

Why was the size of the U.S. House of Representatives frozen at 435 members in 1929?

There has been much discussion in recent years about the Electoral College, and the fact that the people are disproportionately represented there because of the way electors are allocated. Typically, this is discussed as a consequence of the fact that each state receives two electors because of its two senators, regardless of population. And that is true. However, another cause, which was recently discussed by Harvard Professor Danielle Allen, is the fact that the size of the House of Representatives was frozen in 1929. Had the House been allowed to grow with the population, the number of representatives from populous states would have grown, and along with them, the number of electors those states receive. (In addition, with each House member representing fewer constituents, it can be argued that the House would be closer to the people, as was originally intended.)

So, why was the number frozen in 1929?

Read each of the linked pages. Write down one or two key points from each one, and any questions you'd like to ask. Then, when you've finished all of them, write a paragraph with your thoughts.

A) [https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Permanent-Apportionment-Act-of-1929/](https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Permanent-Appportionment-Act-of-1929/)

B) <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/31/u-s-population-keeps-growing-but-house-of-representatives-is-same-size-as-in-taft-era/>

C) [https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/14402/Why\\_the\\_House\\_Must\\_Be\\_Expanded\\_Democracy\\_Clinic.pdf](https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/14402/Why_the_House_Must_Be_Expanded_Democracy_Clinic.pdf)

(Scroll down to page 6 of the report - also, there are some blank pages that you just have to scroll past.)

D) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reapportionment\\_Act\\_of\\_1929](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reapportionment_Act_of_1929)

(Yes, it is wikipedia, but it is a very good article, and speaks to the politics involved.)

E) UCLA Possible Worlds lecture, featuring Harvard Professor Danielle Allen (I'm just linking this in case you are interested. You should skip the first 14 minutes or so, which are just introductions.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RW8p4Toe9cA>