



March 6, 2022

Office of the Governor
PO Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Governor Edwards:

The Urban League of Louisiana remains committed to the cause of civil rights and parity for all residents of Louisiana. For that reason, we strongly urge you to veto Senate Bill 1 (SB1) and House Bill 14 (HB14) because they fail to provide African Americans in Louisiana the opportunity for fair participation in the political process. African Americans make up a third of Louisiana's population based on 2020 Census data. Despite countless Louisianans and multiple civil rights organizations calling for fair and equitable representation throughout the entire redistricting process, the state legislature passed maps that fail to increase the opportunity for fair representation and that likely violate the Voting Rights Act. Now that they have failed to uphold their moral and legal obligation, we respectfully call on you to stand on the right side of history for all Louisianans.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act requires that the Legislature draw maps that give minority voters the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice. Additional Black-majority districts are needed not only to fulfill the requirements of federal law, but to provide the critical perspectives needed to tackle some of our state's toughest problems. Contrary to some state legislators' claims, it is possible to draw maps that provide additional Black-majority districts and meet all of the requirements of proper redistricting. We, along with many other civil rights organizations, provided a range of maps that accomplish this to the legislature during the redistricting session.

The aforementioned maps increasing majority-Black representation were drawn using traditional redistricting principles such as contiguity and compactness. In *Thornburg v. Gingles*, the United States Supreme Court established criteria for determining voter dilution, one being racially polarized voting. Louisiana has a well-documented history of racially polarized voting patterns and SB1 and HB14 would undoubtedly continue this precedent. The Urban League of Louisiana, along with our partner organizations and all Louisianans committed to fair and equitable maps, strongly urge you to veto Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 14.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Reese Morse".

Judy Reese Morse
President & CEO
Urban League of Louisiana