

**ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE T
CITY OF MERCED**

You have a choice. All six council members live north of Bear Creek and therefore are assumed not to represent other parts of Merced well, and none of the council is Hispanic when nearly half the residents are. Elections by district are more likely to be representative of all neighborhoods of the city, than elections at large. The city council voted unanimously to place this on the ballot. Instead of allowing the staff, council, and community to design the best district boundaries, MALDEF requires by its settlement agreement with the city, that Santa Fe railroad (along 24th St.) be used as a boundary, with three election districts north of the railroad and three districts south of it. A better solution is three election districts each with two council representatives, because: 1) Each district has a larger population from which candidates can be nominated, reducing the chance that only one candidate runs. An unopposed candidate is elected without even campaigning; 2) With six districts, based on the 2012 election, only 1,666 votes are needed to elect a council member, and in a district with fewer registered voters than average even less votes are required. This allows special interest groups to become overly influential; 3) With three electoral districts for example: north, central, and south Merced - each with two council members, everyone in the city votes in every election to elect one of their two representatives, instead of voting at every other election; 4) All citizens have two council members committed to representing them, so if they disagree with one, they can ask the other one. If the ballot measure is voted down, MALDEF will likely sue the city. Perhaps the courts will allow the citizens more flexibility in devising district elections than MALDEF did. Vote "No".

Michael Belluomini
Member of the Merced City Council

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE "T"

The recommendation to approve this ballot measure is driven by the attorneys for MALDEF and for the city. They have chosen to divide the city at the Santa Fe railroad for council district boundaries and they insist on six single-member districts instead of allowing consideration of three districts with two council members each. They argue that two-member districts are not acceptable to the courts, though there are no court rulings specifically on city two member districts. Three council districts for example, a north district, (north of Bear Creek), a south district, (south of Highway 99), and a central district (between 99 and the creek), will still result in all neighborhoods being represented and in one or two districts being predominantly Hispanic in population. Three council districts with two council members each will result in better choice of candidates, elected by more voters, representing more voters, and keep council issues before all voters at every election. How city leaders are chosen is very important. This is your city, consider the issues and vote what YOU want. You know what is best for the City of Merced.

Michael Belluomini

Member Merced City Council