



# Deconstructing the Republic: Voting Rights, the Supreme Court, and the Founders' Republicanism Reconsidered

*Anthony A. Peacock*

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Although the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did more to fortify American republicanism than any other civil rights legislation in American history?finally securing the right to vote for black citizens in the Jim Crow South almost one hundred years after passage of the Fifteenth Amendment?as currently implemented, the landmark law actually undermines the Founders' vision of American government.

*Deconstructing the Republic* contends that the Founders' vision rests on the idea that individual citizens can choose their representatives based on public debate and argument, without regard to their race, creed, or class. Peacock argues that the way the Voting Rights Act has been implemented undermines this vision, replacing it with judicially-mandated multicultural politics.

According to Peacock, the politics of multiculturalism is an elite vision of America in which race and ethnicity are permanent features of American politics that require certain groups?blacks and Hispanics, particularly?to be awarded seats in the House of Representatives and state legislatures in proportion to their share of the population. By institutionalizing political identities based on illiberal conceptions of race and ethnicity, today's Voting Rights Act displaces the Constitution's emphasis on individual rights in favor of corporate, race-centered rights?and removes the public good from the calculus of representation.

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