

Staying on Track with the Voting Rights Act

Myrna Pérez
January 25, 2011

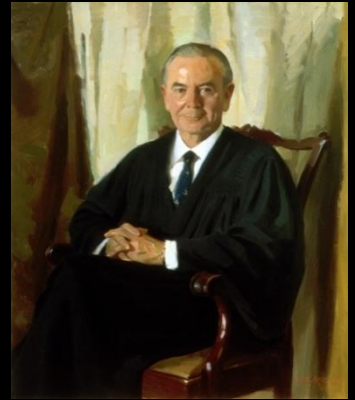
BRENNAN
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE

The Brennan Center and Redistricting

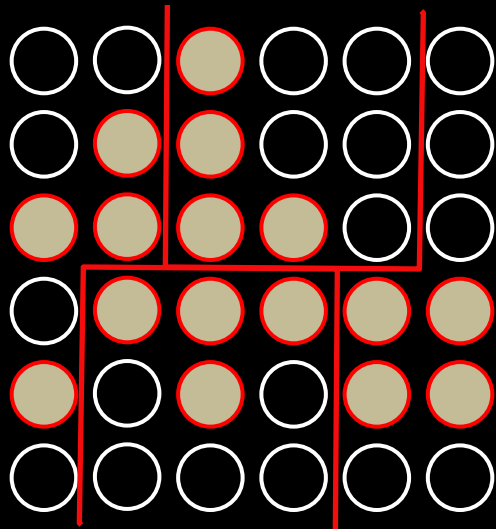
Based at NYU, but work nationwide

Think Tank, Advocacy Group, Law Firm

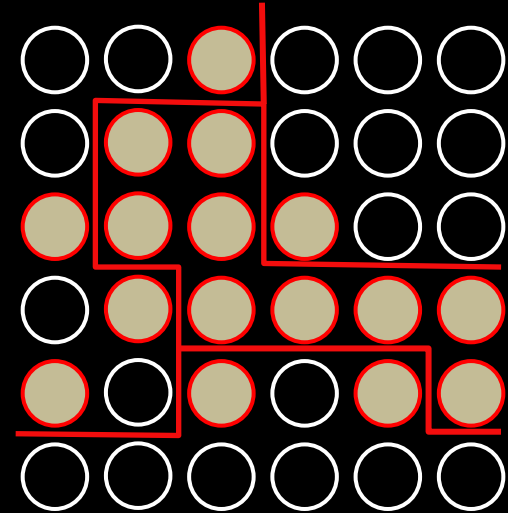
- Study of redistricting practices and reform initiatives
- Testimony before decisionmakers
- Consulting for advocates
- Advocacy and publication



Minority Representation



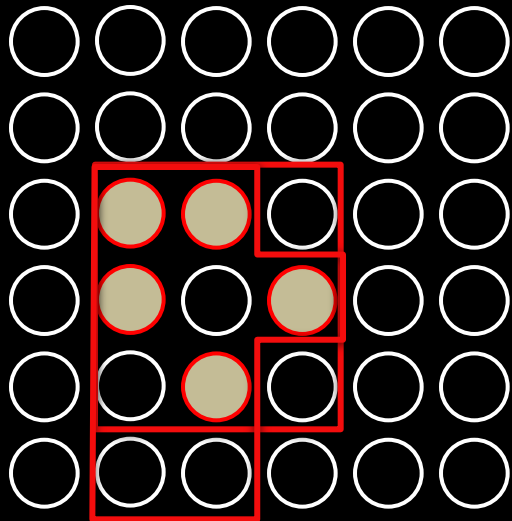
Cracking



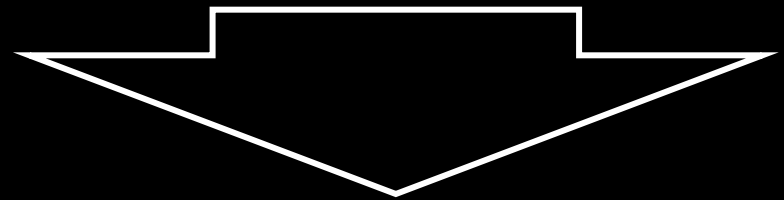
Packing

The Voting Rights Act

Section 2

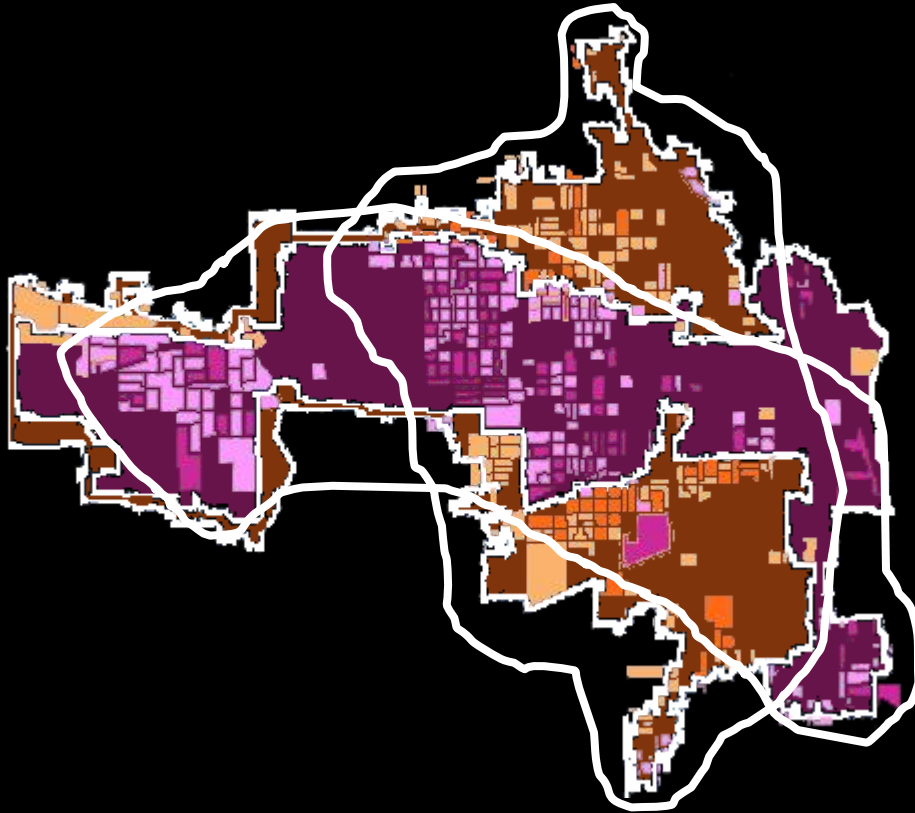


- Do minorities represent most of the voters in a compact area?
- Is there polarized voting?
- Is the minority population otherwise protected given the “totality of the circumstances”?



Do Not Dilute

Complying with the Voting Rights Act



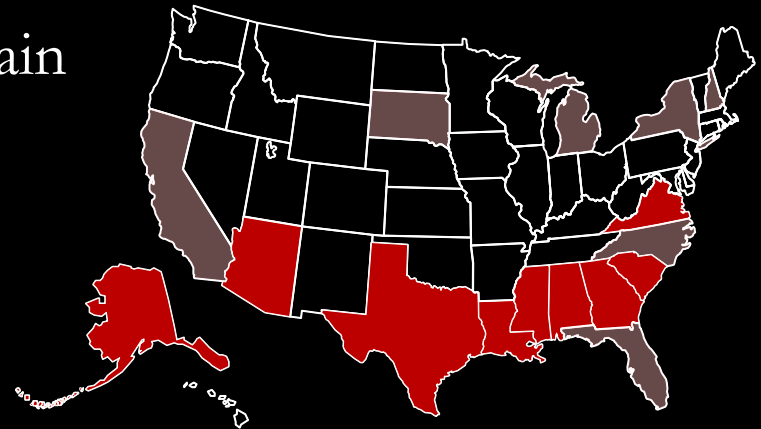
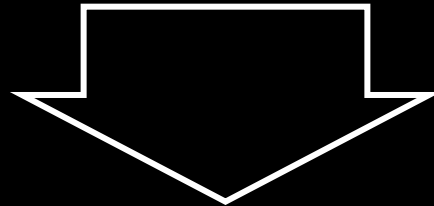
Chicago
suburbs

Latino/Hispanic
African-American

The Voting Rights Act

Section 5

- Preclearance for certain jurisdictions



- Is the new map intended to dilute minority votes?
- Does the new map leave minority voters worse off?

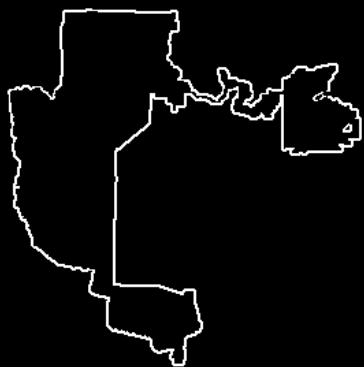
Communities of Interest

- Kansas -- “Social, cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic interests common to the population of the area, which are probable subjects of legislation . . . should be considered. [S]ome communities of interest lend themselves more readily than others to being embodied in legislative districts. . .”

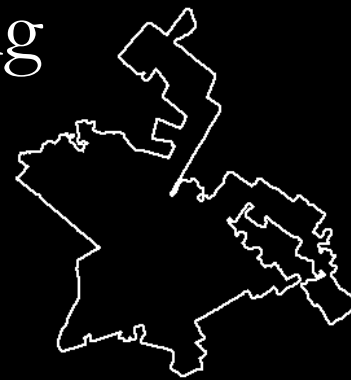
Communities of interest

- Social interests
- Cultural interests
- Racial / ethnic interests
- Economic / trade interests
- Geographic interests
- Communication and transportation networks
- Media markets
- Urban and rural interests
- Occupations and lifestyles

Cannot Judge by Shape Alone



You can't evaluate a district until you know what it's trying to achieve



Further Information

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