Exhibit 17 to Davis Intervenors’ Opposition to Plaintiff State of Texas’ Motion for Summary Judgment

Letter from Tarrant County Commissioner Roy Brooks to Senator Kel Seliger (May 11, 2011)
May 11, 2011

Senator Kel Seliger Chair,
Senate Select Committee on Redistricting
Capitol Extension, Room E1.606,
State Capitol Austin, TX 78701

Mr. Michael Morrison & Mr. David Guinn
Baylor University School of Law
One Bear Place 97288
Waco, TX 76798

Dear Sirs:
I write to you in my individual capacity as Tarrant County Commissioner, Precinct One. My Precinct contains in part, the Southeast Fort Worth community. Southeast Fort Worth is a community of interest comprising primarily ethnic minorities that have had a historic impact on the election of persons of their choice to represent them at all levels of government. I am deeply concerned that this community not be marginalized or have its historic impact diluted.

Tarrant County has a population of over 1,800,000 residents and is one of the fastest growing counties in America. Our County contained the third largest concentration of African American citizens in Texas and one of the largest concentrations of Hispanic residents in our State. Both the Hispanic and African American populations in Tarrant County increased in raw numbers and as a percentage of the total population during the
last decade. Most of the African American and Hispanic residents in Tarrant County live in the 10th Senatorial District.

When the current lines of the 10th Senatorial District were drawn in 2001 and Texas submitted its Senate map to the Department of Justice for preclearance, in its submission the State anticipated that during the decade the voting strength of minority citizens in the 10th District would grow and evolve to the point where they would elect their candidate of choice. The Texas submission said in part:

…District 10 contain[s] significant minority communities that are essentially kept intact within [the] district. The voting strength of these minority communities in the future will depend on the cohesion within and between Black and Hispanic voters and the ability of such voters to form coalitions with other racial or ethnic groups in support of their preferred candidates. (State of Texas Section 5 Preclearance submission, August 2001)

The State’s prediction in its submission was accurate. Over the last decade, the minority population in the 10th District grew to the point that Anglos now make up less than half the population of the district. African American and Hispanic citizens form an effective coalition and have demonstrated their ability to elect their candidate of choice. Now there is a clear possibility, and perhaps even likelihood, that the Texas Legislature will break apart the 10th District in order to crack the effective block of minority voters and eliminate their ability to elect their candidate of choice.

I believe that any effort to dilute the voting strength of minority citizens in the 10th Senate District of Texas would be a disservice to many of the people I represent and would constitute illegal retrogression. I respectfully call on you to be vigilant in examining the State Senate redistricting plan presented by the State of Texas for preclearance either to the Department of Justice or to the Federal District Court of the District of Columbia and file an objection to any plan that reduces the voting strength of minority citizens. Moreover, I ask that you closely review alternative redistricting plans that may present that enhance the voting strength of minority citizens in Tarrant County and the surrounding areas to fully realize the voting potential of the growing minority population in our area.

Thank you for your assistance with this important matter.

Sincerely,

Ray C. Brooks
Roy C. Brooks

cc: Senator Mario Gallegos, Senator John Carona, Senator Kevin Eltife, Senator Craig Estes, Senator Troy Fraser, Senator Juan Hinojosa, Senator Joan Huffman, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., Senator Dan Patrick, Senator Jeff Wentworth, Senator Royce West, Senator Tommy Williams, Senator Judith Zaffirini

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