



Texas State Conference of NAACP Units

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PRESS RELEASE **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Texas State Conference of NAACP Branches opposes the proposal presented by the Texas Attorney General's Office because it does not address the letter or spirit of the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act was created to ensure that all citizens would be able to select their choices for representation at the local, state, and national levels. The proposal of the Texas Attorney General damages the ability of communities of interest, both geographical and ethnic, to pick the candidates of their choice to represent the interests of the communities in which they live and work.

Texas State NAACP President and National NAACP Board Member Gary Bledsoe said, "The NAACP has stood throughout this litigation with our friends and allies from National LULAC, which has already announced its opposition to the proposal from the State Attorney General. We are proud to say that the African-American Congresspersons from Texas and those Congresspersons who consistently get A's on the NAACP Report Cards understand the significant gravity of this subject. We are pleased that some changes were made by the State from its passed C185 regarding the current African-American Congressional Districts, but the changes do not guarantee that the citizens who increased the population of this state during the last decade have their voices recognized through the electoral process. Sadly, but not surprisingly, all three of Texas African-American Congresspersons had their offices left out of their districts. It is equally not surprising that this did not happen to any white Congressperson. The State also drew Congresswoman Johnson's residence out of her district. This stark racial disparity of treatment clearly got the attention of the DC Court as it did with the San Antonio Court."

Some of those matters seem to have been addressed by the proposed plan though there are still some serious problems that exist with the drafting of the Congressional Districts. However, we need more time to study the proposed maps but our preliminary analysis yields the following opinions. We are disappointed in the plan offered by the State of Texas today in an attempt to push through an early primary election for the State of Texas. The plan provides for 70% of 36 Districts to be dominated by white majorities. This proposed

solution flies in the face of fairness and awards most, if not all, of the new seats to white voters, even though minorities account for nearly 89% of Texas' total growth during the last decade. It sets Texas on a path to join other Southern States as a full-fledged adherent of the Southern Strategy. Besides having districts that were not fairly treated in the process, African-Americans are reduced to having opportunities to elect the candidate of their choice from 9.3% of the Districts to 8.3% even though they constitute 12% of Texas population. All minorities in Texas deserve to be treated equally and fairly in the electoral process and Texas still has a long way to go to meet that expectation. If the Texas Attorney General is interested in getting the primary on a faster track, then we request that he follow the spirit of the Voting Rights Act.