



QUINN, CONNOR, WEAVER,
DAVIES & ROUCO LLP

For Immediate Release

September 12, 2023

Media Contacts

Legal Defense Fund (LDF) – media@naacpldf.org / 212-965-2200

Quinn, Connor, Weaver, Davis, & Rouco LLP – rrouco@qcwdr.com / 205-918-7430

LDF Joins as Co-Counsel, Files Proposed Amended Complaint in Lawsuit Challenging Racial Discrimination in Newbern, Alabama’s Electoral Practices

[Newbern, Alabama]—Today, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) joined as co-counsel and [filed](#) a proposed second amended complaint in *Braxton et al., v. Stokes et al.*, a federal lawsuit challenging racially discriminatory voting and electoral practices in Newbern, Alabama.

The lawsuit, filed in March 2023 by Quinn, Connor, Weaver, Davis, & Rouco LLP on behalf of plaintiffs Patrick Braxton and other Black Newbern residents in the United States District Court Southern District of Alabama, alleges that the Town of Newbern failed to properly hold elections and unlawfully prevented the town’s first Black mayor and first majority-Black town council from fulfilling their official duties.

The plaintiffs claim that they have continually faced unlawful discrimination in attempting to vote and hold office in Newbern. For decades, Newbern has not held mayoral elections. After the first Black mayor, Patrick Braxton, came into office in November 2020, Newbern residents arranged an illegal special election that intentionally prevented Mayor Braxton from appointing a majority-Black town council and Newbern voters from electing their candidate of choice for town council.

The amended complaint adds two new claims alleging that the town’s voting and electoral practices violate Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. The complaint also asks the court to order new elections for town council and for defendants to follow Alabama law, which specifies how elections should be held.

“The repeated failure of Newbern officials to hold or give notice for a municipal election — for decades — is unfortunately emblematic of ongoing attacks against Black voters. It is imperative that courts step in to ensure that everyone’s right to vote is protected,” said Morenike Fajana, Senior Counsel at LDF.

“The Legal Defense Fund is proud to join this case to vindicate the rights of the residents of Newbern who have not had the opportunity to participate in municipal elections for decades,” said Leah Wong, Voting Rights Defender and Prepared to Vote Attorney at LDF.

“For too long, the town of Newbern has failed to follow the law by denying Black voters their right to elect representatives and hold office — this is clearly an effort to stifle the political participation, voices, and power of Black residents in the town. Every voter deserves to have their voice heard. We urge the court to hold the defendants accountable and order them to follow the law,” said Richard Rouco, Partner at Quinn, Connor, Weaver, Davis, & Rouco LLP.

[Read the amended complaint here.](#)