

Why is Rural America Treated Differently than Urban America?

Our Founders created a constitutional republic, not a democracy. The Founders disliked democracies and eliminated democracy principles in many places in the Constitution. For instance, the United States Senate has equal representation regardless of population. The Founders did not want one more populous region or state to impose its majoritarian values on the minority population. Similarly, the Founders also guaranteed a republic form of government for each state.

Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution reads: The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government. ...”

However, democracy principles were forced onto the states in *Baker v. Carr (1962)* and *Reynolds v. Simms (1964)* or better known as the One Person, One Vote cases. Yes, each person should receive one vote, but that is not what Baker and Reynolds were about.

In Baker and Reynolds, the Supreme Court decided that, unlike the federal government, districts for both state legislative houses must be evenly divided based on population. Baker and Reynolds provide all the voting power within states to urban areas. Rural regions are now at the mercy of big-city politics. There is no good reason why one of the two state house chambers cannot have equal representation for urban and rural regions. This can be accomplished, for example, by providing each county one representative regardless of population size.

According to the Department of Agriculture, per capita data suggests rural areas are more poverty-stricken and less educated than inner cities.ⁱ Considering how state and federal tax money is appropriated, that finding should not be a shock. Teachers’ salaries are the best example in the disparity of how funds are disproportionately appropriated in Colorado.ⁱⁱ

The purpose of Baker and Reynolds was to stop the disenfranchisement of minority voters, but instead, it displaced subjugation to rural areas. It is true minority voters in urban centers were denied proper representation at the time Baker and Reynolds were decided. But the government solution is wrong and fails to treat everyone equally by balancing population interests in one chamber of the state legislator and regional interests in the other chamber.

ⁱ [USDA ERS - Rural Poverty & Well-Being](#)

ⁱⁱ [Interactive Map: Average Teacher Salaries In Colorado - CBS Colorado \(cbsnews.com\)](#)