

# CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE



*The Rose Institute of State and Local Government*

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Restoring the Competitive Edge: California's Need for Redistricting Reform and the Likely Impact of Proposition 77**

A new report from the Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College finds that Proposition 77 would result in a significant increase in competition in California elections. The Institute's research finds that Proposition 77, if enacted by voters, is likely to create ten competitive Congressional districts, four new competitive Assembly districts, and seven new competitive State Senate seats. The number of safe Democratic and Republican seats is likely to be reduced evenly: by five each for Congress and the Assembly, and by four Democratic and three Republican seats in the State Senate.

The report also finds that districts drawn under Proposition 77 would create two new Latino voting-age-majority districts; significantly reduce the divisions of counties compared to California's current districts; and greatly increase district compactness.

The report goes on to examine the threats to representative democracy under the incumbent-protection gerrymanders of 2001, comparing them to the competitive, community-oriented districts created when panels of retired judges drew the districts in 1973 and 1991.

The report is available in pdf format here:

<http://rose.research.claremontmckenna.edu/redistricting/redistricting.asp>.

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"Restoring The Competitive Edge" details, through text, maps and charts, the impact of the 2001 gerrymanders in California and elsewhere. Drawing on the Institute's more than 30 years of redistricting research, the report provides extensive background on the issues surrounding Proposition 77.

The Institute's research findings include:

- Panels of retired judges created 40 competitive districts in 1973 and 48 competitive districts in 1991.
- The legislature's incumbent-protection gerrymander in 1982 created just 19 competitive districts, and in 2001 the legislature created only five somewhat competitive districts.
- California has undergone multiple mid-decade redistrictings in three of the last four decades: once in the 1960s to comply with the Supreme Court's "one person, one vote" ruling in *Baker v. Carr*; again in the 1970s: one Congressional plan was used in 1972 and a new plan was drawn for 1974; and again in the 1980s after a referendum that rejected the 1982 plans forced the creation of new districts for 1984. Of the last four decades, only the 1990s avoided mid-decade revisions.

Dr. Ralph A. Rossum, Director of the Rose Institute commented: "The impact of gerrymandering on representation, legislative effectiveness and voter apathy is clear. Advances in computer technology leading up to the 2001 redistricting gave gerrymandering technicians enormous control over the electoral future of the state. Now, more than ever, State Legislators and Congressional Representatives choose their voters, instead of the other way around."

### **About the Rose Institute:**

The Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College provides research and management experiences for Claremont McKenna College students while conducting and publishing research on California government and politics.

Using computer technology, students and faculty at the Rose Institute advance knowledge about politics and provide services that assist in understanding the political process. Through the development of large computerized databases and advanced geographic retrieval systems, students become involved in projects focusing on topics such as redistricting, fiscal analysis, California demographics, survey research, and legal and regulatory analysis. The Rose Institute also works in collaboration with the Kosmont Companies to publish the annual *Kosmont-Rose Institute Cost of Doing Business Survey*®.

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