

1 JANET RENO
 Attorney General
 2 BILL LANN LEE
 Acting Assistant Attorney
 General for Civil Rights
 3 JOSEPH D. RICH
 4 ROBERT A. KENGLE
 JON M. GREENBAUM (SBN #166733)
 5 DAVID J. BECKER (SBN #174429)
 Attorneys, Voting Section
 6 Civil Rights Division.
 U.S. Department of Justice
 7 P.O. Box 66128
 Washington, D.C. 20035-6128
 8 Telephone: (202) 307-3113
 Facsimile: (202) 307-3961
 9 ALEJANDRO N. MAYORKAS (SBN #122447)
 United States Attorney
 10 MICHELE C. MARCHAND (SBN #93390)
 Assistant United States Attorney
 11 312 North Spring Street
 Los Angeles, California 90012
 12 Telephone: (213) 894-2727
 Facsimile: (213) 894-7819
 13 Attorneys for Plaintiff

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 CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT
 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIF.
 LOS ANGELES

14
 15 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
 16 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
 17 WESTERN DIVISION

18 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)
 19 Plaintiff,)
 20 v.)
 21 CITY OF SANTA PAULA, CALIFORNIA;)
 22 SANTA PAULA CITY COUNCIL;)
 23 RICHARD COOK, LAURA FLORES)
 24 ESPINOSA, JAMES GARFIELD, DONALD)
 JOHNSON, ROBIN SULLIVAN, members)
 of the Santa Paula City Council;)
 RICHARD DEAN, Ventura County)
 Clerk-Recorder,)
 25 Defendants.)

00-03691GHK
 CIVIL ACTION NO. (SHX)

COMPLAINT

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COMPLAINT

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2 The United States of America, plaintiff herein, alleges:

3 1. The Attorney General files this action pursuant to
4 Sections 2 and 12(d) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as
5 amended, 42 U.S.C. 1973, and 42 U.S.C. 1973j(d). The Court has
6 jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 42
7 U.S.C. 1973j(f).

8 2. Defendant City of Santa Paula is a political and
9 geographical subdivision of the State of California.

10 3. Defendant Santa Paula City Council is the body
11 established under the laws of the State of California that is
12 responsible for governing Santa Paula.

13 4. The Santa Paula City Council consists of five members.
14 Defendants Richard Cook, Laura Flores Espinosa, James Garfield,
15 Donald Johnson, and Robin Sullivan are the current members of the
16 city council and Mr. Cook is the current mayor. All five
17 councilmembers are residents of Santa Paula and each
18 councilmember is sued in his or her official capacity.

19 5. Defendant Richard Dean serves as the Clerk-Recorder for
20 Ventura County. As Clerk-Recorder, Mr. Dean is responsible for
21 exercising certain powers and duties associated with the conduct
22 of primary and general elections in Santa Paula, including
23 elections for the Santa Paula City Council. Mr. Dean is a
24 resident of Ventura County and is sued in his official capacity.

25 6. According to the 1990 Census, Santa Paula has a total
26 population of 25,062, 14,753 (58.9%) of which is Hispanic, and a
27 voting age population of 17,558, 9,421 (53.7%) of which is
28 Hispanic. Based on 1990 Census data, Santa Paula has a citizen

1 voting age population of approximately 13,000, of which
2 approximately 40% is Hispanic. As of November 1998, the most
3 recent city council election, approximately 45% of the registered
4 voters and 41% of the voters casting ballots had Spanish
5 surnames.

6 7. The Santa Paula City Council is composed of five
7 members elected at large to four-year, staggered terms.

8 8. The Hispanic population of Santa Paula is sufficiently
9 numerous and geographically compact that a properly apportioned
10 single-member district plan for electing the defendant City
11 Council can be drawn in which Hispanic citizens would constitute
12 a majority of the citizen voting age population in two districts.

13 9. Hispanic voters in Santa Paula are politically cohesive.
14 Racially polarized voting patterns prevail in elections for the
15 Santa Paula City Council. White bloc voting usually results in
16 the defeat of Hispanic voters' candidates of choice. In each
17 election since 1990 for the Santa Paula City Council, Hispanic
18 and non-Hispanic voters consistently have preferred different
19 candidates and the candidates preferred by white voters usually
20 have defeated Hispanic voters' preferred candidates.

21 10. Ms. Flores Espinosa is the only Hispanic member of the
22 Santa Paula City Council, and she is the only member of the Santa
23 Paula City Council who was a candidate of choice among Hispanic
24 voters.

25 11. The staggering of terms for Santa Paula City Council
26 elections reduces the opportunities for Hispanic voters to
27 overcome the effect of white bloc voting.

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1 12. Hispanic persons in Santa Paula have suffered from a
2 history of official discrimination that has affected the ability
3 of Hispanic persons to participate effectively in the political
4 process.

5 13. Hispanic persons in Santa Paula bear the effects of
6 past discrimination in areas such as education, employment, and
7 housing, as reflected in their depressed socioeconomic status
8 relative to white Santa Paula residents. These effects of past
9 discrimination hinder the current ability of Hispanics to
10 participate effectively in elections in Santa Paula.

11 14. During political campaigns in Santa Paula, there have
12 been instances of racial appeals.

13 15. The Santa Paula City Council has adopted an annexation
14 plan that is likely to result in the reduction of the percentage
15 of Hispanic voting age citizens in the City of Santa Paula.

16 16. Under the totality of the circumstances, the at-large
17 election system for electing the Santa Paula City Council has the
18 effect of diluting Hispanic voting strength, resulting in
19 Hispanic citizens being denied an opportunity equal to that
20 afforded to other members of the electorate to participate in the
21 political process and elect representatives of their choice, in
22 violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 1973.

23 17. Unless enjoined by order of this Court, defendants will
24 continue to conduct elections for the Santa Paula City Council
25 using the current at-large electoral system, in violation of
26 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 1973.

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1 WHEREFORE, the United States of America prays that this
2 Court enter an order:

3 (1) Declaring that the at-large method of electing members
4 of the Santa Paula City Council violates Section 2 of
5 the Voting Rights Act;

6 (2) Enjoining the defendants, their agents and successors
7 in office, and all persons acting in concert with any
8 of them, from administering, implementing, or
9 conducting any future elections for the Santa Paula
10 City Council under the current at-large method of
11 electing city councilmembers;

12 (3) Ordering defendants to devise and implement an election
13 system for the Santa Paula City Council which complies
14 with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.
15 1973; and

16 (4) Ordering such additional relief as the interests of
17 justice may require, together with the costs and
18 disbursements in maintaining this action.

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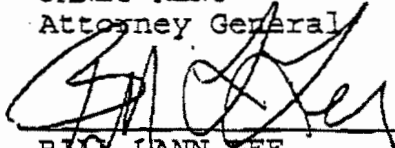
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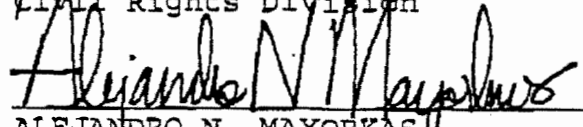
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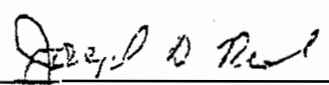
JANET RENO
Attorney General



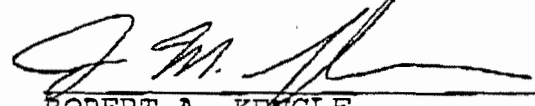
BILL LANN LEE
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division



ALEJANDRO N. MAYORKAS
United States Attorney
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Assistant United States Attorney



JOSEPH D. RICH
Acting Chief, Voting Section



ROBERT A. KENGLE
JON M. GREENBAUM
DAVID J. BECKER
Attorneys, Voting Section
Civil Rights Division
Department of Justice
P.O. Box 66128
Washington, D.C. 20035-6128
(202) 307-3113