**2000 to 2012 Change in Citizen Voting Age Population Database**

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*Executive Summary:*

Latinos in California are often a large percentage or plurality of a city’s total population but a significantly lower percentage of a city’s citizens of voting age. The latter is often referred to in voting rights lawsuits as the count of eligible voters in a city. According to the *Thornburg*and *Bartlett*decisions of the US Supreme Court, plaintiffs in a Federal Voting Rights Act lawsuit must prove that a protected class can constitute a majority of a proposed remedy district.[[1]](#footnote-1) Yet, those two rulings are unclear as to a majority of what – total population, voting age population, citizen voting age population, or actual voters. In *Romero v. City of Pomona,* District Court Judge Ideman ruled, and the 9th Circuit affirmed, that citizen voting age population is the vital number:

“The Court finds that geographic compactness is non-existent in the City of Pomona, regardless of whether the hispanics and blacks are treated separately or together. After taking into consideration factors such as eligible voting age and citizenship, the evidence conclusively establishes that neither hispanics nor blacks can constitute a majority of the voters of any single member district.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Despite its importance, Citizen Voting Age Population data is not easy to find or use. The Census Bureau collects the raw counts in the annual American Community Survey. At the Rose Institute, we compiled the data from 2008-2012 five-year ACS tables B05003, B05003B, B05003D, B05003H, and B05003I for Census Places in California, removed the unofficial Census Designated Places (CDPs) from the list, combined the tables and calculated percentages for each ethnic group. Then we combined this latest ACS data with the *Census 2000 Special Tabulations, Citizenship by Race and Hispanic Origin[[3]](#footnote-3)* and calculated growth counts and percentages for each city. Note that eight cities in California incorporated after 2000, so comparison data is not available for those cities.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Because Citizen Voting Age Data is difficult to find potential plaintiffs have to hire experts to compile the data for their city before they can even file a case. While experts are still needed to prepare and file a case, the Rose Institute database serves three related very useful purposes: (a) it provides cities with a quick way to look at whether their council is representative of their eligible voter population and, at a basic level, the degree of potential liability they face under the California or Federal Voting Rights Acts; (b) it provides residents of every city in California with important information on the demographics of their city; (c) it provides statewide voter mobilization and voting rights activists with information at a glance that would otherwise have required the expenditure of thousands of dollars for city by city analysis by expert demographers.

1. *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30 (1986).

*Bartlett v. Strickland*, 556 U.S. 1 (2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Romero v. City of Pomona*, 665 F. Supp. 853 (1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Census 2000 Special Tabulations, Citizenship by Race and Hispanic Origin (STP76*); Revised, November 8, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Aliso Viejo, Eastvale, Elk Grove, Goleta, Jurupa Valley, Menifee, Ranch Cordova, and Wildomar were all incorporated after 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)