

Proposal: A study of electoral methods that can be used to settle voting rights lawsuits, including cumulative voting, limited voting, the single-transferable vote, and district elections, so the League can participate in the debate when a community is facing (or trying to forestall) such a lawsuit.

Background: Many jurisdictions in California have been sued, are being sued, have been threatened with a lawsuit, or fear a lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA). While the traditional remedy for settling such suits is to replace at-large elections with district elections, there are situations where a legal majority-minority district cannot be drawn, and in those cases proportional and semi-proportional systems have been used to give the protected group the ability to elect a candidate of their choice.

While the League has clear positions as to *how* district lines should be drawn, it has no clear positions as to *when* districts should be used, or when one of the non-district alternatives would be a better remedy. This hampers the League's ability to participate in the discussion of potential remedies of those lawsuits.

The LWVUS position on Representative Government is one that "promote[s] an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive", but that is too vague when it comes to choosing among potential remedies to voting rights lawsuits. A study of methods that can be used to remedy voting rights lawsuits is needed so the League can better participate in these deliberations.

For example, the City of Santa Clarita recently settled a CVRA lawsuit by agreeing to switch to cumulative voting, as did the Santa Clarita Community College District. The Newhall School District and the Castaic Union School District will also be switching to cumulative voting so as to avoid being sued under the CVRA.

The City Councils of Woodland (in Yolo County) and Highland (in San Bernardino County) placed measures on their respective November ballots to switch to district elections either because of an actual lawsuit or due to a fear or threat of one.

Without clear positions on remedies to CVRA lawsuits, it is difficult for Leagues to participate in these debates.

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