

Civil Rights Groups File Federal Lawsuit Over Louisiana's New Gerrymandered District Maps

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2022

CONTACT: Ella Wiley, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, ewiley@naacpldf.org

NEW ORLEANS — The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Louisiana, Cozen O'Connor, Ron Wilson, and John Adock filed a [federal lawsuit](#) today on behalf of Black Voters Matter Capacity Building Institute, the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP, and several individual Louisiana voters challenging newly drawn state House and Senate district maps as unlawfully minimizing the voting strength of Black Louisianans.

The [lawsuit](#) asserts that the newly drawn maps deny Black residents an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice, in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

New political maps are drawn as part of a once-in-a-decade redistricting process triggered by census data — they determine the allocation of political power, representation, and access to resources at every level of government across the country for the next 10 years.

“The Louisiana Legislature has attempted to silence Black Louisianans for another decade,” said **LDF attorney Victoria Wenger**. “The numbers, geography, and people of Louisiana were clear throughout this entire redistricting process: additional majority-Black districts must be drawn for Louisiana’s legislative maps to comply with the Voting Rights Act. Black voters cannot be forced to endure another decade of underrepresentation, which is why it’s so important that a court fix these discriminatory maps before another decade of harm is cemented.”

“The Louisiana Legislature had the opportunity to ensure our district maps were constitutional, but instead they continued on the path that has led to decades of diluting Black voting power,” said **ACLU of Louisiana Executive Director Alanah Odoms**. “Louisianans deserve better from our elected officials, but those representatives aren’t letting us have a choice, so once again, we’re fighting back in the courts to protect the rights for all. It is well past time for Louisiana to turn the page and allow all citizens to participate fully in our democracy.”

“Black Louisianans like me deserve to be fairly represented,” said **Assumption Parish resident Dr. Dorothy Nairne**. “To comply with the Voting Rights Act, the maps must increase majority-Black districts. Lawmakers must follow the census data and are well aware of this, but instead they chose to ignore repeated concerns from national and local civil rights

leaders. We must reconcile this now. We look forward to fighting these discriminatory maps in court to ensure every voter's voice is heard and to improve the quality of life for all of us.”

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act bans the drawing of legislative district lines that water down the voting strength of Louisiana citizens who are Black. In the last decade, communities of color in Louisiana have grown, now making up 42% of the voting-age population, yet just 26% (37 of 144) of current legislators are people of color. And the state Legislature failed to draw district lines that would allow Louisiana's new voters to elect their preferred leaders.

It's essential for Louisiana voters to choose their leaders rather than politicians choosing their voters. District lines stay in place for 10 years. Who is elected to the state Legislature determines things such as whether schools and children have the resources they need to thrive. The state's elected officials have great power over citizens' lives, including over education, healthcare, and criminal law reform.

“The new state maps unlawfully deprive Louisiana's Black population of a meaningful opportunity to elect candidates of their choice to the state Senate and House of Representatives,” said **Black Voters Matter State Organizing Manager Omari J. Ho-Sang**. “The refusal of the Louisiana Legislature to address the rights of its Black residents is directly linked to its historical and present conditions of racial discrimination against Black people. It is time we remedy this inequity.”

The case, *Nairne v. Ardoin*, was filed in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. 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. 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 NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).