

**Southern Coalition for
Social Justice**

**Training on
Political Redistricting**

**July 26 -31, 2010
Duke University**



**Building Strength thru Unity,
and Unity thru Organization**



**Redistricting strategies used to dilute minority voting strength:
Packing, Cracking, Stacking, and Stovepiping; and
Swing Districts, Phantom Districts and Aberration Districts**

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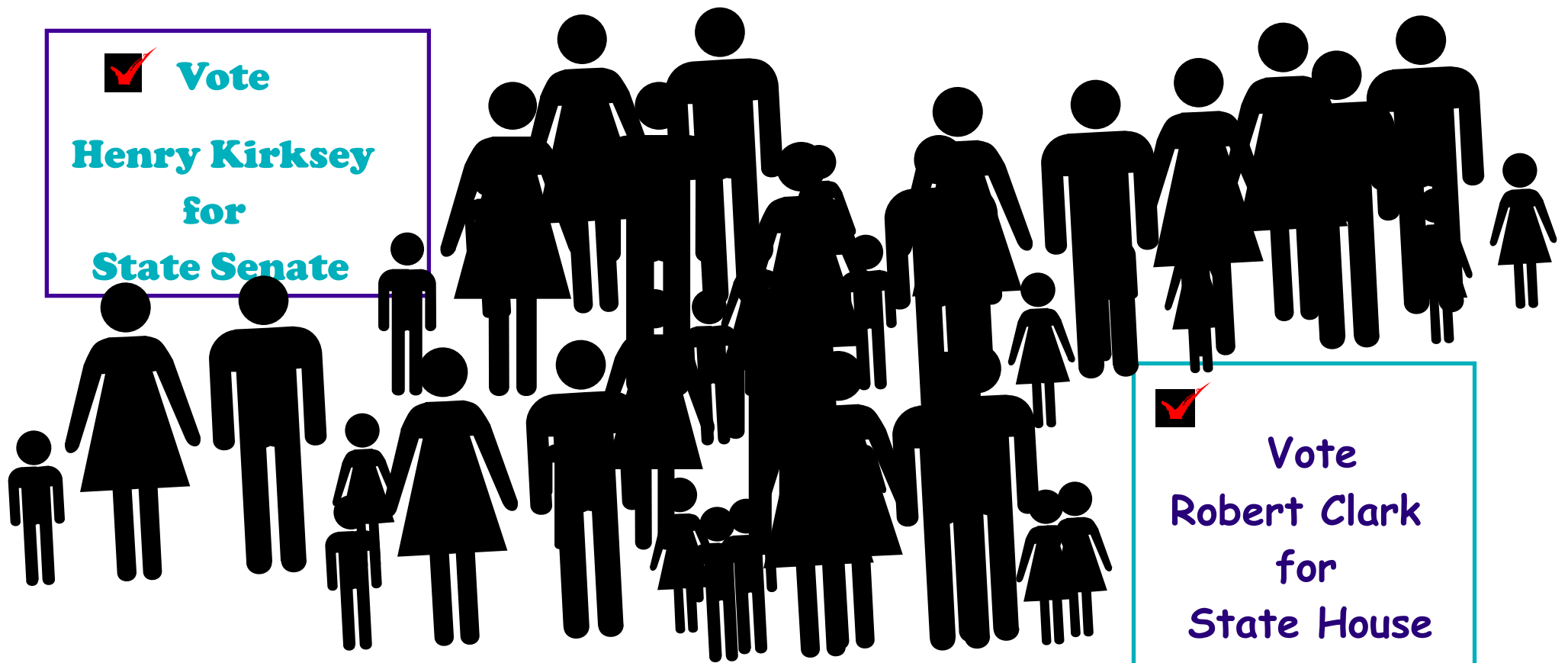
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Southern Echo is a leadership development, education, and training organization working to develop new, grassroots leaders and community organizers in the African-American communities in Mississippi and the surrounding region through a comprehensive training, technical and legal assistance program. This work has carried Echo staff into 65 of Mississippi's 82 counties and has provided training for community organizations in 11 other states in the southern United States. The underlying goal is to empower local communities through the development of *effective leadership* and *community organization*, and to create a process through which community people can obtain the *information* and build the accountable leadership and organization needed to hold the *political, economic, educational, and environmental systems* accountable to the needs and interests of the African-American community. Echo's model of community organization is "*inter-generational*," with a special emphasis on the active inclusion of *young people* in this process on the same basis as adults.

Southern Echo's goal is to create and sustain a cadre of black-based black-led grassroots organizations across the State of Mississippi that can build unusual alliances across traditional barriers of race, class, geography and status to impact the formation and implementation of public policy at the local, county, state and federal levels. In addition Southern Echo is working to build these kinds of alliances within the southern region and to build common ground in the work among grassroots Latino organizations in the southwest and white working class organizations in Appalachia to impact policy concerning civic engagement, public education and environmental racism and classism in these three regions.

 **Vote**
Henry Kirksey
for
State Senate



 **Vote**
Robert Clark
for
State House

When the Voting Rights Act passed in 1965 the white leadership in Mississippi realized that they could no longer prevent black citizens from registering to vote and from voting. Not that they didn't continue to try.

Violence and intimidation remained a serious problem! But, they turned to all kinds of voting schemes to dilute black voting strength.

In particular, officials used **redistricting** as a means of cracking, packing and stacking black voters to try to dilute black voting strength in order to undermine black citizens from becoming public officials.





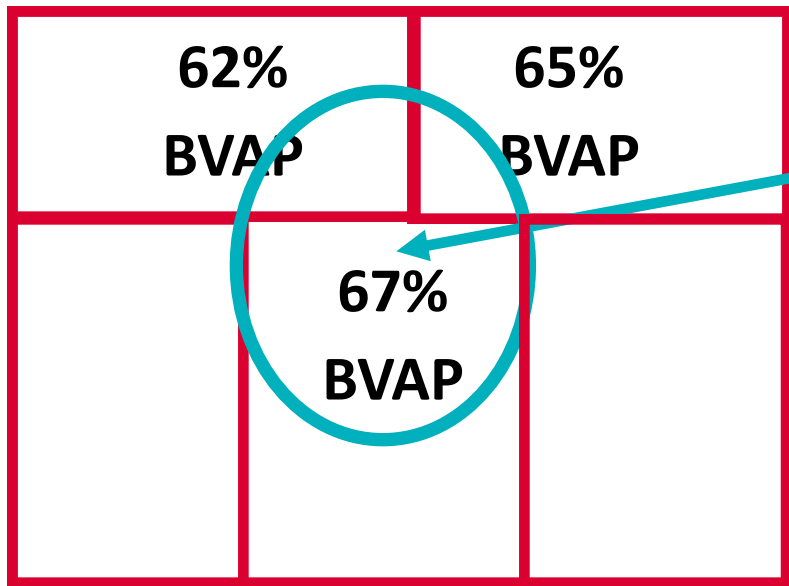
Packing is a redistricting device to **concentrate** in a single or small number of districts more Black or Hispanic voters than are necessary to have ***electable Black or Latino districts***, in order to prevent the **communities of color** from winning enough seats to gain a ***majority*** of votes on a municipal or county board, or to win enough seats at the state level, to impact the formation and implementation of public policy.



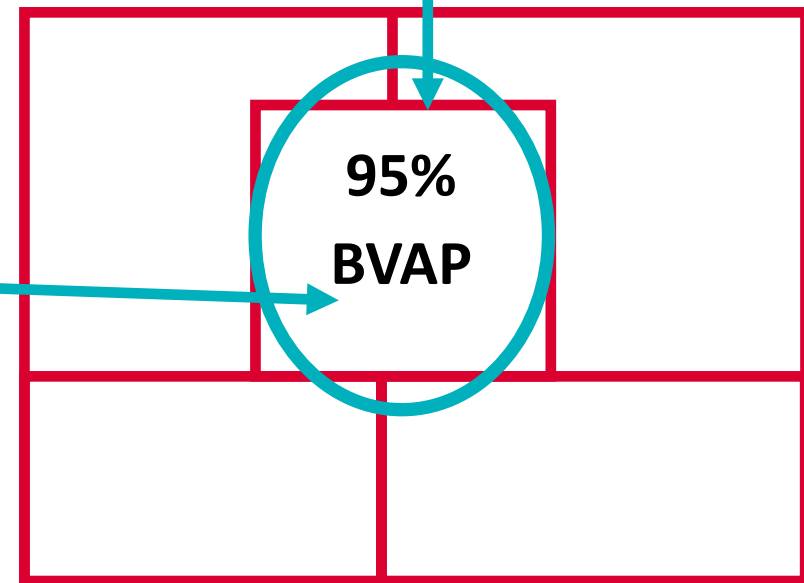


Example of Packing:

The County Board of Supervisors *could* have created this “fair” plan in which the black community would have a reasonable opportunity to elect representatives of its own choice in 3 districts.



Concentration of
Black or Latino
voting age population



Instead, the Supervisors created this “unfair” *packing* plan with only *one* district with a majority Black or Latino voting age population in order to dilute the voting strength of the communities of color and minimize representation.



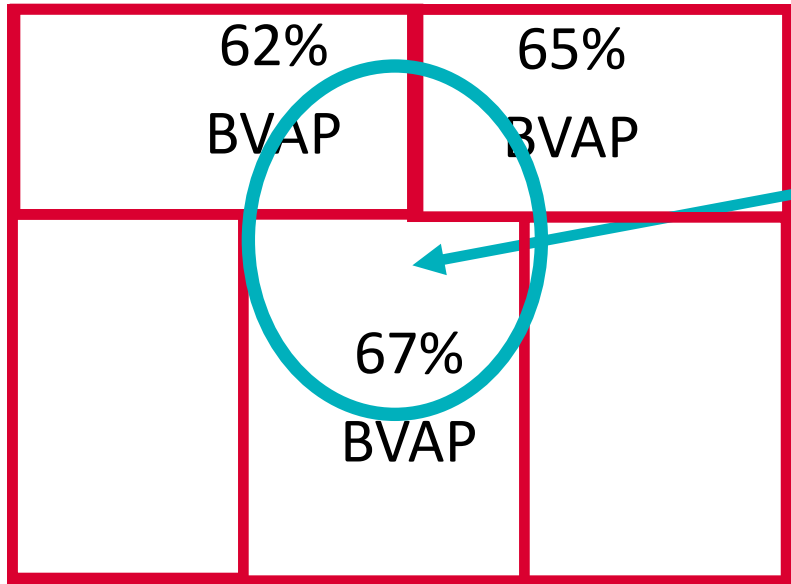
Cracking is a redistricting device by which concentrations of Black or Latino voters are **divided up** or **fragmented** among several districts or wards, to prevent the **community of color** from winning enough seats to gain a majority of votes on a municipal or county board, or to win enough seats at the state level, to impact the formation of public policy. This strategy is the opposite of *packing*.





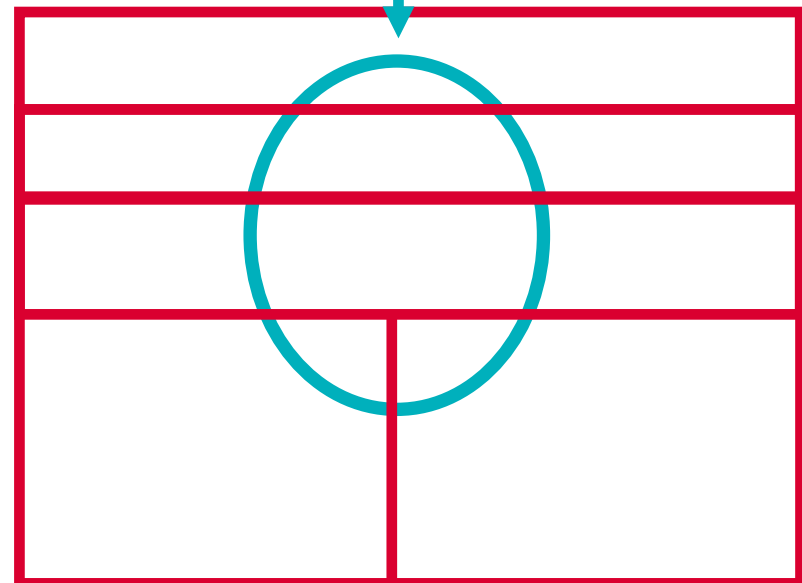
Example of Cracking:

The County Board of Supervisors *could* have created this “fair” plan in which the black community would have a reasonable opportunity to elect representatives of its own choice in 3 districts.



Concentration of Black or Latino voting age population

Instead, the Supervisors created this “unfair” **packing** plan with no district with a majority Black or Latino voting age population in order to dilute the voting strength of the communities of color and minimize representation.





Stacking is a redistricting tactic to concentrate very low income Black or Latino citizens with less education, in the same district with whites with high income and more education to create the illusion of a majority Black or Latino district. *Voter turnout* is affected by the level of income and education. People with less income and education tend not to vote to the same extent as those with more income and education.

The white candidate will have the better chance to win because of anticipated lower voter turnout in the minority communities and racial bloc voting in the white communities.





Racial bloc voting refers to the situation where there is a Black or Latino candidate running against a white candidate and virtually all white voters cast their ballots for the white candidate regardless of the fact that the Black or Latino candidate is or may be more qualified for the position than the white candidate.

Studies show that white voters engage in racial bloc voting to a far greater extent than do minority voters.

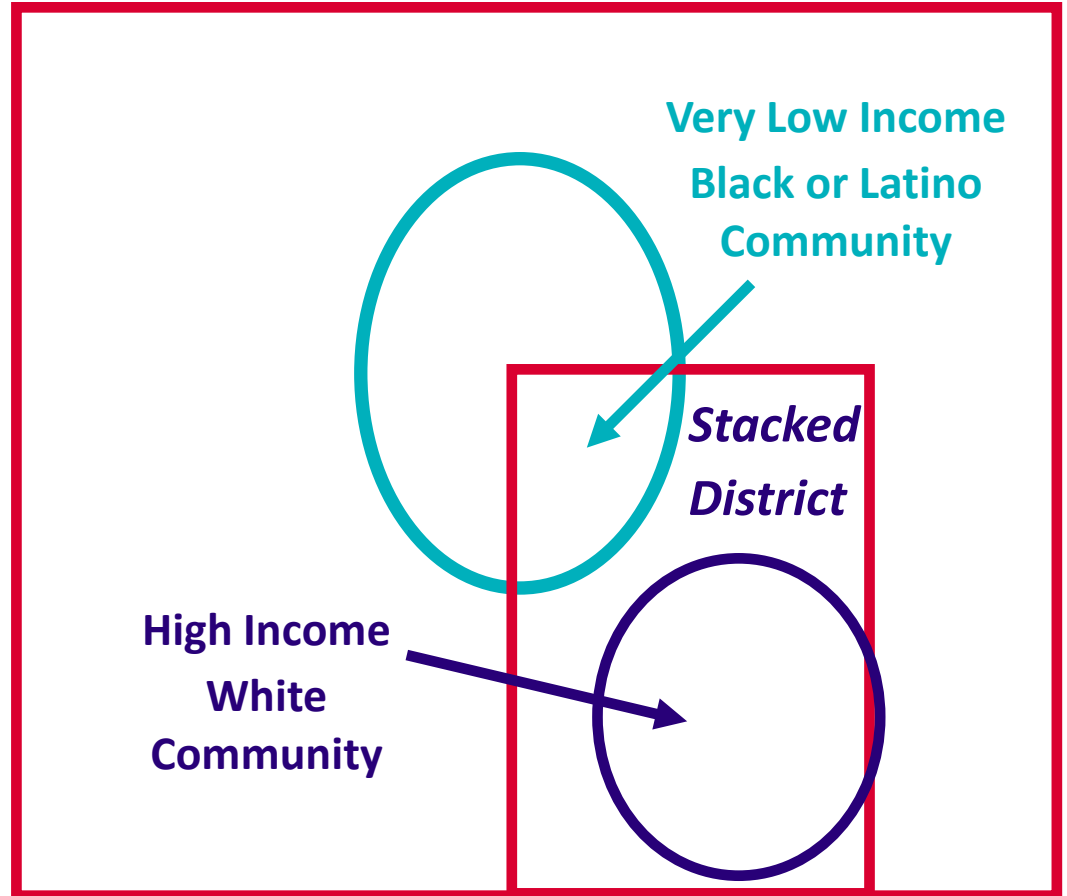
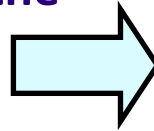
Remember, racism is about domination and control. Decisions by public officials impact control! Elections can determine who controls!





Example of Stacking:

The County Board of Supervisors in a majority Black county try to sell the idea of two electable black districts, two electable white districts and a so-called swing district. But the swing district is stacked:



In the *stacked* district the Black Voting Age Percentage (BVAP) is 53%. The White Voting Age Percentage (WVAP) is 47%. The *Black community* is very low income, with very low high school graduation rates. The *white community* is upper income, with high college graduation rates. At election time there is likely to be a higher percentage rate of white voter turnout.



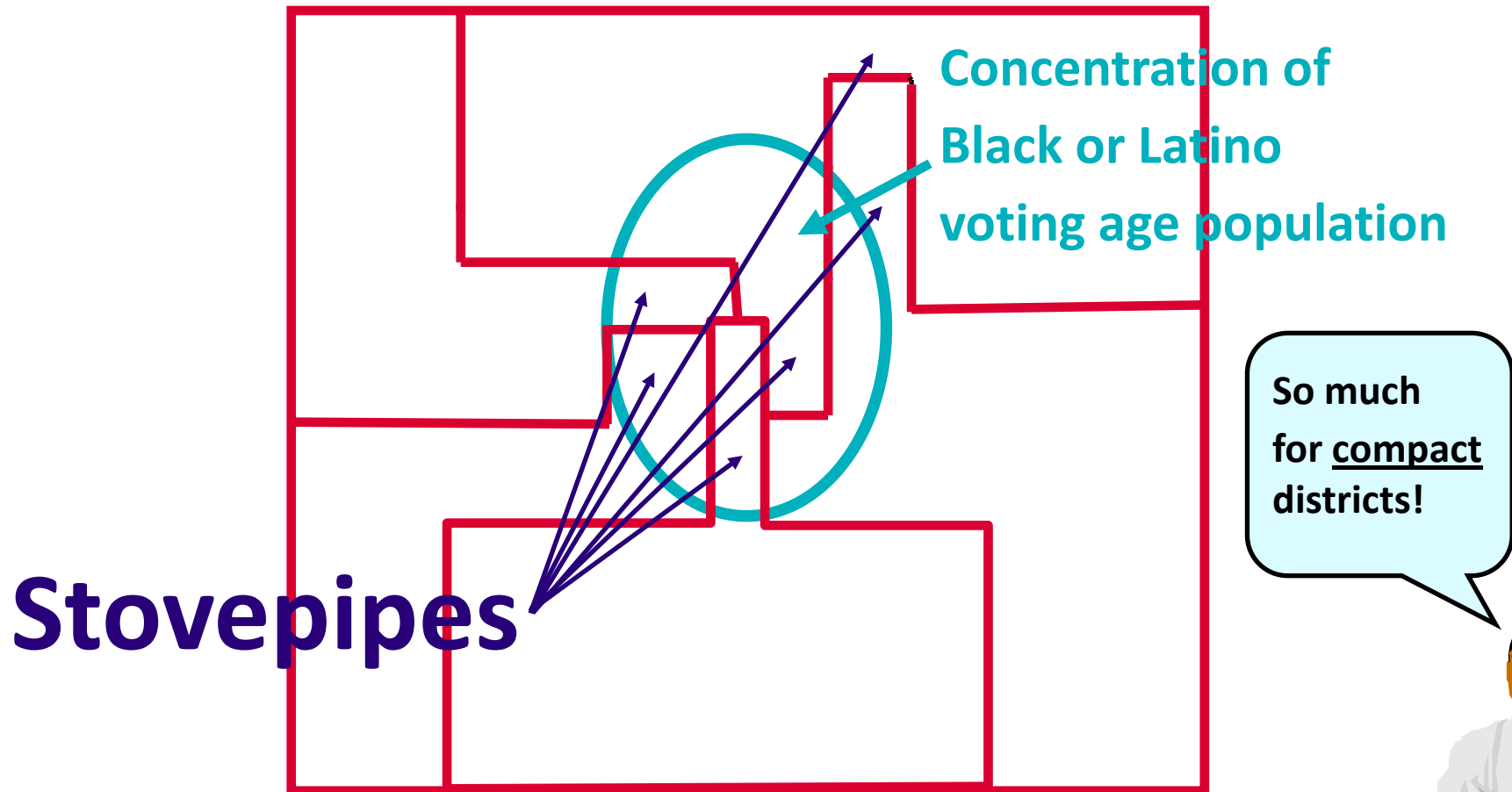
Stovepiping is a redistricting tactic used to connect two parts of a district that are otherwise geographically separated. This has been used to:

- a. create majority white districts,
- b. to pack Black or Latino majority districts,
- c. to crack concentrations of Black or Latino voters,
- d. to stack low income Black or Latino areas with high income white areas, and
- e. to gerrymander bizarre-looking districts to ensure either a Democratic party or Republican party majority in the district.





Example of stovepiping to crack the concentration of a Black or Latino majority population and divide it among the five districts so that no district will have a majority Black or Latino Voting Age Population:





Phantom Black or Latino majority districts

Phantom majority districts refers to the creation of districts that are, according to the general population statistics (*total population data*), *technically* majority Black or Latino, but that are *not* districts in which Black or Latino candidates can get elected.

In these districts, the *total* Black or Latino population is in the majority -- above 50 percent. But, in Mississippi, for example, the Black community has more young people under the age of 18 than the white community. Therefore, the *black voting age* population averages about 5% lower than the *total* population. For example, if the total Black population percentage is 53%, the total Black voting age percentage will be about 48%. That means the white voting age percentage will be about 52%, a majority.

In this case, racial bloc voting and lower Black voter turnout will make it more difficult for a Black candidate to win.





Aberration elections

In Mississippi there are some situations in which Black candidates have won elections in districts where the Black voting age population has been less than 50%. This does not mean that such a situation can readily be duplicated elsewhere. Here are circumstances that explain an aberration or unusual election:

1. A single Black candidate ran against 2 white candidates who split the white vote.
2. A Black person was appointed to fill a vacancy and ran in the election as the incumbent.
3. The white candidate in the race did something to anger the white community and white voters didn't turn out.
4. The white community has identified a Black candidate who will be more loyal to white interests than Black interests and the white community will support that Black candidate against any other Black candidates.



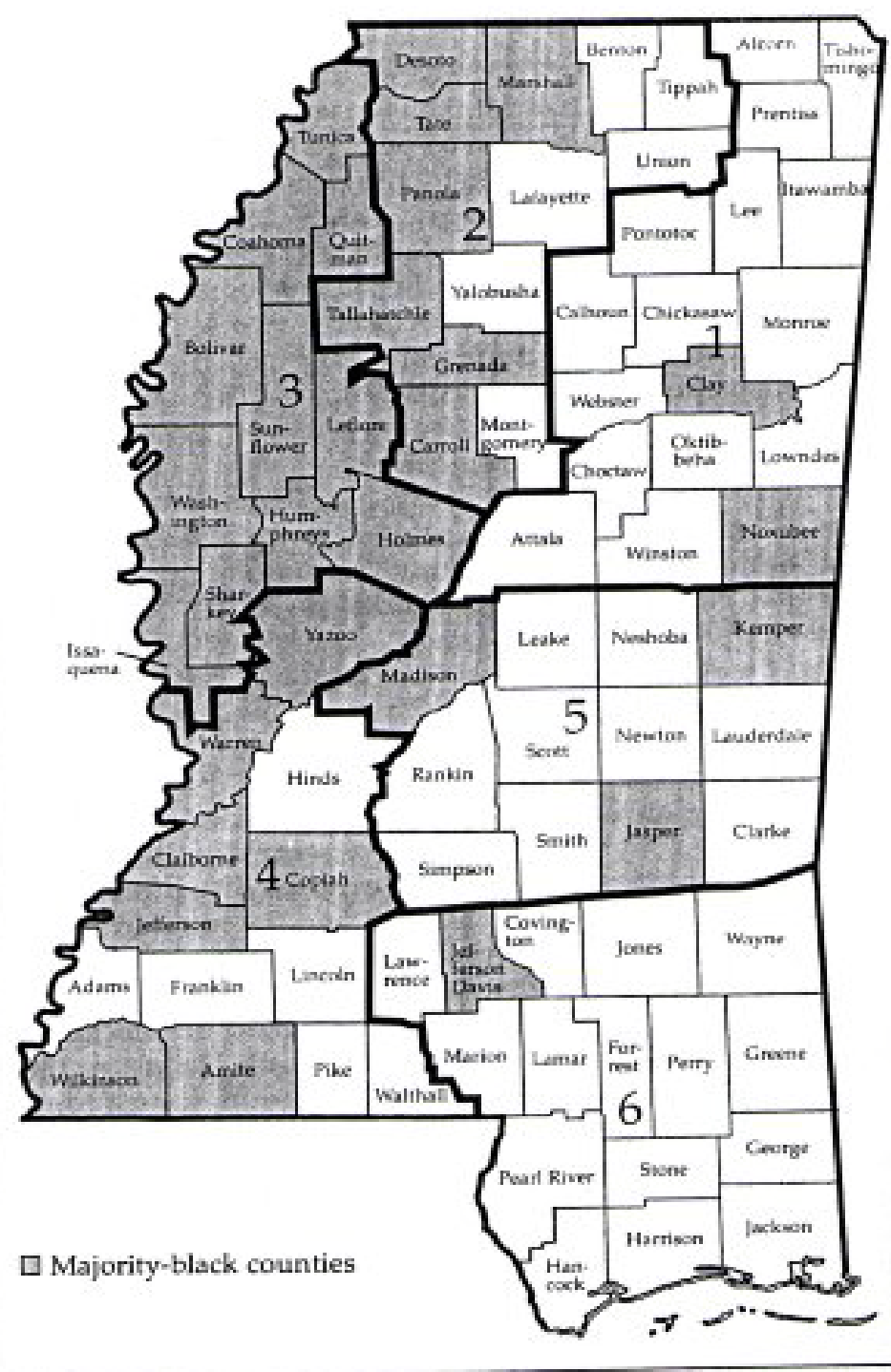


The 1965 Voting Rights Act was the first voting rights act with enforcement teeth.

In 1966 the MS state legislature was required to redistrict the US Congressional seats in order to come into compliance with the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

This is what the Congressional districts looked like in 1956 before black citizens were able to register to vote in huge numbers. This Delta district had been intact from 1882 to 1956. Note: In 1956 there were 6 congressional districts.

Note the majority black counties of Desoto, Tate, Panola, Grenada, Carroll, Madison and Amite in this map. They are no longer majority black.

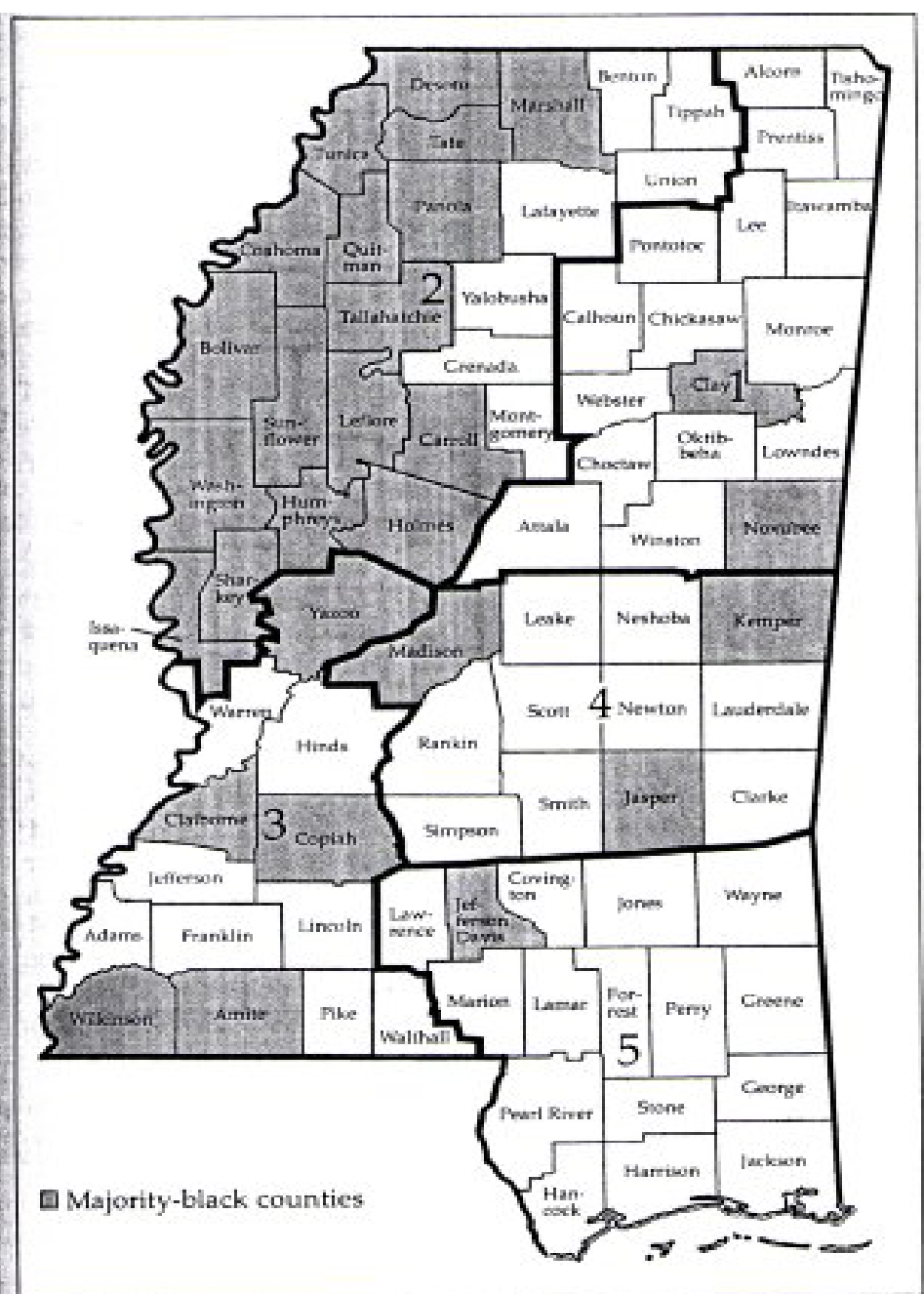


Map 2.2. Mississippi's Congressional Districts in 1956. From 1882 to 1956, the Delta area was preserved intact in a single district (in 1956, the Third Congressional District).



This is the 1962 Congressional redistricting plan based on the 1960 census. The state lost one congressional district as a result of the 1960 census. The Delta District became the 2nd District after the legislature combined what had been the 3rd and 2nd districts.

Note: This new 2nd congressional district in the Delta region was almost 60 % majority black. This redistricting plan was created by the all-white MS State Legislature 3 years *before* the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.



Map 2.3. Congressional Districts Adopted by the State Legislature in 1962. After the 1960 census, as a result of the reapportionment of congressional seats, Mississippi lost a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Second and Third Congressional Districts were simply combined to form a new Second District, which included the Delta area and was almost 60 percent black in population.



This is the 1966 Congressional redistricting plan drawn by the state legislature immediately *after* the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Note that the majority black counties along the Delta region are **"cracked"** among 4 of the state's 5 districts: districts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

This strategy to **"crack"**, or split, black voting strength among several districts meant that *no district* had a black voting age majority.

