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MAY 14 1971

Leonard E. Yokum, Esquire
District Attorney
21st Judicial District
Amite, Louisiana 70422

Dear Mr. Yokum:

This is in reference to a resolution by the St. Helena Parish Police Jury authorizing a change from ward-by-ward to at-large election of the police jurors, which was submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

As you may know, the statute permitting at-large election of police jurors (Act No. 445 passed during the 1968 Louisiana legislative session) was submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5. The implementation of this statute, along with the provisions authorizing at-large elections for school board members (Act 561), were objected to by him on June 26, 1969. Because of this earlier objection to the enabling legislation and federal court decisions affecting at-large election problems, it appears that St. Helena Parish does not have authority to elect police jurors on an at-large basis. In the case of Dyer v. Love, 307 F. Supp. 974 (N.D. Miss. 1969), the court ruled that as a result of the Attorney General's objection to the implementation of the state statute authorizing at-large elections for boards of supervisors in Mississippi, the supervisors "do not have statutory power or authority to provide" for such elections.

We appreciate the difficulties that may result to particular parishes where a change to at-large elections for police jurors may neither have a racial purpose nor a racial effect. But we must conclude that the Attorney General of the United States is without power to supersede the Louisiana legislature by carving out exceptions for particular counties. Instead, the solution would seem to lie with the Louisiana legislature.

Sincerely,

DAVID L. NORMAN
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division