

For Immediate Release

June 9, 2023

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Civil Rights Groups Seek to Lift Stay in Federal Lawsuit Challenging Louisiana's Discriminatory State Legislative Maps on Heels of U.S. Supreme Court Alabama Decision

BATON ROUGE, La. — The Legal Defense Fund (LDF), American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Louisiana, law firm Cozen O' Connor, and Louisiana attorneys Ron Wilson and John Adcock filed a motion today to lift a stay in a federal lawsuit challenging Louisiana's discriminatorily drawn state House and Senate district maps.

The groups filed the motion in *Nairne v. Ardoin*, a [lawsuit](#) originally brought in March 2022 that asserts that the maps deny Black residents an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice, in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The action comes in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision yesterday in *Allen v. Milligan* (formerly called *Merrill v. Milligan*), which reaffirmed the legal framework that guides courts in evaluating challenges to redistricting plans under Section 2.

"The Supreme Court's ruling to uphold decades-long precedent and sustain Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act will have ripple effects nationwide," said **Sara Rohani, redistricting fellow at the Legal Defense Fund**. "In Louisiana, our efforts to advance fair and representative maps for the state Legislature were put on pause pending this historic decision, but now it's time to get back to work. We will continue to work tirelessly through this litigation to ensure that the state comes into compliance with federal law and enacts a map that honors Black voters' choices and the voting rights of all Louisianians."

In August 2022, the lawsuit came to a standstill when the Louisiana federal court issued a stay of all proceedings in the case while awaiting the Supreme Court's decision in *Milligan*. In light of yesterday's *Milligan* ruling, the groups are urging the federal court to allow the case to proceed.

The motion was filed on behalf of plaintiffs in the lawsuit, including the Black Voters Matter Capacity Building Institute, the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP, and several individual Louisiana voters challenging the 2022 redistricting cycle maps.

“We need state legislative maps that reflect our communities and no longer deny Black voters a fair shot at representation,” said **Mike McClanahan, president of the Louisiana NAACP**. “The same lawmakers who drew their own districts last year in ways that deprive Black Louisianians an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice spent this year advancing policies that undermine access to democracy and fair justice. It is fitting that the Supreme Court’s decision upholding Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act came on the exact same day that Louisiana’s legislative session concluded — let’s finally close this chapter of leadership in our statehouse that undermines and undervalues the voices of Black Louisianians. We look forward to proceeding with our case to challenge the state legislative maps and remain optimistic that fairness will be vindicated under the renewed strength of the Voting Rights Act. Justice delayed but not denied!”

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act bans the discriminatory drawing of legislative district lines that dilute the voting strength of Black voters. In the last decade, communities of color in Louisiana have grown, but the state Legislature failed to draw district lines that would allow Black Louisiana voters to elect their preferred leaders.

“This case has always been about fairness and representation,” said **Dr. Dorothy Nairne, the lead named plaintiff in *Nairne v. Ardoin***. “I remain optimistic that the Supreme Court’s ruling to uphold Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act signals a new chapter in our fight to achieve fair legislative maps in Louisiana. These maps have real consequences for my community. It is time that Black voters all the way from my neighborhood in Napoleonville up to Baton Rouge and Shreveport are able to finally feel real hope that their voices will be heard in our political process. We are eager to see this vision through in the courts.”

“Black Louisianians’ deserve fair representation at our state capitol,” said **Omari Ho-Sang, senior state organizing manager – Louisiana**. “We know the facts are on our side, and the Supreme Court upholding Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act affirms that the law should be on our side here, too. At every stage of the redistricting process, we heard voters demand maps that reflect their communities. We have hope of achieving this now in the courts and are ready to see this through to victory.”

“It’s well past time for Louisiana to turn the page and allow all citizens to participate fully in our democracy,” said **ACLU of Louisiana Executive Director Alanah Odoms**. “Louisianians deserve better from our elected officials. Black voters must be heard in the electoral process, not packed into one district or diluted into several

districts by maps that attack their political power. Our fight for fair maps continues, to ensure that every vote counts, and that voters of color have equal representation in our state.”

“The Supreme Court was right to take a stand against Alabama gerrymandering when it upheld Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act,” said **Sarah Brannon, managing attorney of the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project**. “Black voters in Louisiana deserve nothing less, and why this case should be allowed to move forward.”

Filing: <https://www.aclu.org/documents/nairne-v-ardoin-plaintiffs-motion-to-vacate-stay>