



Rock Island County
NAACP
BRANCH 3268
Bonnie J. Ballard, President

Statement by Bonnie Ballard, president of the Rock Island County NAACP, provided to State Representative Mike Halpin.

Representative Halpin:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the matter of redistricting. As the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund has noted, redistricting will determine political representation for the decade to come. During the redistricting process, the lines and boundaries of governing bodies are redrawn so that each district is roughly equal in population size based on the most recent census data. However, it is almost as important that districts are drawn in ways that comply with the central requirements of the Voting Rights Act and that new boundary lines do not dilute minority voting strength. Minority communities have an important role to play in the redistricting process to ensure that their voices are heard, their needs are addressed and their rights are protected.

The Rock Island County NAACP encourages the Illinois General Assembly to keep in the forefront of its work the Voting Rights Act, which since 1965 has helped to protect minority voting rights. Special attention must be paid to the Voting Rights Act and its prohibitions on redistricting plans that discriminate. This discrimination most commonly happens when a redistricting plan concentrates minority communities into a small number of districts (known as "packing") or spreads minorities out into too many districts (known as "cracking" or "splitting"). Both schemes weaken the political power of communities of color.

On behalf of the Rock Island County NAACP, I would like to thank Representative Halpin for this opportunity to provide a statement, and extend my appreciation for your understanding that I was not able to attend in person.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie J. Ballard, President
RICO NAACP Branch 3268