



**For Immediate Release**  
Monday, July 7, 2025

**LDF Media**  
[media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

**LDF Declares Victory in Successfully Advocating for the County  
Commission in Fayette County, Tennessee to Draw a New, Fairer Electoral  
Map**

Today, after succeeding in convincing county lawmakers to pass a new map that provides fair representation to Black voters, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) declared victory and voluntarily dismissed its [lawsuit](#) challenging the illegal and unconstitutional 2021 map of the Fayette County, Tennessee Board of County Commissioners. LDF represented NAACP Fayette-Somerville Branch, Christine Woods, Thomas Gilmore, Velisa Fitzpatrick, Willie Luellen, and Marandy Wilkerson in the now-dismissed case.

Although Black voters make up more than a quarter of Fayette County's voting-age population, in 2021, the County Commission drew a map that locked Black voters out of the electoral process. Under that previous electoral map, the history of racial discrimination and racially polarized voting in Fayette County resulted in an election system where none of the current 19 commissioners are Black people and none of the 10 electoral districts provided opportunities for Black voters to elect candidates of their choice.

When drawing the old map, the all-white County Commission ignored pleas from community members and the county's own attorney who warned about the harm that would occur from enacting it. The County Commission also rejected alternative proposed plans that heeded guidelines that would have lessened the map's racially discriminatory impact. As a result, LDF filed a [lawsuit](#) alleging that the 2021 plan diluted Black voting strength in violation of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) and the U.S. Constitution.

On June 24, in response to LDF's litigation, Fayette County lawmakers unanimously passed the new County Commission electoral map, which complies with Section 2 of the VRA and Constitution. The new map creates three new majority-Black single-member districts that provide Black voters with the opportunity to elect candidates of choice to the County Commission. The new map will be used in the 2026 election cycle, the first in years that Black communities in Fayette County will have an equal voice when participating in the democratic process.

“Our lawsuit sent a clear message that Fayette County has to treat everyone fairly in the map drawing process,” said John Cusick, LDF Assistant Counsel. “The new map is a huge victory for Black voters that only happened because of our clients’ courage and unshakeable determination to fight for full citizenship and equal rights. We look forward to the 2026 election cycle where Black voters will finally have a chance to participate equally in the democratic process.”

“Fayette County tried to push Black voters out of the electoral process and silence us with a map that diluted our voting power,” said Elton Holmes, President of the Fayette-Somerville Branch of the NAACP. “But the new map rights that wrong and ensures we have equal representation. We are ready to move forward to ensure our voices are heard in Fayette County and represented on the County Commission.”

“This passage of the new map is not just a victory for Black voters, but also a victory for Fayette County,” said Plaintiff Christine Woods. “I’m excited about the new map and look forward to the upcoming elections that will take place under a fair map. This is a great opportunity for Black voters to get out and make our voices heard so that we have equal representation on the County Commission.”

“Our nation works best when every vote counts,” said Janette McCarthy Wallace, General Counsel of the NAACP. “The adoption of this new map is a powerful affirmation of what happens when communities stand together and the legal system functions as it should, as a check against injustice and a safeguard for democracy. We’re pleased that this outcome reflects both the strength of our lawsuit and the tireless work of local leaders and advocates, and gives Black voters in Fayette County the chance to make their voices heard.”

“I am so encouraged by the passage of a map that no longer harms Black voters in Fayette County,” said Plaintiff Willie Luellen. “With this map, we are one step closer to the representation that Black voters deserve in Fayette County.”

“The Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP welcomes the resolution of the redistricting dispute in Fayette County,” said Gloria Sweet-Love, President of the Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP. “There is a long history and contemporary pattern of unfair redistricting practices in rural West Tennessee that have harmed Black political representation. We are also scrutinizing other redistricting plans adopted by local jurisdictions in the region in order to safeguard democracy.”

“We are pleased Fayette County passed a fair and non-discriminatory map that addresses the harm to our clients,” said Don Donati, Founding Attorney at Donati Law, PLLC. “We are so proud to stand with our clients and co-counsel in this important fight.”

###

*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.*