



## **SCOTUS Voting Decision Protects Political Influence Of Latinos, Others**

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Democrats and civil libertarians are applauding a U.S. Supreme Court ruling on a Texas case, *Evenwel v. Abbott*, that challenged the way voting districts are drawn.

It's a ruling that may bolster the growing influence of Latino voters.

Two years ago Sue Evenwel, a resident of Titus County, challenged the way the State of Texas draws legislative voting districts, which are created with a nearly equal number of residents. Evenwel claimed districts should instead be drawn with an equal number of eligible voters.

In an unusual unanimous vote, the Justices rejected Evenwel's argument and preserved the principle of "one person, one vote," which has been a legal test since 1964.

Texas Democratic Party spokesman Emanuel Garcia says the decision is important in making sure everyone has representation- including immigrants, minors and others who can't or don't vote.

“We believe that every single person should have a voice in their government, and that our elected officials should be responsive to everyone’s needs, not just those that can put them into power,” said Garcia.

“Should the children in that district not have any voice? Sure, they’re not voters. They don’t qualify to be voters. But they can still pick up the phone and call their elected representatives,” he said.

Plaintiffs who lost the case say the issue of voting equality is not going away.

Ilya Shapiro, an attorney with the libertarian Cato Institute, filed a brief in support of Evenwel. He believes the Justices got it wrong.

“It’s not fair and violates the constitutional principal of “one person, one vote” to have significantly different numbers of voters in different districts,” said Shapiro.

“If you have 100 voters in one district and 200 in another, well, that district where there are only 100, each of their votes is worth twice as much.”

Legal experts say a ruling in favor of Evenwel would have shifted political influence away from Democratic urban areas to more Republican rural areas. It would have damaged political influence in the Latino community where some members haven’t registered to vote or don’t qualify because of their immigration status.