

DEC 28 1971

Mr. Richard Kilbourne
District Attorney
26th Judicial District
Clinton, Louisiana 70722

Dear Mr. Kilbourne:

This is in reference to the redistricting plan for East Feliciana Parish submitted by you to the Attorney General by letter of October 26, 1971.

Our analysis and review of the plan submitted reveal aspects of the reapportionment which make it impossible for the Attorney General to reach a determination that the plan does not have a discriminatory purpose or effect. A small portion of District 1 in the proposed plan is non-contiguous with and located some distance from the rest of District 1 and is virtually surrounded by District 2. This small enclave is approximately 95% white whereas the rest of the district is approximately 70% black. As the holding of the Supreme Court in Comillion v. Lightfoot, 364 U.S. 339 (1960), suggests, the voting rights of a racial minority can be infringed by drawing odd-shaped voting districts in which, in view of available alternatives, the voting strength of that group is affected. It appears that the reapportionment here could have been accomplished in a manner which would have avoided the effect of adversely affecting the Negro voting strength in the area involved.

For the foregoing reason I must, on behalf of the Attorney General, object to the proposed plan. However, I should like to add that the Voting Rights Act permits seeking approval of all changes affecting voting by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia irrespective of whether the change previously has been submitted to the Attorney General.

If a new plan is proposed, it will receive our prompt and careful consideration.

Sincerely,

DAVID L. NORMAN
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division