

CASHE COUDRAIN & BASS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

ANDRE G. COUDRAIN

ASHLEY E. BASS

RODNEY C. CASHE (1948 - 2011)

P.O. DRAWER 1509
HAMMOND, LA 70404

106 SOUTH MAGNOLIA ST.
HAMMOND, LA 70403

PHONE (985) 542-6848
FAX (985) 542-9602

WWW.CCBATTORNEYS.COM

JAMIE POLOZOLA GOMEZ

PATRICK G. COUDRAIN

SHAAN M. AUCOIN

acb@ccbattorneys.com

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Michael Pernick, Redistricting Counsel
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
40 Rector Street, 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10006

Tracie Washington
Louisiana Justice Institute
3157 Gentilly Blvd., Suite 132
New Orleans, LA 70122

Michael Showers, President
Greater Tangipahoa Parish NAACP Branch
17536 Rising Fawn Rd.
Amite, LA 70422

RE: Tangipahoa Parish School Board Compliance
with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act

Dear Mr. Pernick, Mr. Showers and Ms. Washington:

The Tangipahoa Parish School Board (“TPSB”) is in receipt of your letter of August 16, 2021 and thanks you for same. The current redistricting plan was precleared by the United States Department of Justice after its adoption in 2012. The percentages that the LDF asserts violate Section 2 jurisprudence in regard to “packing” were approved as by the US DOJ and presumed to be in compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that a court would conclude contrary to the preclearance issued by the US DOJ. I have attached a copy of the preclearance letter and the Report related to the existing plan adopted in 2012.

The assertions as to population appear to rely upon population estimates. LA law mandates the School Board use the actual 2020 Census data. The School Board has already engaged Strategic Demographics, LLC to assist in the post 2020 Census redistricting process. The principal of Strategic Demographics, LLC was actively involved in the 2010 cycle redistricting process which resulted in the current plan that was precleared by the US DOJ.



It is a common misconception that the minimum number of majority-minority districts is determined by a proportional population review. That is simply inconsistent with the law and jurisprudence. While instructive, the primary issue with regard to compliance with the Voting Rights Act is to first, not impair existing minority voting strength and, secondly, craft a plan that is not solely based upon race, to the exclusion of other redistricting criterion, such as community of interests, etc. The jurisprudence has clearly provided that the determination of whether a district is a majority-minority district is NOT the race of the candidate elected, but rather whether the candidate elected is generally the candidate of choice by the minority population in the district. Finally, student populations of a School District are not a valid redistricting criteria. While other data, such as voter registration data, may play a role in determining whether a district that appears to be a majority minority district is likely to perform as such, the basis for redistricting is the official 2020 Census data.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ashley E. Bass

Ashley E. Bass

AEB/kpp
Enclosure

cc: Melissa Stilley
Bret Schnadelbach
Robin Abrams
Ron Genco

