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or abridgment on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

(b) *Section 2.* Preclearance under section 5 of a voting change will not preclude any legal action under section 2 by the Attorney General if implementation of the change demonstrates that such action is appropriate.

[52 FR 490, Jan. 6, 1987, as amended at 63 FR 24109, May 1, 1998]

§ 51.56 Guidance from the courts.

In making determinations the Attorney General will be guided by the relevant decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States and of other Federal courts.

§ 51.57 Relevant factors.

Among the factors the Attorney General will consider in making determinations with respect to the submitted changes affecting voting are the following:

(a) The extent to which a reasonable and legitimate justification for the change exists.

(b) The extent to which the jurisdiction followed objective guidelines and fair and conventional procedures in adopting the change.

(c) The extent to which the jurisdiction afforded members of racial and language minority groups an opportunity to participate in the decision to make the change.

(d) The extent to which the jurisdiction took the concerns of members of racial and language minority groups into account in making the change.

§ 51.58 Representation.

(a) *Introduction.* This section and the sections that follow set forth factors—in addition to those set forth above—that the Attorney General considers in reviewing redistrictings (see § 51.59), changes in electoral systems (see § 51.60), and annexations (see § 51.61).

(b) *Background factors.* In making determinations with respect to these changes involving voting practices and procedures, the Attorney General will consider as important background information the following factors:

(1) The extent to which minorities have been denied an equal opportunity

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to participate meaningfully in the political process in the jurisdiction.

(2) The extent to which minorities have been denied an equal opportunity to influence elections and the decision-making of elected officials in the jurisdiction.

(3) The extent to which voting in the jurisdiction is racially polarized and political activities are racially segregated.

(4) The extent to which the voter registration and election participation of minority voters have been adversely affected by present or past discrimination.

§ 51.59 Redistrictings.

In determining whether a submitted redistricting plan has the prohibited purpose or effect the Attorney General, in addition to the factors described above, will consider the following factors (among others):

(a) The extent to which malapportioned districts deny or abridge the right to vote of minority citizens.

(b) The extent to which minority voting strength is reduced by the proposed redistricting.

(c) The extent to which minority concentrations are fragmented among different districts.

(d) The extent to which minorities are overconcentrated in one or more districts.

(e) The extent to which available alternative plans satisfying the jurisdiction's legitimate governmental interests were considered.

(f) The extent to which the plan departs from objective redistricting criteria set by the submitting jurisdiction, ignores other relevant factors such as compactness and contiguity, or displays a configuration that inexplicably disregards available natural or artificial boundaries.

(g) The extent to which the plan is inconsistent with the jurisdiction's stated redistricting standards.

§ 51.60 Changes in electoral systems.

In making determinations with respect to changes in electoral systems (e.g., changes to or from the use of at-large elections, changes in the size of elected bodies) the Attorney General,

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in addition to the factors described above, will consider the following factors (among others):

(a) The extent to which minority voting strength is reduced by the proposed change.

(b) The extent to which minority concentrations are submerged into larger electoral units.

(c) The extent to which available alternative systems satisfying the jurisdiction's legitimate governmental interests were considered.

§ 51.61 Annexations.

(a) *Coverage.* Annexations, even of uninhabited land, are subject to section 5 preclearance to the extent that they alter or are calculated to alter the composition of a jurisdiction's electorate. In analyzing annexations under section 5, the Attorney General only considers the purpose and effect of the annexation as it pertains to voting.

(b) *Section 5 review.* It is the practice of the Attorney General to review all of a jurisdiction's unprecleared annexations together. See *City of Pleasant Grove v. United States*, C.A. No. 80-2589 (D.D.C. Oct. 7, 1981).

(c) *Relevant factors.* In making determinations with respect to annexations, the Attorney General, in addition to the factors described above, will consider the following factors (among others):

(1) The extent to which a jurisdiction's annexations reflect the purpose or have the effect of excluding minorities while including other similarly situated persons.

(2) The extent to which the annexations reduce a jurisdiction's minority population percentage, either at the time of the submission or, in view of the intended use, for the reasonably foreseeable future.

(3) Whether the electoral system to be used in the jurisdiction fails fairly to reflect minority voting strength as it exists in the post-annexation jurisdiction. See *City of Richmond v. United States*, 422 U.S. 358, 367-72 (1975).

[52 FR 490, Jan. 6, 1987; 52 FR 2648, Jan. 23, 1987]

Subpart G—Sanctions

§ 51.62 Enforcement by the Attorney General.

(a) The Attorney General is authorized to bring civil actions for appropriate relief against violations of the Act's provisions, including section 5. See section 12(d).

(b) Certain violations of section 5 may be subject to criminal sanctions. See section 12(a) and (c).

§ 51.63 Enforcement by private parties.

Private parties have standing to enforce section 5.

§ 51.64 Bar to termination of coverage (bailout).

(a) Section 4(a) of the Act sets out the requirements for the termination of coverage (bailout) under section 5. See § 51.5. Among the requirements for bailout is compliance with section 5, as described in section 4(a), during the ten years preceding the filing of the bailout action and during its pendency.

(b) In defending bailout actions, the Attorney General will not consider as a bar to bailout under section 4(a)(1)(E) a section 5 objection to a submitted voting standard, practice, or procedure if the objection was subsequently withdrawn on the basis of a determination by the Attorney General that it had originally been interposed as a result of the Attorney General's misinterpretation of fact or mistake in the law, or if the unmodified voting standard, practice, or procedure that was the subject of the objection received section 5 preclearance by means of a declaratory judgment from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

(c) Notice will be given to interested parties registered under § 51.32 when bailout actions are filed or decided.

Subpart H—Petition To Change Procedures

§ 51.65 Who may petition.

Any jurisdiction or interested individual or group may petition to have these procedural guidelines amended.