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Black Voters File Emergency Petition to the Supreme Court Asking for Hearing to Select Louisiana's New Congressional Map to Proceed

Washington, DC—Yesterday in *Robinson v. Ardoin*, the challenge to Louisiana's congressional map under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, plaintiffs filed an emergency petition to the Supreme Court of the United States asking for the process of selecting a new map to proceed.

The motion is in response to a writ of mandamus issued by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals yesterday, which vacated a remedial hearing set for Oct. 3-5, 2023, during which the District Court was set to consider Plaintiffs' proposal for a new map including two majority-Black districts. Plaintiffs argue that the writ was improperly granted and would unfairly risk the timeline to enact a new congressional map. The map enacted by the Louisiana Legislature only includes one majority-Black district.

Last year, a federal district court in Baton Rouge found that the legislature's map dilutes the votes of Black Louisianians, likely in violation of the Voting Rights Act, and enjoined its use in the 2022 election. However, the U.S. Supreme Court temporarily blocked that ruling, allowing the map to be used in the 2022 mid-term election. In June, the Supreme Court allowed the case to move forward, and the district court scheduled a hearing to adopt a new map to remedy the vote dilution in the Legislature's map.

"We are ready to advance a map that marks a new chapter for the state of Louisiana – one that provides a fair opportunity for Black voters to equally participate in the political process," said LDF redistricting fellow Sara Rohani, "Procedural delays should not be used as a barrier to justice for another election cycle. A new map must be selected."

"The State has had plenty of opportunity to enact a map that gives representation to Louisiana's Black voters and failed to do so," said Alora Thomas-Lundborg, Senior Counsel at the Harvard Election Law Clinic. "Now is the time for courts to act and ensure that Louisianians vote under a lawful map in 2024."

"There should be no further delays in upholding Black Louisianans' right to fair representation," said Alanah Odoms, ACLU of Louisiana executive director. "The hearing should proceed as planned so that our congressional maps can be redrawn to reflect the diverse population they serve."

“The right of all Americans to equal voting power is a central pillar of our democracy and for too long Black Louisianans have been excluded from the democratic process,” said **Sarah Brannon, managing attorney of the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project**. “We won’t allow procedural delays or other tactics to hamper the fight for an equitable and lawful map for all Louisianans.”

While the procedural writ does not overturn the substantive decisions on the case thus far, it jeopardizes the timeline when a map can be selected before the 2024 elections. The preliminary injunction continues to prohibit the state from conducting any elections on the discriminatory map enacted by the Louisiana Legislature last year and a Fifth Circuit oral argument regarding the state’s violation of the Voting Rights Act will take place as scheduled on Friday, Oct. 6. Still, the process to select a new map remains needed.

The lawsuit, filed in March 2022, argues that the state’s congressional map severely dilutes the voting power of Black Louisianians and violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by failing to add a second majority-Black district. The lawsuit was filed by the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP, Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, and individuals Press Robinson, Dorothy Nairne, E. René Soulé, Alice Washington, and Clee Ernest Lowe. The plaintiffs are represented by the Legal Defense Fund, American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Louisiana, Harvard Election Law Clinic, Louisiana attorneys John Adcock and Tracie Washington, and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP.