

**PART 55—IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT REGARDING LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS**

**Subpart A—General Provisions**

Sec.

- 55.1 Definitions.  
55.2 Purpose; standards for measuring compliance.  
55.3 Statutory requirements.

**Subpart B—Nature of Coverage**

- 55.4 Effective date; list of covered jurisdictions.  
55.5 Coverage under section 4(f)(4).  
55.6 Coverage under section 203(c).  
55.7 Termination of coverage.  
55.8 Relationship between section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c).  
55.9 Coverage of political units within a county.  
55.10 Types of elections covered.

**Subpart C—Determining the Exact Language**

- 55.11 General.  
55.12 Language used for written material.  
55.13 Language used for oral assistance and publicity.

**Subpart D—Minority Language Materials and Assistance**

- 55.14 General.  
55.15 Affected activities.  
55.16 Standards and proof of compliance.  
55.17 Targeting.  
55.18 Provision of minority language materials and assistance.  
55.19 Written materials.  
55.20 Oral assistance and publicity.  
55.21 Record keeping.

**Subpart E—Preclearance**

- 55.22 Requirements of section 5 of the Act.

**Subpart F—Sanctions**

- 55.23 Enforcement by the Attorney General.

**Subpart G—Comment on This Part**

- 55.24 Procedure.

APPENDIX TO PART 55—JURISDICTIONS COVERED UNDER SECTIONS 4(f)(4) AND 203(c) OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301; 28 U.S.C. 509, 510; 42 U.S.C. 1973b, 1973j(d), 1973aa-1a, 1973aa-2.

SOURCE: Order No. 655-76, 41 FR 29998, July 20, 1976, unless otherwise noted.

**Subpart A—General Provisions**

**§ 55.1 Definitions.**

As used in this part—

*Act* means the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 79 Stat. 437, as amended by the Civil Rights Act of 1968, 82 Stat. 73, the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970, 84 Stat. 314, the District of Columbia Delegate Act, 84 Stat. 853, the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1975, 89 Stat. 400, the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982, 96 Stat. 131, and the Voting Rights Language Assistance Act of 1992, Public Law 102-344, 106 Stat. 921, 42 U.S.C. 1973 *et seq.* Section numbers, such as “section 14(c)(3),” refer to sections of the Act.

*Attorney General* means the Attorney General of the United States.

*Language minorities* or *language minority group* is used, as defined in the Act, to refer to persons who are American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives, or of Spanish heritage. (Sections 14(c)(3) and 203(e)).

*Political subdivision* is used, as defined in the Act, to refer to “any county or parish, except that where registration for voting is not conducted under the supervision of a county or parish, the term shall include any other subdivision of a State which conducts registration for voting.” (Section 14(c)(2)).

[Order 1246-87, 53 FR 735, Jan. 12, 1988, as amended by Order No. 1752-93, 58 FR 35372, July 1, 1993]

**§ 55.2 Purpose; standards for measuring compliance.**

(a) The purpose of this part is to set forth the Attorney General’s interpretation of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act which require certain States and political subdivisions to conduct elections in the language of certain “language minority groups” in addition to English.

(b) In the Attorney General’s view the objective of the Act’s provisions is to enable members of applicable language minority groups to participate effectively in the electoral process. This part establishes two basic standards by which the Attorney General will measure compliance:

(1) That materials and assistance should be provided in a way designed to allow members of applicable language

minority groups to be effectively informed of and participate effectively in voting-connected activities; and

(2) That an affected jurisdiction should take all reasonable steps to achieve that goal.

(c) The determination of what is required for compliance with section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c) is the responsibility of the affected jurisdiction. These guidelines should not be used as a substitute for analysis and decision by the affected jurisdiction.

(d) Jurisdictions covered under section 4(f)(4) of the Act are subject to the preclearance requirements of section 5. See part 51 of this chapter. Such jurisdictions have the burden of establishing to the satisfaction of the Attorney General or to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia that changes made in their election laws and procedures in order to comply with the requirements of section 4(f)(4) are not discriminatory under the terms of section 5. However, section 5 expressly provides that the failure of the Attorney General to object does not bar any subsequent judicial action to enjoin the enforcement of the changes.

(e) Jurisdictions covered solely under section 203(c) of the Act are not subject to the preclearance requirements of section 5, nor is there a Federal apparatus available for preclearance of section 203(c) compliance activities. The Attorney General will not preclear jurisdictions' proposals for compliance with section 203(c).

(f) Consideration by the Attorney General of a jurisdiction's compliance with the requirements of section 4(f)(4) occurs in the review pursuant to section 5 of the Act of changes with respect to voting, in the consideration of the need for litigation to enforce the requirements of section 4(f)(4), and in the defense of suits for termination of coverage under section 4(f)(4). Consideration by the Attorney General of a jurisdiction's compliance with the requirements of section 203(c) occurs in the consideration of the need for litigation to enforce the requirements of section 203(c).

(g) In enforcing the Act—through the section 5 preclearance review process, through litigation, and through defense of suits for termination of coverage

under section 4(f)(4)—the Attorney General will follow the general policies set forth in this part.

(h) This part is not intended to preclude affected jurisdictions from taking additional steps to further the policy of the Act. By virtue of the Supremacy Clause of Art. VI of the Constitution, the provisions of the Act override any inconsistent State law.

[Order 655-76, 41 FR 29998, July 20, 1976, as amended by Order 1246-87, 53 FR 736, Jan. 12, 1988]

### § 55.3 Statutory requirements.

The Act's requirements concerning the conduct of elections in languages in addition to English are contained in section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c). These sections state that whenever a jurisdiction subject to their terms "provides any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable language minority group as well as in \* \* \* English. \* \* \*"

## Subpart B—Nature of Coverage

### § 55.4 Effective date; list of covered jurisdictions.

(a) The minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act were added by the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1975.

(1) The requirements of section 4(f)(4) take effect upon publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER of the requisite determinations of the Director of the Census and the Attorney General. Such determinations are not reviewable in any court.

(2) The requirements of section 203(c) take effect upon publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER of the requisite determinations of the Director of the Census. Such determinations are not reviewable in any court.

(b) Jurisdictions determined to be covered under section 4(f)(4) or section 203(c) are listed, together with the language minority group with respect to which coverage was determined, in the appendix to this part. Any additional