

As you may know, the statute amending provisions of Louisiana law dealing with the election and appointment of police jurors and the redistricting of police jury wards (Act No. 445 passed during the 1968 Louisiana Legislative Session) was submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5. The implementation of this statute was objected to by him on June 26, 1969. Because of his earlier objection to the enabling legislation and Federal court decisions affecting at-large election problems, I must advise you that the Attorney General objects to the appointment plan by Desoto Parish which incorporates these same characteristics. In the case of Byrt v. Love, 307 F. Supp. 974 (N.D. Miss. 1969), the court ruled that as a result of the Attorney General's objection to the implementation of a state statute authorizing at-large elections for boards of supervisors in Mississippi, the supervisors "do not have statutory power or authority to provide" for such elections.

This is in reference to an ordinance of the Desoto Parish Police Jury authorizing a change from ward-by-ward to at-large election of the police jurors, which was submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Dear Mr. Callaspy:

Mr. J. M. Callaspy
President, Desoto Parish Police Jury
Courthouse
Mansfield, Louisiana 71052

AUG 6 1971

Although we understand the difficulties a police jury must overcome in drawing new election districts for a parish, we must conclude that the Attorney General of the United States is without power to supersede the Louisiana Legislature by carving out exceptions for particular counties. Of course, as provided by Section 3, you have the alternative of instituting an action in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia seeking a judgment declaring that the change in manner of electing police jurors does not have the purpose or effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color.

Sincerely,

DAVID L. NORMAN
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division