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## WHEN THE LETTER BETRAYS THE SPIRIT

VOTING RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT AND AFRICAN AMERICAN PARTICIPATION  
FROM LYNDON JOHNSON TO BARACK OBAMA

By Tyson King-Meadows

“Tyson King-Meadows provides an exhaustive examination of the Voting Rights Act, including its adoption, interpretation, implementation, and revision. His focus is on the enormous discretion that presidents, justices, and Congress have had, and continue to have, in decisions concerning the Act, discretion that can be employed to strengthen or weaken the impact of the Act on minority empowerment. Anyone interested in the role that this Act plays in American politics will learn a great deal from this book, including those who think they are already well versed in the Act and its consequences.”—**Richard L. Engstrom**, Duke University

“Professor Tyson King-Meadows has produced an exceptionally brilliant and timely piece of scholarship on the state and status of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and its four renewals. This comprehensive and systematic work takes the reader from President LBJ to President Barack Obama via King-Meadows's original conceptualization the "Johnson Framework" through the Conservative Movement and its presidents along with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' efforts to redirect and reorient the focus and implementation of VRA as a different public policy. The intellectual sweep of this work encompasses not only the executive, but the legislative, judicial, and bureaucratic branches of government. This culminates in a bold new theory that is generated from both quantitative and qualitative data. Rare scholarship is on display in every chapter of this book.” —**Hanes Walton, Jr.**, University of Michigan

“King-Meadows does an outstanding job of advancing an inherently difficult proposition—a Congress-Centered approach to voting rights enforcement. Because he is so meticulous in analyzing the many practical implications of our current Executive-Centered Framework, and does it using many different kinds of evidence, his book will be of great interest to scholars who study African American politics, voting rights and civil rights policy, political representation, as well as public policy implementation.” —**Todd Shaw**, University of South Carolina

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Drawing from government data, legislative history, Supreme Court decisions, survey results, and the 2006 reauthorization debate, *When the Letter Betrays the Spirit* examines how executive and judicial discretion facilitates violations of the Voting Rights Act. Connecting Johnson to Obama, the book challenges the executive-centered model of leadership and proffers a Congress-centered approach to protecting voting rights. This approach would both satisfy the goals of the black civil rights movement and give fuller support to the Fifteenth Amendment.

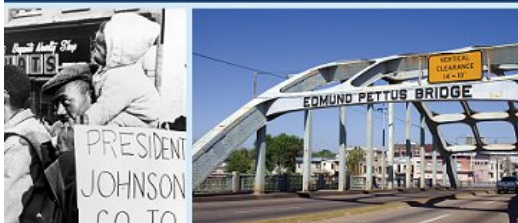
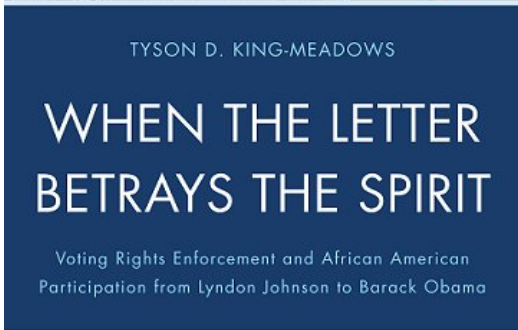
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