



Let's not turn back the clock.

Cities are removing at-large seats from their councils all over the United States.

Both research and the courts have proven that electing representatives from districts or wards instead of at-large provides more fair and equal representation of all citizens and that at-large tends to be discriminatory.

Locally, the Springfield and Danville city councils, and the Cook County Board have removed at-large seats, some as the result of court action, and now elect all representatives by district.

In 1998 Urbana voted to remove at-large seats from the Urbana School Board and elect members by ward.

Why would we adopt a regressive political structure? Vote against at-large AGAIN.



Don't change government on a whim.

The at-large referendum was hastily placed on the ballot for political reasons. There has been no public hearing, no commission, and no report of how this will alter Urbana government.

The filing period for candidates has already begun and we don't even know what form of government we will have in the next elections.

The matter requires more study to determine whether a larger city council will result in better delivery of services and more efficient decision-making, or whether it will just cost more money.

Vote NO on November 2



Let's keep big money interests out of local government.

Because at-large elections are citywide, running at-large requires significant funding and party backing.

At-large elections are often contests decided by financial contributions rather than individual merit.



Government works best when brought closer to the people.

The elected officials who win at-large city council seats are less in tune with the people they were elected to represent. Expensive media campaigns replace face-to-face contact between candidate and voter.



At-large goes against the spirit of the constitution.

At-large advocates argue that people who live in wards with higher voter turnout deserve a greater voice in government. This notion is unconstitutional. "One person, one vote" means that representation in government must be based on population, not voter turnout. Students and minorities have lower voter turnout, but deserve equal representation.

Despite the fact that the wards have equal populations, more people voted in the last city election in Ward 7 near Meadowbrook Park than in Ward 3 near King Park. At-large advocates say Wards such as 7 should have more representation.

Imagine if we applied that philosophy to the state legislature. The 100th Representative District which surrounds Springfield had 48,000 voters in the last election -- almost twice the number of people who voted in our 103rd District! Does this mean Champaign-Urbana voters deserve less representation in the Illinois House of Representatives?



Election by wards is consistent with the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits election processes that dilute minority influence, even when that is not the intent.

One-seventh of Urbana's population is African American. One of seven council members is black. Adding two at-large seats to the city council will dilute the minority vote.



At-large voting hurts minority representation.

At-large elections have a long history as a vehicle for suppressing minority representation. At-large voting for local office was created after the Civil War in the South for the purpose of keeping minorities out of office.

The first African-American in over 20 years was elected to the Urbana School Board after the people of Urbana voted in 1998 to change from at-large to district elections.

Champaign, which still has 3 at-large City Council seats, elected Giraldo Rosales in 2001, making him the only minority elected at-large in 33 years.

Springfield removed at-large in 1987 when legal action forced the City to comply with the Voting Rights Act. Subsequently, the first black since 1911 was elected.

Danville eliminated at-large in 1987. Prior to that time, no women or minorities had ever served on the City Commission. Since 1987, minorities have gained consistent, equal, and equitable representation.

www.noatlarge.org