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## Full Court Hearing Begins in Federal Court to Decide Fate of Consent Decree Protecting Black Voting Rights and Judicial Representation in Louisiana

Today, the full Fifth Circuit will hear oral argument to [reconsider](#) a lower federal court order that upheld the landmark *Chisom* consent decree which came out of the case [Chisolm v. Louisiana](#). The decree protects the rights of Black voters in Orleans Parish, Louisiana by providing an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice to the Louisiana Supreme Court. The *Chisom* en banc argument will be held before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals with LDF and co-Counsels the law firm Cozen O'Connor, and Louisiana civil rights attorneys Ronald Wilson and William Quigley defending the District Court's decision to deny the Louisiana Attorney General's motion to Dissolve the Consent Decree.

"This case considers the foundational elements of our democracy which are the right to have your voted counted and a fair and just judicial system that interprets laws based on diversity of perspective and consideration. This ongoing court battle has its roots in Louisiana's deep history of discrimination in access to equal representation in the judicial branch and at the ballot box," said **Leah Aden, Senior Counsel, LDF**.

"For the last few decades, the Consent Decree has ensured Black voters in Orleans Parish have an opportunity to elect a candidate of choice to the state's highest court. Before the Attorney General may dissolve that decree, it must prove that there is a durable remedy in place to ensure illegal vote dilution will not immediately recur if federal oversight ends." said **Alaizah Koorji, Assistant Counsel, LDF**.

The *Chisom* Consent Decree was issued following the landmark 1991 United States Supreme Court ruling in *Chisom v. Roemer*, also litigated by LDF, which held that racial vote dilution in judicial elections is barred by Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The decree adopted in federal court in 1992 ensures Black voters in Orleans Parish have an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice to one of the seven seats on the Louisiana Supreme Court.

The Legal Defense Fund (LDF), and co-counsels represent Ronald Chisom, Marie Bookman, and the Urban League of Louisiana in their effort to protect the landmark *Chisom* consent decree.

Before advocates filed the *Chisom* lawsuit, no Black person had ever been elected to the Louisiana Supreme Court. Since the decree was entered, three Black justices have been elected to the *Chisom* seat.

To learn more about the timeline of this landmark case [click here](#).

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*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note: 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.*