



**For Immediate Release**

**LDF Media**

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**District Court Rejects Federal Challenge to Arkansas Congressional Map  
*Eastern District of Arkansas Court Finds Lack of Evidence that Map Is a  
Racial Gerrymander and Is Racially Dilutive***

After years of litigation, a three-judge federal panel granted Defendant's summary judgment motion in *Christian Ministerial Alliance, et al. v. John Thurston*, unanimously [ruling](#) that the 2021 enacted Arkansas congressional map did not constitute a racial gerrymander and amount to intentional racial discrimination. The panel's ruling prematurely stops the case before a trial, where the panel would be able to hear directly from witnesses impacted by the redistricting and experts who can explain their reports.

With the creation of the 2021 congressional map, Arkansas carved Pulaski County into three congressional districts. Pulaski County is home to the city of Little Rock and also has the largest Black population of any county in the state. This three-way split in southeast Pulaski County was carried out through the surgical removal of Black voters by sorting them across three separate congressional districts. Plaintiffs, individual Black voters and an organization, sued and raised two claims: race impermissibly predominated in the creation of one of the 2021 congressional districts, and that the map was designed to minimize Black electoral power in all of the districts. This dismissal is one of two other legal challenges that have been brought (and lost) to challenge the 2021 congressional map.

By deliberately separating Black voters in a process known as cracking in southeastern Pulaski County, Arkansas officials severely weakened Black voters' access to representation in the federal legislature. Should one Pulaski-based district have been left intact, as it historically has been in previous congressional maps and was possible in alternative maps, Black communities would have the opportunity to hold their elected officials accountable and demand policy responses to circumstances and resources that impact their everyday lives. The panel's decision ignored and failed to credit ample

evidence gathered of the harm this congressional map incurred on the lives of Black voters.

Plaintiffs' counsel, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), longstanding Arkansas civil rights attorney Arkie Byrd, and O'Melveny & Myers, issued the following joint statement:

“The decision is a disappointing result in a case that will have severe effects on the lives of Arkansans. Equal and fair representation should be a priority for every official in the state, yet here we see that fundamental promise of our democracy tossed to the wayside. But the moral arc of the universe remains long, and we will not stop our fight for fair maps, just representation, and the rights of Black voters in Arkansas.”

Plaintiffs in the case issued the following statement:

“Black voters in Arkansas like us and the community members we represent have the right to effect change in their communities through electing candidates of choice, just like any other voter in the state. We know the truth of the congressional map, and its goal of splintering Black communities where we live and contribute to dilute the power of those same communities. We will not let this setback decrease our commitment to achieving equality in representation and voting in our home state. We are former teachers, community leaders, and more and have an unwavering commitment to challenge discrimination where it exists. We will keep marching onward toward true justice at the ballot box.”

The plaintiffs include the Christian Ministerial Alliance and individual voters, Patricia Brewer, Carolyn Briggs, Lynette Brown, Mable Bynum, and Velma Smith.

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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.*