

Black Elected Officials (BEOs) on Local Governing Bodies
After Adoption of Full Representation Systems

Jurisdiction	BEO 1988	BEO 1992	BEO 1996	BEO 2000
Ariton *	1	1	1	1
Carbon Hill *	1	1	1	0
Centre +	1	0	1	1
Cuba *	0	0	0	0
Dora *	1	0	0	0
Faunsdale **	1	1	1	2
Fulton **	1	1	0	0
Goshen *	1	1	1	0
Guin +	1	1	1	2
Heath +	0	0	0	0
Kinsey *	2	0	0	0
Loachapoka *	1	1		0
Lowndesboro **	0	0	0	0
Myrtlewood *	0	0	0	0
Orrville **	0	0	0	0
Pennington *	1	1	1	2
Pickensville *	0	1	1	2
Pine Apple *	1	1	1	1
Providence *	0	0	0	0
Rutledge *	0	1	1	1
Silas **	1	1	1	1
Toxey *	1	1	1	0
Waldo **	2	2	2	2
Waverly *	0	0	0	0
Webb *	0	0	0	1

* One-Vote System
** Two-Vote System
+ Cumulative Voting

The Center for Voting and Democracy

The Center is dedicated to fair elections where every vote counts and all voters are represented. As a catalyst for reform, we conduct research, analysis, education and advocacy to build understanding of and support for more democratic voting systems. We promote full representation as an alternative to winner-take-all elections and instant runoff voting as an alternative to plurality elections and traditional runoff elections.

We Provide the Following:

- Voter education & community workshops
- Comprehensive website & library
- Legal assistance in voting rights cases
- Assistance in drafting legislation
- Analysis of alternative voting plans
- Amicus Curiae briefs

A History of Effective Service

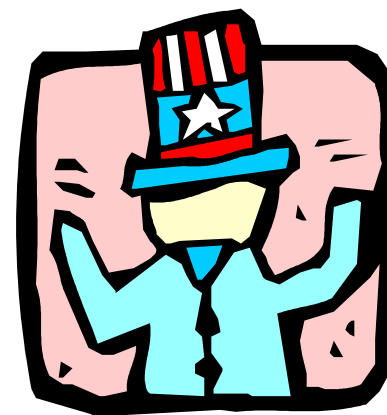
The Center for Voting and Democracy (CVD) has a history of successful service to racial and ethnic minorities seeking fair representation. We worked closely with Amarillo (TX) in preparation for cumulative voting elections in 2000 and 2002. We helped AALDEF defend choice voting in New York City before the Department of Justice in 1999. We have made numerous presentations to community groups, charter commissions and national organizations.



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Full and Fair Representation in Alabama

Winning A Fair Share of Seats and Political Power with Cumulative Voting and the One-Vote System



Prepared by
The Center for Voting and Democracy



Full Representation Voting Systems in Alabama

Background

Full representation voting methods were first adopted in Alabama during the 1980s. Today there are 28 governing bodies elected by cumulative voting or versions of the one-vote system. Nearly all have elected African Americans for the first time after adoption of full representation. Most have elected more women and had higher turnout.

With the one-vote system, voters cast one vote in an election for more than one seat. With cumulative voting voters have the same number of votes as seats, but are able to “plump” more than one vote on a single candidate,

In 1985, the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC) decided to challenge at-large elections statewide. As a result of this lawsuit, many localities were required to change their voting systems to provide racial minorities with a better opportunity to elect candidates of choice. The ADC proposed full representation in some places where it was not clear that a single-member district system would boost minority representation. The jurisdictions that adopted full representation have much in common. 90.3 percent are municipalities, and sixteen have a black population that is less than 25 percent.

Full representation has helped realize the goal of voting rights advocates to have fair systems where the minority has a real voice in the political system.

Advantages of Full Representation

- ⇒ Eliminates requirement of jurisdictions to redistrict themselves every 10 years
- ⇒ Boosts access to representation for racial minorities and women
- ⇒ Allows candidates to win with less campaign spending
- ⇒ Increases the potential pool of high-quality candidates

Making Strategic Decision: How Many Candidates to Run?

Full representation systems work best when those seeking to elect candidates of choice understand the incentives of a particular system. One key strategic decision to make with cumulative voting and the one-vote system is deciding how many candidates from your particular community should run. The ADC has pointed out that if several black candidates compete together against all other candidates in an open field, chances increase that no black candidate will win. While this can be a real concern, more than one black candidate can win under appropriate conditions. The municipalities of Kinsey and Waldo both have elected two black candidates at the same time in one election cycle.



Summary

Full representation has made a difference in Alabama. Cumulative voting and the one-vote system have given many Alabama localities the opportunity to elect local governments that look like their communities. African Americans, women, and substantial political minorities now have a fair opportunity to voice and represent their concerns and interests. There is no perfect voting system, of course, because not everyone agrees on the goals of an election system. But as a means to provide fair and full representation, cumulative voting and the one vote system have worked well in Alabama since their adoption.

Case Study: Chilton County

Chilton County adopted cumulative voting as part of a voting rights settlement. In 1990, African Americans constituted only 10% of the county's voting age population, and no African American had been elected to the county commission in the 20th century.

But African American Bobby Agee finished first in the initial cumulative voting election for seven commission



“Gve me all four votes!”

seats in 1988 while spending just \$500 and receiving little support from white voters. He has been re-elected three times and served as commission chair.

The Chilton County experience with cumulative voting is not unique. African American voters in other settings have also been able to elect candidates of their choice through this system. As these experiences demonstrate, the representation of politically cohesive minority groups do not have to be dependent on where the group's voters happen to live.

Community Education Lessons

- * Use local newspapers as a tool to educate the public about new system.
- * Hold community meetings to discuss new system.
- * Encourage members of the County Commission and Board of Education to spread word of the new system to friends and neighbors

Since adoption of cumulative voting, Chilton County voters have elected their first black candidates to County Commission and school board which better reflects the partisan breakdown .