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**HISTORIC WASHINGTON VOTING RIGHTS SETTLEMENT IN FAVOR OF LATINO  
VOTERS IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

*Latino voters, working with the UCLA Voting Rights Project, recently succeeded in their Washington Voting Rights Act claim. Starting 2024, Franklin County Commission seats will be elected utilizing single-member districts*

Three individual Latino voters and the League of United Latino America Citizens (LULAC), represented by the UCLA Voting Rights Project (VRP) through recent settlement, succeeded in demonstrating that Franklin County, Washington was in violation of the Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA). This settlement comes after the UCLA VRP successfully argued for the Washington State Court to uphold the constitutionality of the Washington Voting Rights Act.

Latinos have never elected a *candidate* of choice to the Franklin County Commission under the at-large system. Under the settlement, Franklin County Commissioner elections will be required to use single-member districts starting in 2024. The new single-member district map includes the first ever Latino majority citizen voting age population district in the county and keeps a majority of East Pasco whole in District 2. The UCLA Voting Rights project will continue to monitor Franklin County and work to ensure that any map adopted will not dilute the votes of the Latino community.

Plaintiff Gabriel Portugal stated, “We are truly pleased about the settlement. The Franklin County Commissioners have admitted that they are in violation of the law. Now the County’s election system will be changed. Many voters including Latinos in Franklin County now have the right to elect a candidate within their district. This right is an essential part of our democracy. We believe this is a win for everyone in Franklin County.”

“We are proud of having represented our Plaintiffs and look forward to continuing to work with them and members of the Latino community,” stated Sonni Waknin, Voting Rights Counsel.

### **About the UCLA Voting Rights Project**

The UCLA Voting Rights Project (UCLA VRP) is the flagship project of the UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative (LPPi) at the University of California, Los Angeles aimed at creating an accessible and equitable system of voting for all Americans through impact litigation, research, and clinical education to expand access to the ballot box. UCLA VRP addresses monumental and overlooked gaps in the field of voting rights, such as: how to train young lawyers and researchers, how to support the development of new legal and methodological theories for voting rights cases, and how to advance policy work to ensure that there is a new generation of leaders who are pursuing efforts to guarantee all citizens have equal and fair access to our democracy. The project was founded by Chad W. Dunn, J.D., and Matt Barreto, Ph.D.

To learn more about the UCLA Voting Rights Project, please visit <https://latino.ucla.edu/votingrights>.