

four of them in the West—Arizona, California, Washington and Idaho.

There is a difference between reapportionment and redistricting. Reapportionment decides how many districts there will be. Redistricting decides their shapes. And the outcome is not always foreseeable. In one of the gerrymanders of the notorious Vergiels redistricting, a Senate district then held by longtime Republican stalwart Lawrence Jacobsen of Douglas County started in Jacobsen's home county, stretched through Carson City, then bit off a chunk of Washoe County, an amalgam of rural and urban designed to defeat the incumbent. The Democrats teed up an attractive Douglas County candidate. But both the redistricting and the recruitment were for naught. Senate Republican floor leader William Raggio was so angry over the railroading of the redistricting plan that he made sure Jacobsen had everything necessary to win. And Jacobsen was reelected.

## COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT

In a different legislative issue, there are growing concerns about Assembly Bill 70, which seeks to change language associated with the Nevada open meeting law. The bill has been amended twice and is now in its third version.

The concern is that the measure changes who can file open meeting complaints from anyone to people with a direct interest in matters under discussion at a meeting. That would eliminate journalists, who are frequent attendees at public meetings and often have filed complaints that have been upheld.

The bill reads in part, "The Attorney General is not required to investigate or prosecute any alleged violation of this chapter if the Attorney General determines that ... the interests of the person who filed the complaint are not significantly affected by the action of the public body that is alleged to violate this chapter." Other language analogizes standing to file a complaint with "standing to challenge the action of the public body in a court of law."

The bill was drafted by a task force formed in the attorney general's office when Adam Laxalt was AG, and Deputy Attorney General Gregory Ott told the Assembly Government Affairs Committee, "I am happy to report that the language contained in the proposed bill was approved by the task force with no member opposing."

One source suggested, "Check out who's on the task force. The [members] are all attorneys with boards and commissions." □

**"A Gerrymander is always in the eye of the beholder."**

**Fred Lokken**  
Political scientist

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## Skip Sparks



Downtown Sparks is often impenetrable these days. Various road and structural projects have street closure and detour signs all over the place. There are blockages on 11th, 10th, C, at two points on Victorian Plaza Circle, and intermittently on other streets. Local merchants tend to sigh when asked about the impact.

PHOTO/DENNIS MYERS