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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAACP SLO COUNTY BRANCH

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NAACP Urges “YES” Vote on Proposition 50

The NAACP San Luis Obispo Branch urges all who are committed to civil rights and racial justice to vote “YES” on Proposition 50 in the November 4 statewide election. They add their voice to the NAACP California-Hawaii State Conference which in August voted to support Proposition 50.

Barry Stokes, President of the NAACP SLO branch today released a statement in which he said:

“Passing Proposition 50 is essential to maintain fair representation of minority voices in the United States Congress. States like Texas, Florida, Ohio, Missouri, Indiana, and Alabama have either enacted, or are likely to soon enact, legislation changing election district lines that dilutes minority votes even more than they had been previously. The result being that representatives to the U.S. Congress from those States will tilt even further away from civil rights and racial justice.

Gerrymandering has always been a tool in silencing minority voices. It carves up minority communities into election districts that ensure minority candidates and voters who support racial justice find themselves in districts that are hostile to racial equality. After the 2019 5-4 *Rucho v. Common Cause* Supreme Court opinion, this tool was made even more powerful and insidious by allowing States to disguise racial gerrymandering as mere “partisan gerrymandering,” which the Court explicitly determined was not a matter in which courts could intervene.

These developments in other States are likely to have real and immediate consequences for racial minorities across the United States, including in California. Those consequences include the erosion of voting rights, the rights of immigrants (documented as well as undocumented), and the rights of recipients of Medicaid/Medi-Cal, Medicare, and Social Security benefits. All these rights as well as too many others to detail here are essential to minority communities and are subject to the control of an already hostile U.S. Congress.

It would be fundamentally naïve of the NAACP and others who are committed to civil rights and racial justice to ignore the threat being posed by developments in the law (as expounded by ever more unsympathetic courts) and in the politics of the other States. To respond to the current challenges, Governor Gavin Newsom proposed, and the legislature approved for the

November ballot, Proposition 50, which allows the legislature to draw new Congressional District boundaries for the 2026 elections. Those boundaries which are temporary and only in effect until 2030 are expected to produce five Congressional seats, the demographics of which make them more likely to vote for candidates for Congress that are in favor of protecting civil rights and racial equality. Those additional seats would roughly balance the additional five hostile seats created by Texas alone.

Would it be better to abolish gerrymandering? Of course it would. California cannot view itself in isolation and allow a misplaced sense of fairness at the California level to result in the perpetration of injustice on a national scale. If we had national rules that mandated fair representation of minorities in Congress from all States, we would not be having this argument. Unfortunately, the national rules have changed, and California voters cannot simply ignore the danger to the erosion of civil rights and racial justice that the great majority of Californians value.”

For more information see <https://cahinaacp.org/blog-theyre-trying-to-silence-usbut-prop-50-is-our-answer/>.

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