

OUR VOICE

We Count

Way back in 1950, there were slightly more than 160,000 people living in the Nevada, making it the smallest state in the union. Over the ensuing decades, the explosion of gaming and tourism provided plentiful jobs and, eventually, birthed a metropolis, perennially putting Nevada atop the list of fastest-growing states in America.

Much of the growth was powered by the population boom in Clark County. In fact, at times Clark County grew so fast that its population doubled every three years; upwards of 6,000 people moved here each month during boom times, which is nearly six times the number of those who departed. In December, the county topped the two million mark for the first time. While the economy has slowed in migration, Las Vegas (the biggest city in Clark County), is a place where people want to live.

Relocation.com, an online consumer resource for moving services, data compiled last year revealed that, on a per-capita basis for cities with more than 1 million people, Las Vegas retained its top spot as the No. 1 destination for people looking to make a long-distance, state-to-state move. Between 1990 and 2000, the city's population grew 85.2 percent, to 478,000. Today, more than 700,000 people live within city limits.

Why are these numbers important? Because the 2010 Census is right around the corner and our political prowess is directly tied to our population count.

To wit, the U.S. Bureau notes that Census counts impacts funding in your community: "Census data directly affect how more than \$300 billion per year in federal and state funding is allocated to communities for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, transportation and much more. That's more than \$3 trillion over a 10-year period. Spending just a few minutes to fill out your census form will help ensure your community gets its fair share of federal and state funding."

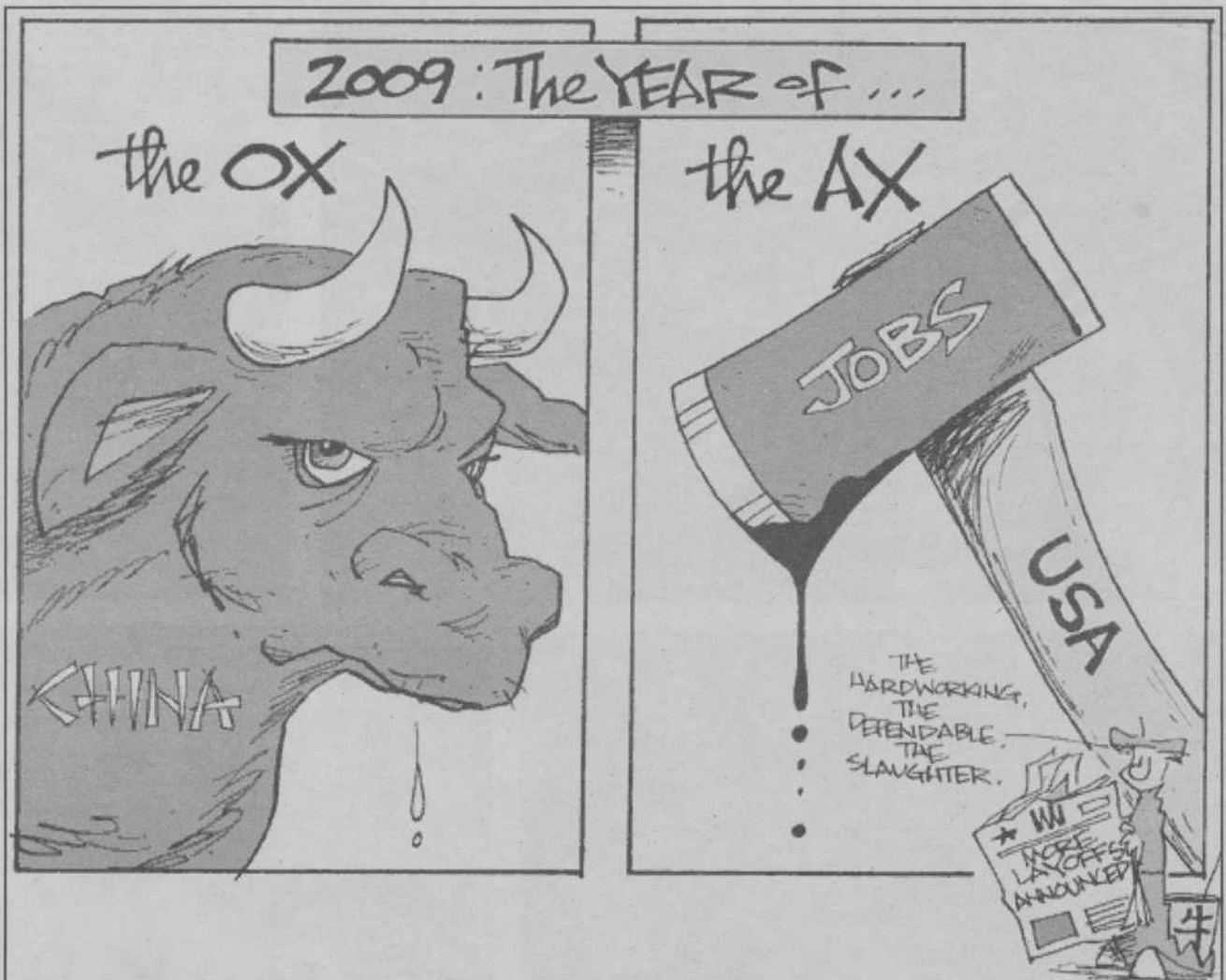
The Census also affects your voice in Congress: "Mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the census is also used to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and to redistrict state legislatures." Because of the state's population growth, Nevada added a third congressional seat following the 2000 Census. According to Census Bureau analysis by Washington-based Election Data Services, Nevada joins four states (Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Utah) that would gain a seat in the House of Representatives; Texas would gain three.

Census data also affects your representation in state and local government, as it's used to "to define legislature districts, school district assignment areas and other important functional areas of government." This is extremely important in Southern Nevada, as local lawmakers grapple with tough issues like crippling state budget cuts, contentious secondary education issues (rezoning, the decision to go to year-round schedules) and Gov. Jim Gibbons plan to siphon tens of millions of dollars from Clark and Washoe counties to help shore up the state's multibillion-dollar budget deficit.

Finally, the Census informs community's decisions. "The census is like a snapshot that helps define who we are as a nation. Data about changes in your community are crucial to many planning decisions, such as where to provide services for the elderly, where to build new roads and schools, or where to locate job training centers."

Given the state's unemployment was rate 9.1 in December, it's vital that our count be accurate. If we undercount our population, we risk losing tens of millions of dollars at a time when Nevada can't afford to lose any more money. Census counts are critically important to minority and underserved communities. If we're proverbially out of sight, it'll be that much harder to argue for resources. Best of all, you can be play a role and not just by filling out the form. The Census Bureau is hiring for 500 temporary positions. Wages start at \$14.50 an hour. This is great news, as the city drastically needs jobs.

With the economy likely to get worse before it gets better, the entire nation is counting on an accurate count. For more information, call the Census 2010 jobs hotline at (866) 861-2010 or visit www.census.gov/2010census.



GOP obstruction damages us

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

President Barack Obama's pledge to bring America together and specifically attempt to work across party lines with Republicans in the governing process was laudable, but I always wondered if it would work.

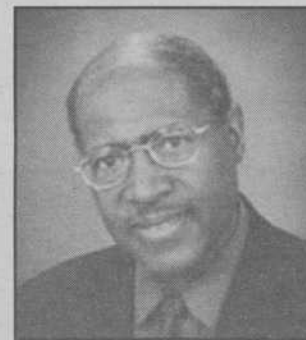
The principle reason is that the key to Republican power has been their remarkable clarity of ideology and the party discipline behind it.

This was patently evident when Newt Gingrich took over in 1994 after the "Republican Revolution" netted 54 seats in the House and eight seats in the Senate, giving Republicans control of the Congress for the first time in 40 years.

They promptly proceeded to rearrange the administration of the Congress in their own image and the ruthlessness of it caught Democrats by surprise, as they became virtually shut out of the governing process — not given legislative documents, not told where vital meetings were being held, and defeated time and again by party vote.

In the first 100 days, Gingrich enacted every bill in the ten-point "Contract With America," except for the proposed constitutional amendment mandating term limits for members of Congress.

Despite the fall of that era,



RON WALTERS

the pattern of disciplined, ideological behavior that made them dominant remains. For example, Rush Limbaugh, conservative talk-show host and Republican powerhouse, forthrightly rejected Obama's overture of bipartisanship, saying that he wanted him "to fail."

Whining that Obama would bring in a new season of liberalism, he was fearful that the return of liberalism would bring back affirmative action. It seems that is what is really under the covers of the rejection of bipartisanship.

To his credit, Obama shot back in a meeting with Republicans, saying that they could not afford to participate in bipartisan governance and listen to Rush Limbaugh at the same time, because he represented the narrow partisan politics of the past that he was trying to get beyond.

It doesn't seem, however, that they were listening to him. John Boehner, leader of the Republicans in the House, after the meeting with the president was over,

promptly railed against the size of the stimulus package and continued his opposition on "Meet the Press" (January 25), saying that there was a lot of "wasteful spending" in the package and little to spur job growth.

John McCain picked up the criticism of Obama whose first act was to sign a series of Executive Orders, one of which limited the influence of lobbyist access to his administration. And even though had honored McCain with a dinner and asked for his help in passing his plan, but McCain called the new lobbying rules "disingenuous" and refused to support the stimulus in its "current form."

Then, Texas Republican Senator John Cornyn used his extraordinary power as Senator and held up confirmation proceedings for Eric Holder, attorney general-des-

ignate, attempting to get assurances from him that he will not pursue legal actions against the presumptive illegalities of George Bush's administration.

For example, the investigation into the use of intelligence by the Bush White House and Dick Cheney are still live issues, such as whether a crime was committed in "outing" a secret agent contrary to federal law.

And although one notices that Bush did not pardon Scooter Libby, there are also issues of torture by the administration, the illicit use of federal funds in contracting related to the Iraq war and others that could serve as a basis for indictment.

I recently watched the proceedings of the Appropriations Committee and the Committee on Ways and Means in the House as they

(See Walters, Page 9)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER
LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice
GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.
THE FIFTH FLOOR, SUITE 500

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100
Email: lvsentinelvoice@yahoo.com

Contributing Writers:
Parker Philpot
Martine Ramos
Lés Pierres Streater
Sheila Thompson

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association