

DJ 166-012-3  
X9764

MAR 22 1977

Mr. Robert B. Spoonemore  
Superintendent  
Ralls Independent School  
District  
Box AD  
Ralls, Texas 75357

Dear Mr. Spoonemore:

This is in reference to the change to a majority vote requirement for election to the Board of Trustees of the Ralls Independent School District, Crosby County, Texas, submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended. Your submission was received on February 4, 1977.

We have given careful consideration to the information furnished by you as well as Bureau of the Census data and information and comments from interested parties. On the basis of our analysis we are unable to conclude, as we must under the Voting Rights Act, that the imposition of a majority vote requirement will not have a discriminatory effect on the conduct of elections in the Ralls Independent School District.

Our analysis reveals that Mexican Americans constitute a substantial proportion of the population of the Ralls Independent School District and that bloc voting along ethnic lines may exist. Under these circumstances, recent court decisions, to which we feel obligated to give great weight, indicate that a majority vote requirement in the context of at-large elections has the potential for abridging minority voting rights. See White v. Regester, 412 U.S. 755 (1973); Whitecomb v. Chavis, 403 U.S. 124 (1971).

Accordingly, on behalf of the Attorney General, I must interpose an objection to the implementation of the majority vote requirement for election to the Board of Trustees of the Ralls Independent School District. Of

course, as provided by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, you have the right to seek a declaratory judgment from the District Court for the District of Columbia that this change has neither the purpose nor will have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race, color or membership in a language minority group. In addition, Sections 51.23 to 51.25 of the Attorney General's Section 5 guidelines (28 C.F.R. 51.23-51.25) permit reconsideration of the objection should you have new information bearing on the matter. However, until such time as the objection may be withdrawn or a judgment from the District of Columbia Court is obtained, the legal effect of the objection by the Attorney General is to make the change to a majority vote requirement legally unenforceable.

Sincerely,

Drew S. Days III  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division