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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Files Brief Opposing Louisiana Attorney General’s Effort to Dissolve Historic Voting Consent Decree

Today, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) filed a [brief](#) on behalf of Ronald Chisom, Marie Bookman, and the Urban League of Louisiana supporting a 1992 consent decree in the landmark *Chisom* litigation meant to ensure Black voters in Louisiana have an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice to the state Supreme Court. The brief was filed in response to Attorney General Jeff Landry’s continued efforts to dissolve the decree with little explanation. LDF’s brief stresses the continued need for the *Chisom* consent decree, which serves as a remedy against the extreme and historic dilution of Black voting power in Louisiana.

In May 2022, the Eastern District Court [denied](#) Attorney General Landry’s motion to dissolve the decree. However, rather than accept the decree’s importance to Black representation and draw a new district map that complies with the decree, the defendants appealed the lower court’s decision to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

[Governor John Bel Edwards](#) and former [Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson](#), who served on the Louisiana Supreme Court from 1994 to 2020, also filed briefs highlighting the importance of the decree and opposing Attorney General Landry’s motion for dissolution.

Before advocates filed the *Chisom* lawsuit, no Black person had ever been elected to the Louisiana Supreme Court. The decree, issued following the landmark 1991 United States Supreme Court ruling in *Chisom v. Roemer*, provided a remedy for racial vote dilution in Louisiana’s election of its state Supreme Court justices, by ordering a new map that contained a district comprised of a majority of Black voters anchored in Orleans Parish. The case has its roots in Louisiana’s long history of discrimination in access to the judicial branch. As a direct result of the Consent Decree, Black voters in Orleans Parish have successfully elected candidates of their choice to the Louisiana Supreme Court: Justice Revius O. Ortique Jr. (1992-1994); Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson (1994-2020); and Justice Piper D. Griffin (2020-present).

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Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.