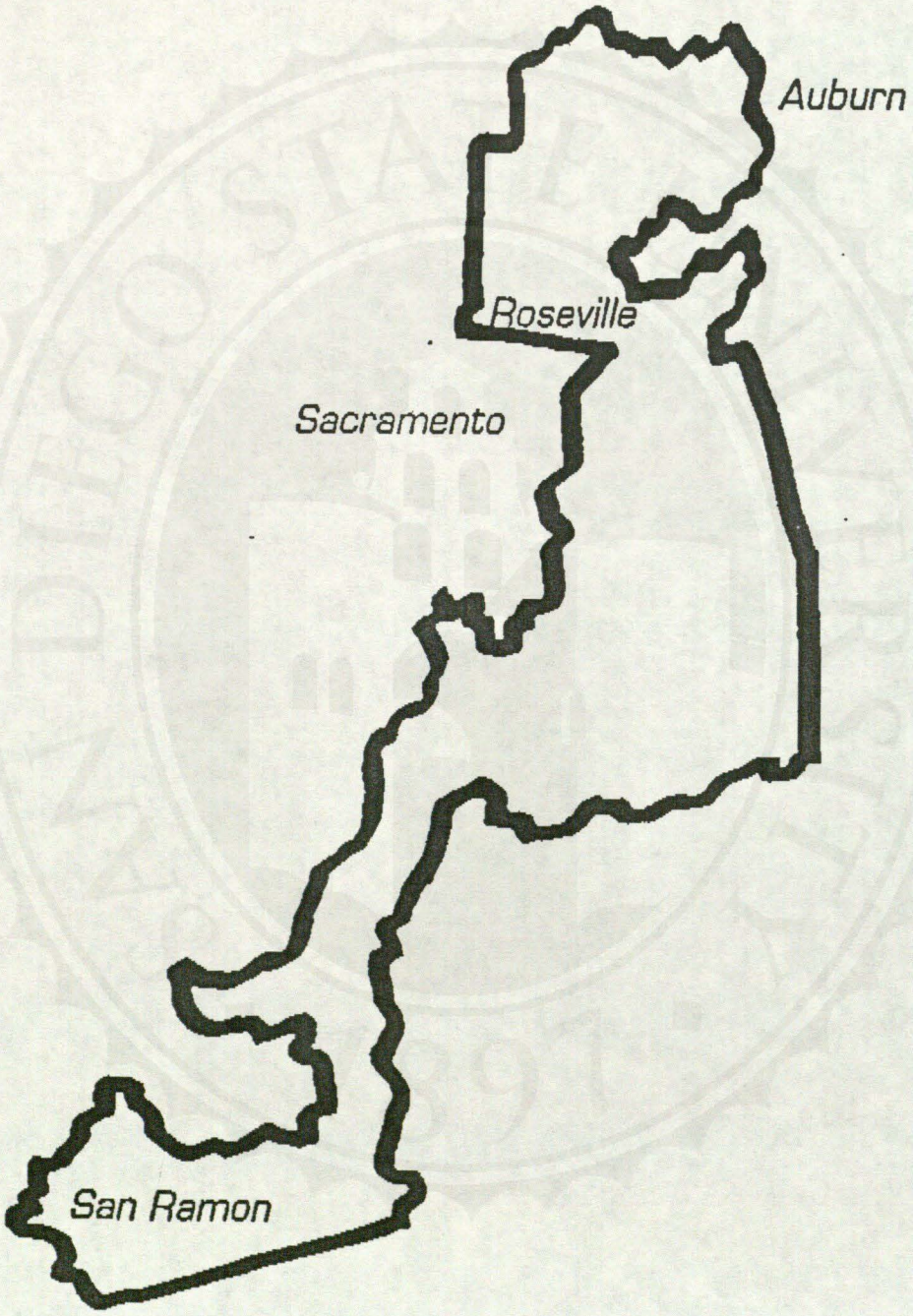
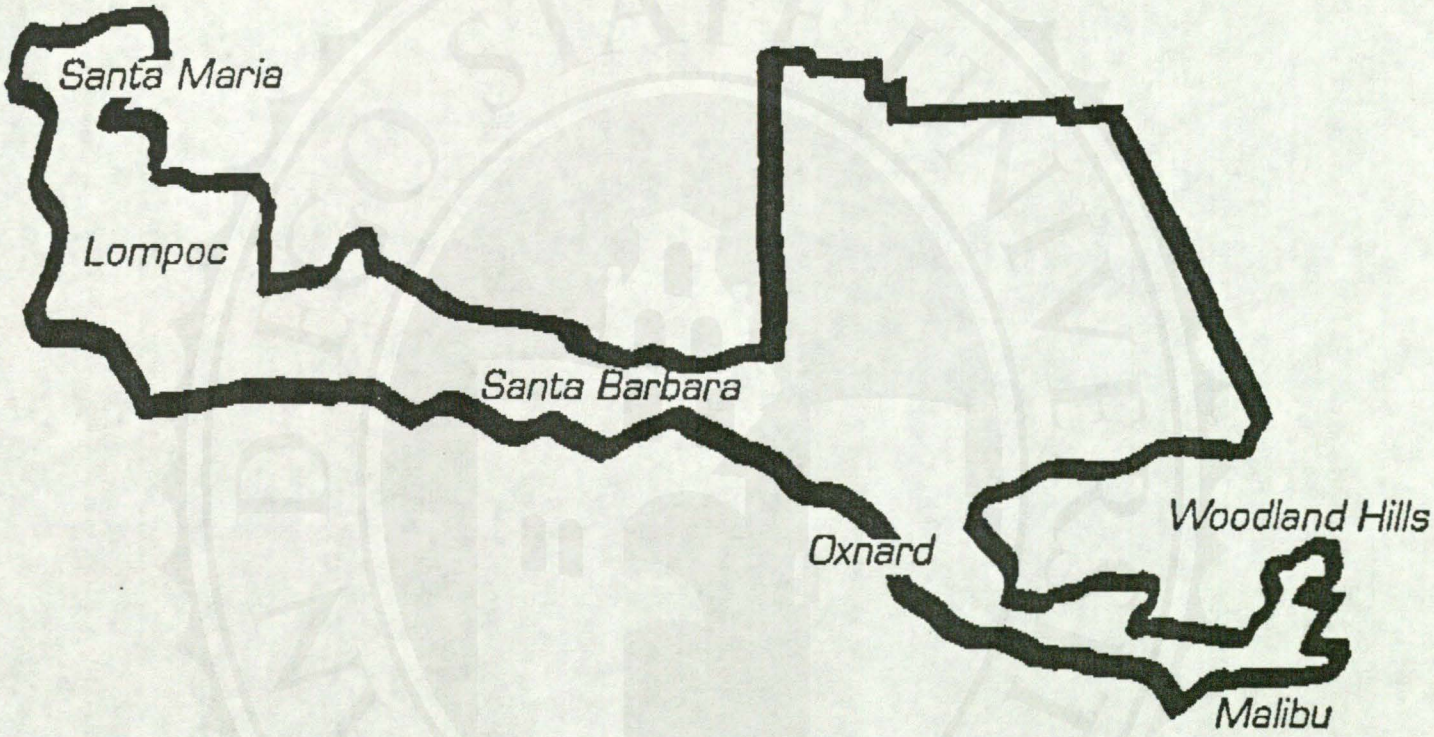
Proposed Congressional District 5



Proposed Senate District 18



Proposed Assembly District 38