

APR 13 1976

Honorable Virginia G. Godfrey  
Mayor, City of Many  
P. O. Box 987  
Many, Louisiana 71449

Dear Mayor Godfrey:

This is in reference to the 1973 annexation and Reapportionment Plan "C" for the City of Many, Sabine Parish, Louisiana, submitted pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Your submission was completed February 13, 1976.

The Attorney General does not interpose an objection to the 1973 annexation. However, we feel a responsibility to point out that Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act expressly provides that the failure of the Attorney General to object does not bar any subsequent judicial action to enjoin the enforcement of such change.

In regard to Reapportionment Plan "C," we have given careful consideration to the materials and information you have submitted, as well as data compiled by the Bureau of the Census and information and comments from other interested parties. On the basis of our review and analysis, however, we are unable to conclude, as we must under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, that the reapportionment plan does not have the prohibited racial effect.

Our analysis shows that, according to the 1970 Census, the City of Many has a population which is 40% black. The majority of that black population is concentrated in the east-central area of the city. However,

our analysis shows that the boundary lines as drawn in the submitted reapportionment plan would have the effect of overly concentrating black citizens into District "B," while simultaneously fragmenting adjoining black concentrations into the surrounding majority white districts. Thus, District "B" emerges as a 100% black district and the rest of the black concentration is fragmented to the point where they represent, at best, a 42% minority among their proportions in the remaining four districts. We have not been presented with any compelling justification for such configuration and our own analysis reveals none. Moreover, it appears that rational and compact alternative districting could achieve population equality without such an effect.

Under these circumstances, I must interpose an objection on behalf of the Attorney General to the implementation of the submitted reapportionment plan for the City of Many.

Of course, as provided by Section 5, 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 question does not have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race. However, should you choose not to pursue that remedy, we have the continuing duty to enforce the Voting Rights Act and to insure compliance by the city with the objection herein.

Therefore, I would appreciate receiving, as soon as possible, the city's decision on whether a new city reapportionment will be accomplished or whether you will pursue the declaratory judgment provided for in the Act.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

J. Stanley Pottinger  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division