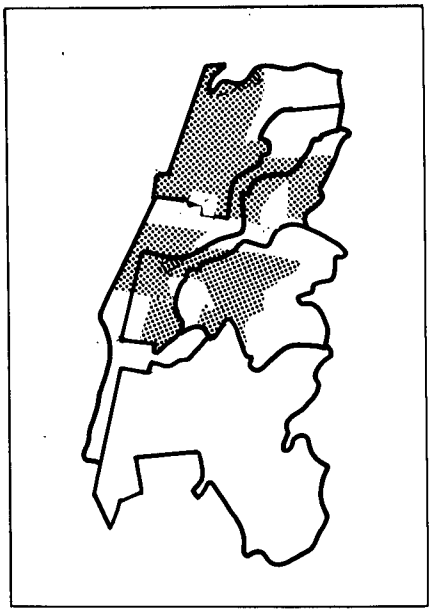
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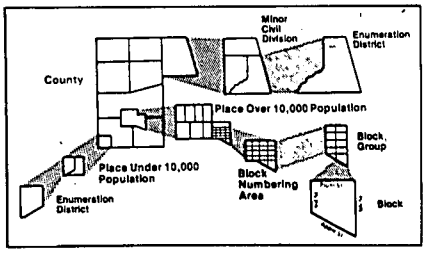
Redistricting in Mississippi

Primaries are scheduled for August, but most counties have waited until the last minute to submit district plans for preclearance. How closely is the Justice Department watching?



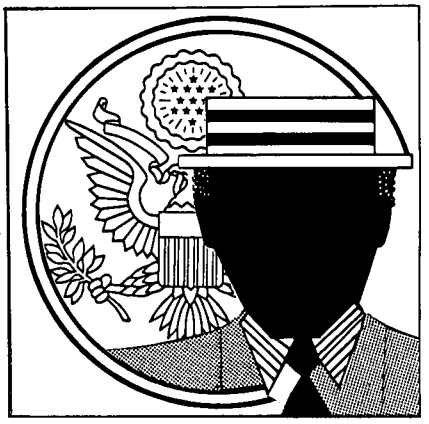
Resources for Voting Rights Litigation

Hints from a population expert on maps, numbers, computers



Black Presidential Candidacy Endorsed

"Black Coalition for 1984" will draft a platform, encourage voter registration, and try to link up with Hispanics, women, and labor.



Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

Two months ago, Secretary of Education Terrell Bell released the report of his National Commission on Excellence in Education. *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative Need for Educational Reform* officially recognized that our schools have not been turning out enough graduates trained to perform productively in a highly technological, internationally competitive economy. Nor are our schools instilling the cultural values and citizenship skills "essential to a free, democratic society . . . that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom." In the dramatic language of the report, "the educational foundations of our society are presently [sic] being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people."

For weeks, the media have been filled with stories substantiating the commission's findings. Virtually all the Democratic presidential hopefuls have produced position papers calling for, among other things, more federal spending for education, in part to increase the pay of teachers. For the moment, at least, education has become a major issue for the 1984 campaign.

The Reagan administration's position has been politically astute, though educationally shortsighted. It is advocating merit pay for superior teachers, with the money coming from state and local taxes. This position is shortsighted in several ways.

First, local governments can't pick up the financial slack already resulting from federal budget cuts. According to the *Washington Post,* a recent Princeton University study reports that "most financially pressed state governments have not tried to cushion their residents from the impact of cuts in federal aid, and the few that have are making up less than a quarter of the cuts."

Another problem with the Reagan position is that the idea is being used as a substitute for raising the abysmally low pay of *all* teachers. Thus it will be ineffective in attracting new teachers and improving the overall quality of education.

But despite the shortsightedness of the Reagan position, it has achieved two short-term political advantages. The administration has seized the initiative on education reform, without giving up anything except perhaps a little presidential jawboning. And it has divided a potentially powerful source of political opposition, the nation's teachers and many who are dissatisfied with the state of education in America.

The administration has also used the Commission's report to revive its push for another shortsighted proposal: tuition tax credits. The idea appears to have been given added impetus by the Supreme Court's recent decision on a tuition tax deduction law in Minnesota. Although the lion's share of the deductions went to parents of students in parochial schools, the Court ruled that the tax benefits served a secular purpose and thus did not violate the Constitutional separation of church and state.

Constitutional questions aside, the administration and other supporters of tuition tax credits must face the fact that additional support for private schools is irrelevant to the problems raised in the commission report. Private schools enroll only 10 percent of the nation's elementary and secondary school children—including only about 5 percent of black school children. Support for private schools, however achieved, would draw resources away from the already troubled public schools that educate 90 percent of the nation's students.

If, as the administration predicts, the tax credits would allow more children to enroll in private schools, the effect would be perverse. Private schools, which can select the students they wish to educate, would draw the most talented and the most advantaged students out of public schools. The result could be the reestablishment of two educational systems, separate and markedly unequal. Thus, tuition tax credits, like merit pay for teachers, are a poor response to the problems the Commission's report has identified.

Eddie N. Williams
President

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Redistricting in Mississippi

by Armand Derfner

(The author is currently preparing, for the Joint Center, a case history of the extension of the Voting Rights Act in 1982.)

The statewide elections in Mississippi this year could produce major gains for black voters in many counties, but not if white county officials have their way.

Mississippi's state and county elections take place only once every four years, so this year's elections will be the first since the 1980 census. Black voters have been looking forward to making sizable gains when redistricting is done to comply with the new population figures. County officials in charge of the redistricting process, though, have been working overtime to make certain that the status quo will be maintained.

Black voters are being aided in their efforts by the Voting Rights Act and the Constitution, with some help from the Justice Department. The question is whether this will be enough to crack Mississippi's historic wall of resistance.

County Offices Key

The key battlegrounds are the offices of county supervisor and, to a somewhat lesser extent, justice of the peace. Each of Mississippi's 82 counties is governed by a five-member board of supervisors, elected from five single-member districts, or "beats." No black had been elected county supervisor in this century until 1967, when four blacks were elected in four separate counties. With increasing black voter registration and redistricting following the 1970 census, a handful of blacks were elected in other counties. Going into this year's elections, out of 410 supervisors in the state, 27—or about 6.5 percent—are black.

The state's total population is 35 percent black, and approximately 26 percent of registered voters are black.

The situation has been much the same for justices of the peace. Until now, these offices had been distributed in the same way as those of county supervisor—that is, five in each county, elected from five single-member districts. Out of the 410 justices of the peace in the state, 29 are black today. A change in the law, however, has reduced the number of justices of the peace to two in most counties and three in heavily populated counties. All of these offices will be elected from single-member districts.

Virtually all the district lines for county supervisors and justices of the peace will have to be changed. The county supervisors' beat lines will have to be changed because of demographic shifts that make their districts unequal in population, while the justice of the peace lines will have to be changed because the number of districts in each county will drop from five to two or three.

Although the census figures have been available for two years, very few counties acted to redraw their lines until this year; 22 counties—one quarter of the total—have not even started the process yet, even though most of them are badly malapportioned. The populations of the supervisor districts in some of those counties vary by as much as 200 percent; the Supreme Court has said that variations of more than 10 percent are unconstitutional. As a result, there may well be chaos in many counties as the August primaries approach.

The Constitution and the Voting Rights Act put dual requirements on each county. Districts must be approximately equal in population (within about 10 percent), in order to meet the one-person, one-vote test of the Constitution, and the redistricting plan must avoid diluting the votes of black voters, in order to meet the preclearance test under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Most of the 60 counties that have redrawn their lines do meet the one-person, one-vote test. It is in the preclearance process that many of these counties are failing to obey the law. Because Mississippi is covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, every county must submit its new district plan to the Justice Department and show the department that the new lines do not discriminate against black voters.

Last-Minute Submissions for Preclearance

A number of counties had submitted their redistricting plans by the beginning of this year, and had received preclearance from the Justice Department, even though black voters believed that some of those plans were discriminatory. But in addition to the 22 counties that have not redrawn their lines at all, another 20 counties had not submitted plans for preclearance by the end of February 1983 and had to be asked by the Justice Department to do so.

In the past few months, however, black voters in Mississippi and their supporters have finally been able to make the Justice Department begin to recognize how discriminatory many of the plans are. Thus, from the middle of May through early July, the department acted on 18 counties' supervisors plans and objected to two thirds of them.

The question now is what will happen as time runs down before the primary elections. Only those counties that have had plans precleared will be able to hold valid elections this year. The others cannot legally use their *current* plans, because they are malapportioned, and they cannot use *new* plans, because they have not been precleared under the Voting Rights Act.

There is a widespread suspicion that many of the counties have waited until the last minute to produce precisely this situation, hoping that something would happen to save them from having to allow black voters to exercise effective ballots: the Justice Department would feel pressured into approving discriminatory plans, or the courts would feel pressured into allowing elections to be held under malapportioned or discriminatory plans (because of the so-called, if self-induced, emergency), or the elections would be postponed and the current officeholders would simply continue to hold office illegally while legal entanglements were straightened out.

(Continued on page 8)

Resources for Voting Rights Litigation

by William P. O'Hare

(The author is senior research associate at the Joint Center.)

Since the voting-rights court decisions of the 1960s and 1970s and the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the redistricting process has become a very litigious one. During the 1980s, many community groups and civil rights and public interest attorneys will be challenging proposed redistricting plans in and out of the courtroom.

Various legal strategies can be employed in opposing a redistricting plan. The laws upon which a redistricting plan or the redistricting process rests, and thus the strategy selected, depend to some extent on the political level involved (i.e., U.S. congressional level, state legislative level, or local level) and, of course, on the facts in the case.

In attempting to ascertain the effects of a given district plan, and in supporting or opposing a plan—during the political process, through Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, or in litigation—advocates will need certain resources with which they may not be familiar. This article outlines those resources and how they can be obtained.

Maps

The fundamental requirement for constructing or analyzing a plan for political districts is a good set of maps. There are basically two types of maps that may be needed.

The first category can be called political maps: maps that outline political territories such as precincts, wards, or congressional/legislative districts. While the U.S. Census Bureau reports data for some of these jurisdictions, it does not provide these maps. Political maps must be obtained from local authorities, often an office of the state legislature or local planning department. (To the extent that obtaining these maps is dependent on good relations with local officials, it is easy to understand why the maps should be obtained prior to filing a lawsuit against the jurisdiction.)

The cost and quality of such maps vary enormously from one place to another, and there may be time delays in getting a set of maps. Even finding the source for maps can be confusing. It is important to examine the availability and cost of the necessary political maps very early in the process of deciding whether to pursue litigation regarding a redistricting plan.

Another category of maps that is often necessary *is* produced and distributed by the U.S. Census Bureau. There are three kinds of census maps.

The *County Map Series* includes outlines for

- Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs)—townships or other official political subdivisions of counties;
- Census County Divisions (CCDs), where there are no MCDs;
- places such as cities and towns;
- Indian reservations;
- tracts or Block Numbering Areas (BNAs)—groups of contiguous blocks in some areas;
- blocks or Enumerations Districts (EDs) in non-tracted or blocked areas.

CCDs, BNAs, and EDs are units constructed by the Census Bureau for its own statistical purposes.

County maps may be sufficient in areas that are largely rural or contain only a few small towns, but in densely settled places containing large numbers of people, you will need *Place Maps* or *Place and Vicinity Maps.* Often a Place Map or Place and Vicinity Map will be an inset in a county map. The term place, as used by the Census Bureau, refers to two kinds of areas, (1) "incorporated places" (city, village, etc.), which are politically recognized by states, and (2) densely settled areas that are not politically organized. This second type of area was called an "unincorporated place" in the 1970 Census and is called a "Census Designated Place" (CDP) in the 1980 Census. Place Maps will show how the city is divided up into census units—i.e., blocks, tracts, etc. Place and Vicinity Maps are just like Place Maps, except that they contain some of the built-up area adjacent to the city.

Finally, for large urban or metropolitan areas, the *Metropolitan Map Series* is available. This shows all of the census geography—i.e., tracts, blocks, urbanized areas, etc.—for a whole metropolitan area. A large city may require several maps to cover all the blocks.

Census maps are easily obtained, and they are generally inexpensive. For metropolitan areas, the cost of maps ranges from $8.00 to $50.00. For more rural areas, where you may need a county map and one or two place maps, the costs will generally be under $50.00. On the other hand, the block maps for all of Georgia would come to hundreds if not thousands of dollars. In addition to the cost, organizing and storing all of these maps can be cumbersome and time-consuming.

To obtain census maps, write to:

Data User Services Division
Customer Services
U.S. Bureau of the Census
Washington, D.C. 20233

or call (301) 763-4100 at the U.S. Bureau of the Census in Washington. Once you specify exactly what maps you want, you will be quoted a price for that particular set of maps. A check for the complete amount must be sent to the Census Bureau before your order will be processed. Generally, it takes two to three weeks from the time the bureau receives your payment to fill an order. In some cases, local or state authorities may be able to provide census maps more quickly or more cheaply than the bureau. State data centers* and local planning agencies are a good place to start looking.

Census maps are vital because they contain identifying numbers (i.e., tract and block numbers), which are needed to match census population figures—given in table form—to pieces of geography. Ordinary street and highway maps do not have census geography denoted and therefore are of little use in this process. The geographic terms

* 49 states and the District of Columbia have formed state data centers, which provide census publications and data tapes to users within the state. For the address of your state data center, write or call Larry Carbaugh at the Census Bureau in Washington, D.C. (202) 763-1580.

used by the Census Bureau are explained in *Census Geography: Concepts and Products* (CFF No. 8, June 1982), which is available for 30 cents from the Census Bureau, at the address given above.

Demographic Data

You will need demographic data about the populations of geographic divisions shown on your maps, for two reasons. First, to build contiguous, compact districts of nearly equal population size, as required by the Constitution, one must know the population size of each of the components of such districts. Second, these data are necessary to evaluate the minority voting strength in any particular district and all districts combined.

Demographic data are available from the U.S. Census Bureau under Public Law 94-171. Seven specific figures are available for each area:

1. total population
2. white population
3. black population
4. American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut population combined
5. Asian and Pacific Islander population combined
6. Other races combined
7. Spanish Origin population

Remember that racial categories 2 through 6 are independent of the Spanish Origin category. In other words, someone of Spanish Origin would also be counted as black, white, or some other race.

The P.L. 94-171 data can be purchased in three forms: printed copies called *blowbacks,* microfiche, and computer tape. How one plans to use the data should determine the form in which it is purchased. The data you need may be available at your local planning office, state data center, or from your regional Census Bureau Office. Otherwise, it can be obtained from the Data User Services Division of the U.S. Census Bureau at the address above or by calling (301) 763-4100. To give you a rough idea of prices: The microfiche for the entire state of California is $11; paper copy for Cook County (Chicago) is $115.40; and computer tapes are $140 per state. Computer printouts of needed data can often be obtained from a state data center free or for a small charge. Many commercial vendors also provide data for a fee.

The units of geography for which these figures are available vary from state to state, and from one location to another within a state. Certain states elected to join a program sponsored by the Census Bureau that would give them data for precincts in all or part of the state in 1980. These states, or areas of states, had to freeze their precinct boundaries after April 1, 1977. For these states, the racial data described above are available for each precinct. Certain other states made arrangements to get equivalent data by submitting precinct/block equivalency lists during 1980. Where precinct data are not available, precinct information must be approximated using other Census Bureau units.

The census areas for which figures are uniformly provided—i.e., tracts, enumeration districts, and minor civil divisions—don't always coincide with the boundaries of political entities such as precincts. Therefore, obtaining population figures for precincts can be very time consuming and sometimes requires demographic or statistical expertise seldom possessed by local organizations.

Normally, the Census Bureau provides tract and block data only in highly populated areas. In 1980, however, certain states contracted with the Census Bureau to get tract and/or block data on a statewide basis. Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, New Jersey, and Rhode Island contracted to get *tract* data for the entire state; Georgia, New York, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Virginia arranged to have *block* statistics prepared for the entire state.

In large metropolitan areas or in places with populations of 10,000 or more, you can obtain racial/ethnic data by blocks; in other areas, the smallest geographic unit for which data are available is an Enumeration District. Blocks match your conception of what a city block normally is, and these seldom change from one census year to another (e.g., from 1970 to 1980). EDs, on the other hand, are created solely for the purpose of taking the census and may change completely from one census year to the next. An enumeration district generally contains about 300 housing units or 1,000 people. Census tracts generally have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents.

Computers

There are three general types of functions for which computers are used in redistricting cases. First, they can be used simply to print out data from magnetic tapes in a readable form. This simply transfers information from one media (magnetic tape) to another (paper). Second, computers can be used to compute and analyze statistics for proposed district plans. That is, they can remember which units of geography go into which districts and show the demographic ramifications of one or more proposed plans. The effect of changes can also be examined quickly. A computer can be used to identify units of geography that have high minority populations and to analyze the overall position of minorities in a plan (i.e., how many districts have over 50 percent minority population, how many have between 40 and 50 percent, etc.).

Computers can improve the accuracy of calculations. When plans are constructed by hand, pieces of geography occasionally get left out, totals don't add up, or people make simple arithmetic mistakes. Finally, with sophisticated peripheral equipment and software, computers can actually do mapping of districts. This can be done by setting certain criteria and turning the computer loose or by using a "digitizer" to transfer information from a map to a computer. Usually, though, an infinite number of maps can be drawn to meet most criteria. Therefore, computers seldom take the place of human judgment.

This article has been a very cursory presentation of some basic information, which should be helpful in considering how to pursue redistricting cases. Although the discussion is by no means exhaustive, it should make it easier to track down the demographic information that is essential to the voting-rights litigation process.

Black Presidential Candidacy Endorsed

A high-level group of black political and civil rights leaders endorsed the concept of a black presidential candidacy in next year's Democratic nomination campaign, without endorsing a particular candidate. The June 20 meeting at Chicago's O'Hare Hilton followed months of discussion and speculation over the possibility of such a candidacy and its possible impact on the presidential race (see *Focus*, April 1983).

Attention is now focused on Jesse Jackson, who has set himself forth as a possible candidate and is currently engaged in a campaign to boost black registration in the South. Because over half of the unregistered black voting-age population resides in the South, Jackson's "Southern Crusade" can be seen as a strategic move in preparation for a presidential candidacy.

Jackson has asked Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher to head an exploratory committee, which is usually the first stage in assembling a national campaign organization. Jackson is expected to announce his decision with regard to a candidacy shortly after the completion of the southern registration effort on August 15.

Poll Shows Jackson Third

A survey in the May edition of the *Garth Analysis* showed Jackson running third in the Democratic nomination race, with 9 percent of the Democratic vote. This showing places him well behind former Vice President Walter Mondale, who was first with 36 percent, and Ohio Senator John Glenn, with 24 percent, but well ahead of the other contenders.

According to the poll, Jackson receives the support of 42 percent of black Democrats and 3 percent of white Democrats. Jackson is given a favorable rating by 78 percent of black respondents and an unfavorable rating by only 7 percent, suggesting that he could receive well over half of the black vote in next year's primaries and caucuses. Several recent analyses, including one by the Joint Center, indicate that a candidate receiving 75 percent of the black vote could come to next year's Democratic convention with about 200 delegates, even with only negligible white support. The Garth survey also shows that Jackson is known to only 61 percent of the white electorate. About half of the whites who do have an opinion of Jackson view him favorably, suggesting some room for growth beyond a purely black voter base.

The clearest effect of a Jackson candidacy would be to reduce Mondale's chances of winning the presidential nomination. With Jackson in the race, Mondale's black support erodes from 48 to 21 percent. This shift in the black vote would make it much more difficult for Mondale to perform well in the crucial early round of southern primaries and caucuses during the week of March 13 and might cost him the chance to win other primaries in some of the northern industrial states.

The implications of a Mondale collapse are somewhat difficult to predict and would depend on the relative strengths of the other candidates. A Glenn sweep through the South might enable him to lock up the nomination by the end of March, but strong regional showings by Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina and former Governor Reubin Askew of Florida could instead yield fragmented results in the South. Liberal Senator Alan Cranston of California might then emerge as a dark-horse nominee in the later rounds of the primary schedule. If Mondale's remaining black support solidified behind a black candidate, a brokered convention could be the result, putting black delegates in a position to help determine the choice of the nominee.

Whatever decision is reached about a black candidacy in the nomination race, there seems to be little interest at present in the possibility of a black independent campaign in the November election. Strong sentiment was expressed at the Chicago meeting to channel black efforts into securing commitments from the Democratic party and then uniting behind the Democratic nominee to defeat President Reagan in the fall.

"Black Coalition for 1984" Established

In addition to endorsing the idea of a black presidential candidacy, the Chicago meeting also reached several other decisions in preparation for next year's election. The ad hoc leadership group was reconstituted more formally as the Black Coalition for 1984. The coalition will have four major objectives:

- To draft a "people's platform," which will be given to all of the candidates to determine their responsiveness to black concerns. A draft of the platform was prepared in advance of the June 20 meeting and a final version is anticipated by September.
- To encourage efforts to register 25 percent of the eligible blacks throughout the country who are not currently registered to vote. (For a rundown of the unregistered blacks by state, see the June 1983 issue of *Focus*).
- To establish liaison with Hispanic, women's, and labor groups in the hope of working as a team in next years' platform deliberations and general election campaign.
- To create a media advisory committee to ensure that black concerns are given adequate exposure in the press.

20th Anniversary March for Jobs, Peace, Freedom

Plans for an August 27 march on Washington are firming up. Called by the New Coalition of Conscience, the march will commemorate the historic event at which Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I have a dream" speech and which led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The coalition pulls together groups and individuals seeking to combat "three critical conditions in our society—insufferable unemployment, an escalating arms race, and the denial of basic rights and programs which ensure freedom."

Marchers will assemble beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the Washington Monument. At 11:30, they will start marching to the Lincoln Memorial, where the program will begin at 1:00 p.m. For further information, contact the Twentieth Anniversary Mobilization at 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202 467-6445).

Telescope

Black Presidential Appointees Down Sharply Since 1980

The Civil Rights Commission has issued a report showing that the Reagan administration lags far behind the Carter administration in appointing minorities and women to top policy-making positions in the executive branch. By the end of Carter's term of office, in October 1980, 12.2 percent of presidential appointments were held by blacks and 12.1 percent by women. In contrast, 4.1 percent of President Reagan's appointments have gone to blacks and 8.0 percent to women.

The commission focused on the increasing number of minority and female elected officials as evidence that

> the availability of qualified women and minority men for full-time Presidential appointments should not be in doubt. For example, 1980 census figures show that more than one-third of all State legislators and more than 17 percent of all judges in our society are women. Recent elections in Chicago, Denver, and Philadelphia indicate that black and Hispanic candidates for such offices as mayor are increasingly active and successful in public affairs. Between 1965 and 1982 the number of black elected offficials—Federal, State, and local—increased tenfold, from about 500 to more than 5,100. Women and minority men thus are increasingly acquiring the same public leadership responsibilities and experience that have characterized the backgrounds of white males who have received Presidential appointments.

Black Mayors Urge Conventions in Cities Headed by Blacks

The National Conference of Black Mayors is encouraging black organizations and businesses to bring their annual conventions to cities with black mayors. Since 1973, the number of black mayors across the country has increased from 82 to 224, and several attractive urban centers are now headed by blacks—Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, New Orleans, Detroit, Chicago, and West Palm Beach, Florida. Black mayor often support set-asides for minority businesses and organizations, and they would like to see more of these businesses bring the millions of dollars they spend during their conventions to cities with black mayors.

FEC to Sponsor Conferences on Federal Election Campaign Laws

This coming fall, the National Clearinghouse on Election Administration of the Federal Election Commission is sponsoring a series of regional conferences on federal election campaign laws. The conferences will provide an opportunity to become familiar with the latest developments in federal election laws, particularly new regulations prescribed this year. Participants are expected to include federal candidates, state legislators, state and local party officials, political action committee representatives, election officials, and others interested in the election process.

Workshops and roundtable discussions will cover campaign financing, corporate and labor participation in federal elections, PACs, and party involvement in federal elections. A workshop on candidates for federal office will cover sources of support available to federal candidates; registration, record-keeping, and reporting requirements; and handling specific aspects of election laws that have caused problems for candidates in the past. Several general interest workshops will cover topics such as using the commission's public records and other resources, tax issues related to campaign financing, public financing for presidential elections and conventions, and the Federal Election Campaign Act and the commission's enforcement and investigative procedures.

The conferences will be held between September and December 1983 in five cities around the country: Itasca, IL (Chicago area), September 6-8; Albany, NY, September 25-27; Charleston, SC, October 23-25; Tulsa, OK, November 13-15; and Los Angeles, CA, December 4-6. The registration fee will be about $75 and will include two lunches and a banquet. For further information and a preregistration packet, contact Gwenn Hofmann at 800 424-9530 (toll free), or from Washington, DC, 523-4183.

Senior Military Fellow to Join JCPS

Colonel Wade S. Gatling, United States Air Force, has been selected as the first military officer to participate in the Joint Center's Senior Fellows Program. Colonel Gatling will be in residence at the Joint Center from August 1983 to July 1984, conducting research on military personnel issues and participating in other Joint Center activities.

Colonel Gatling's assignment is the result of an agreement between the Defense Department and the Joint Center, which establishes an arrangement similar to those the Department of Defense has long had with other "think tanks" such as the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute.

Colonel Gatling has been in the Air Force for 22 years. He is coming to the Joint Center from Korea, where he has been commander of the Eighth Combat Support Group at Kunsan Air Base. He is a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and once served as Deputy Chief of the Air Force Human Resources division, which handles equal opportunity policy, human relations education, and drug and alcohol abuse. Colonel Gatling received his Bachelor's degree in mathematics from Tufts University and his Master's degree in business administration from Pepperdine University.

Focus Indexes

Focus and other materials published by the Joint Center for Political Studies are now included in the Public Affairs Information Service database, an online indexing service, and the Congressional Information Service, which publishes the *Statistical Reference Index* and microfiche reproductions.

Redistricting in Mississippi

(Continued from page 3)

The first strategy was thwarted when allies of Mississippi's black voters turned the spotlight on the Justice Department. Representative Don Edwards of California wrote to express concern about the Mississippi County redistrictings. On June 9, 1983, Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center for Political Studies, wrote to Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds describing the types of strategies being used in the redistricting efforts of the Mississippi counties and urging Reynolds, who heads the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, to stand firm against these attempts to perpetuate the history of discriminatory districting in the state.

Williams particularly pointed to the use of the "least change" strategy, by which the counties drew their new lines as closely as possible to the 1970s lines and thus claimed that the new lines were neutral and non-discriminatory. But most of the 1970 lines had escaped scrutiny under the Voting Rights Act (in part because of inadequate Justice Department investigation at the time). Thus, the 1970s lines are simply being used to preserve discrimination.

Assistant Attorney General Reynolds has responded that "we will not grant preclearance to any plan unless the county demonstrates the absence of both discriminatory purpose and effect," and in particular, that "the so-called least-change plan" will receive close scrutiny.

Meanwhile, on June 10, there was a two-hour meeting between Assistant Attorney General Reynolds and the Reverend Jesse Jackson of Operation PUSH. Jackson was accompanied by Representative John Conyers of Michigan; Lamond Godwin, PUSH Washington representative; and several civil rights lawyers. At that meeting, Reynolds was told in detail of redistricting and other problems in Mississippi.

Among the subtle barriers to registration discussed were dual registration—requiring separate registration for county and town elections; the failure to use deputy registrars, so that citizens must often travel more than 50 miles round trip just to register; the full-slate law, under which voters are required to cast some of their ballots against their preferred candidates if they want to vote at all; and numerous other violations of the Voting Rights Act and the Fifteenth Amendment.

At the close of this meeting, Reynolds agreed to go to Mississippi, to look at the situation firsthand. The following week, he and his staff spent two days touring the Mississippi Delta with Reverend Jackson and other black Mississippians. Immediately upon his return from Mississippi, Reynolds dispatched federal examiners to six Mississippi counties, where they registered over 1,100 voter in just four days.

Voting Rights Hang in the Balance

The stage is now set for a showdown on this year's Mississippi elections, to see whether blacks will at last be able to exercise their full voting rights as guaranteed by the Constitution and the law, or whether they will suffer another decade of disfranchisement.

Several lawsuits have already been filed to force counties to adopt properly apportioned, nondiscriminatory districting plans. Civil rights lawyers are considering suing additional counties before the August 2 primary, and they have also called on the Justice Department to bring suits itself.

By the time you read this article, the outlines will be clearer. As this article goes to press, however, blacks' continuing struggle to vote in Mississippi hangs once more in the balance.

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