

H.R. 10018, 86TH CONGRESS, 2D SESSION

A BILL To amend the Civil Rights Act of 1957 by providing for court appointment of United States voting referees, and for other purposes

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That section 2004 of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1971), as amended by section 131 of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 (71 Stat. 637), is amended as follows:

(a) Add the following as subsection (e) and designate the present subsection (e) subsection "(f)":

"(e) In any proceeding instituted pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, in the event the court finds that under color of law or by State action any person or persons have been deprived on account of race or color of any right or privilege secured by subsection (a) or (b) of this section, and that such deprivation was or is pursuant to a pattern or practice, the court may appoint one or more persons (to be known as voting referees) to receive applications from any person claiming such deprivation as to the right to register or otherwise to qualify to vote at any election and to take evidence and report to the court findings as to whether such applicants or any of them (1) are qualified to vote at any election, and (2) have been (a) deprived of the opportunity to register to vote or otherwise to qualify to vote at any election or (b) found by State election officials not qualified to register to vote or to vote at any election.

"Any report of any person or persons appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be reviewed by the court and the court shall accept the findings contained in such report unless clearly erroneous. The court shall issue a supplementary decree which shall specify which person or persons named in the report are qualified and entitled to vote at any election within such period as would be applicable if such person or persons had been registered or otherwise qualified under State law. The Attorney General shall cause to be transmitted certified copies of the original decree and any supplementary decree to the appropriate election officials of the State, and any such official who, with notice of such original or supplementary decree, refuses to permit any person, named as qualified to vote in such original or supplementary decree, to vote at any election covered thereby, or to have the vote of any such person counted, may be proceeded against for contempt.

"The court may authorize such person or persons appointed pursuant to this subsection to issue to each person named in the original decree or any supplementary decree as qualified and entitled to vote at an election, a certificate identifying the holder thereof as a person qualified and entitled, pursuant to the court's original decree or supplementary decree, to vote at any such election.

"The court may authorize such person or persons appointed pursuant to this subsection (or may appoint any other person or persons) (1) to attend at any time and place for holding any election at which any person named in the court's original decree or any supplementary decree is entitled to vote and report to the court whether any such person has been denied the right to vote, and (2) to attend at any time and place for counting the votes cast at any election at which any person named in the court's original decree or any supplementary decree is entitled to vote and report to the court whether any vote cast by any such person has not been properly counted.

"Any person or persons appointed by the court pursuant to this subsection shall have all the powers conferred upon a master by rule 53(c) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The compensation to be allowed to any person or persons appointed by the court pursuant to this subsection shall be fixed by the court and shall be payable by the United States.

"The court shall have authority to take any other actions, consistent with the provisions of this subsection, reasonably appropriate or necessary to enforce its decrees."