

Civil Rights Groups Challenge South Carolina's New Redistricting Map

Lawsuit: Gerrymandered State House Map Intentionally Discriminates Against Black Communities

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COLUMBIA, S.C. — Civil rights groups have filed a [legal challenge](#) over South Carolina's new racially gerrymandered state House district map, charging it intentionally discriminates against Black communities in the state and denies Black voters equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice.

The lawsuit spotlights South Carolina's long history of racial discrimination, and charges that the new map is a racial gerrymander that intentionally packs and cracks Black communities. "Cracking" refers to splitting communities of color into different districts to prevent them from exercising greater political power. "Packing" refers to placing people of color into the same district in greater numbers than necessary to elect candidates of choice to prevent them from exercising greater political power in surrounding districts.

Redistricting only happens once every decade, and it determines the allocation of political power and representation at every level of government for the next 10 years.

The case was brought on behalf of the South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP and an individual voter, Taiwan Scott, who are represented by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of South Carolina, Boroughs Bryant LLC, Arnold & Porter, and General Counsel's Office of the NAACP.

The same groups filed a [federal lawsuit](#) in October 2021 challenging the South Carolina Legislature's unnecessary delay in drawing new redistricting maps that respect the constitutional one-person-one-vote principle.

This new filing amends the existing lawsuit to reflect the passage earlier this month of House Bill 4493, which adopted a racially gerrymandered state House district maps that intentionally cracks and packs Black communities. In addition, the updated suit, which was filed late last night, reiterates the need to pass a constitutionally compliant congressional map, which has yet to happen.

The South Carolina Legislature passed H. 4493 in a flawed and non-transparent process that prevented meaningful and necessary community input and review, including the legislature's refusal to consider alternative maps that complied with the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

The following comments are from:

Leah Aden, deputy director of litigation at LDF: “South Carolina’s H. 4493 represents the latest iteration of South Carolina’s ongoing record of racial discrimination against Black voters. The South Carolina Legislature enacted racially gerrymandered and intentionally dilutive state House districts that minimize Black South Carolinian voting power. And the harms are predictable: Black voters will have fewer opportunities to elect candidates of choice or influence elections and thus have representatives who will be responsive to their needs for housing, economic, educational, and public safety opportunities. The challenged discriminatory districts should not stand.”

American Civil Liberties Union attorney Somil Trivedi: “This is classic gerrymandering. South Carolina lawmakers surgically carved up Black communities in key areas of the state to entrench their own political power. It has got to stop.”

Brenda Murphy, president of the South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP: “Once again, South Carolina legislators have failed to provide fair and nondiscriminatory redistricting plans. This lawsuit is necessary to remedy the racial discrimination motivating H. 4493’s passage and racially gerrymandered state House districts. Equal electoral access and fair representation are critical for the members and volunteers of the South Carolina NAACP. Elected officials must be responsive and accountable to the needs of Black communities throughout South Carolina. The South Carolina NAACP stands ready to ensure that the South Carolina Legislature satisfies their constitutional obligations.”

Allen Chaney, legal director of the ACLU of South Carolina: “Citizens should be able to rely on elected officials to fulfill their redistricting duties with fairness and transparency, but yet again South Carolinians must instead rely on the courts to vindicate their interest in nondiscriminatory political maps.”

The case, *South Carolina Conference of the NAACP v. McMaster*, was filed in U.S. District Court in Columbia, S.C.

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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.

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