The assumptions upon which our vote dilution decisions have been based should be repugnant to any nation that strives for the ideal of a color-blind Constitution. "The principle of equality is at war with the notion that District A must be represented by a Negro, as it is with the notion that District B must be represented by a Caucasian, District C by a Jew, District D by a Catholic, and so on." Wright v. Rockefeller, [376 U.S. 52, 66](http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/376/52.html#66) (1964) (Douglas, J., dissenting). Despite Justice Douglas' warning sounded 30 years ago, our voting rights decisions are rapidly progressing towards a system that is indistinguishable in principle from a scheme under which members of different racial groups are divided into separate electoral registers and allocated a proportion of political power on the basis of race. Cf. [ HOLDER v. HALL, \_\_\_ U.S. \_\_\_ (1994) , 17]   id., at 63-66. Under our jurisprudence, rather than requiring registration on racial rolls and dividing power purely on a population basis, we have simply resorted to the somewhat less precise expedient of drawing geographic district lines to capture minority populations and to ensure the existence of the "appropriate" number of "safe minority seats."

That distinction in the practical implementation of the concept, of course, is immaterial. [14](http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/512/874.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22f14) The basic premises underlying our system of safe minority districts and those behind the racial register are the same: that members of the racial group must think alike, and that their interests are so distinct that the group must be provided a separate body of representatives in the legislature to voice its unique point of view. Such a "system, by whatever name it is called, is a divisive force in a community, emphasizing differences between candidates and voters that are irrelevant." Id., at 66. Justice Douglas correctly predicted the results of state sponsorship of such a theory of representation: "When racial or religious lines are drawn by the State, . . . antagonisms that relate to race or to religion, rather than to political issues, are generated; communities seek not the best representative, but the best racial or religious partisan." Id., at 67. In short, few devices could be better designed to exacerbate racial tensions than the consciously segregated districting system currently being constructed in the name of the Voting Rights Act.

As a practical political matter, our drive to segregate [ HOLDER v. HALL, \_\_\_ U.S. \_\_\_ (1994) , 18]   political districts by race can only serve to deepen racial divisions by destroying any need for voters or candidates to build bridges between racial groups or to form voting coalitions. "Black-preferred" candidates are assured election in "safe black districts"; white-preferred candidates are assured election in "safe white districts."