

Georgia Senate  
Georgia House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
206 Washington St. SW  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Re: Redistricting of County Commissioners and County Boards of Education

Dear Senator or Representative:

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and the law firm of Walden Macht & Haran LLP write to remind you of your obligations to comply with the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ("VRA"). You are responsible for considering and approving local legislation "affecting the composition, form, procedure for election or appointment . . . of the county governing authority." The obligation is critically important as district lines determine, among other things, where residents vote, for whom they can vote, and how responsive elected officials are to constituents' needs.

We are actively involved in the local redistricting cycle in Georgia, including the monitoring of proposed SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people. The adherence of this



equality” embedded in the U.S. Constitution. Applying this principle, *Reynolds v. Sims* holds that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires population apportionment.

Redistricting plans presumptively violate this doctrine if the population variation between districts is greater than 10%. But that does not mean that a plan with a maximum deviation less than 10% gets a free pass. Even when population deviations are less than 10%, the deviation must be based on “legitimate objectives” as opposed to discriminatory or partisan reasons.<sup>7</sup>

We urge you to follow these constitutional requirements. Districts with impermissible population deviations and/or district lines based on illegitimate objectives deprive Georgians of equal representation and give rise to malapportionment lawsuits.

#### B. Complying with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act

You must also comply with Section 2 of the VRA. Section 2 is the VRA’s “sword” to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment’s guarantee that the right to vote will not be abridged. (tr)5(ic(c)42t



VRA and the U.S. Constitution, you may not



Decatur, GA 30031-287  
(470) 5973010  
poy.winichakul@splcenter.org

/s/ Jim Walden  
Jim Walden  
Peter A. Devlin  
Walden Macht & Haran LLP  
250 Vesey St., 27th Floor  
New York, NY 10281  
(212) 3352030