

DJ 166-012-3

JUN 7 1972

Mr. John F. Ward, Jr.
Special Counsel for the Pointe
Coupee Parish School Board
206 Louisiana Avenue
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

Dear Mr. Ward:

Reference is made to the reapportionment plan for school board districts in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, submitted pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and received by this Department on April 14, 1972. We intended to give this submission expedited consideration, but at your request we have delayed making a formal decision on the plan to give you a chance to discuss with the board the possibility of adopting an alternative plan which would have dealt with the problems which we have informally expressed to you.

The submitted plan reduces the proportion of school board members elected from majority-black districts from eight of the old twelve-member board to two out of the proposed eight-member board. It is our view that the plan unnecessarily discriminates against black voters and potential candidates. Therefore, I must on behalf of the Attorney General interpose an objection to the submitted plan.

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act provides that following our objection, the submitted plan cannot be implemented absent a favorable declaratory judgment by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Alternatively, the board can adopt and submit to the Attorney General or to the District Court for the District of Columbia a new plan for review under Section 5. Any such new plan submitted to the Attorney General would receive our prompt consideration.

Sincerely,

DAVID L. HORNAN
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division