



**For Immediate Release**  
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**LDF Media**  
212-965-2200 / [media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

## **Federal Court Rules South Carolina's Congressional Map is Gerrymandered**

COLUMBIA, S.C. — A federal court today ordered South Carolina to redraw its 2021 enacted congressional map, ruling that a district anchored in Charleston County is a racial gerrymander.

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 Legal Defense Fund (LDF), American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of South Carolina, UMD Law Professor Chris Bryant, Arnold & Porter, and General Counsel's Office of the NAACP.

During an eight-day trial this past fall, plaintiffs highlighted how the South Carolina Legislature engineered its new map to cut through Black communities to suppress Black voting power — and demonstrated how lawmakers hid behind arbitrary justifications to achieve their discriminatory actions.

In so doing, a unanimous panel acknowledged the principle that “[s]tate legislators are free to consider a broad array of factors in the design of a legislative district, including partisanship, but they may not use race as a predominant factor and may not use partisanship as a proxy for race,” as they did in designing aspects of South Carolina’s congressional map.

Black voters and their allies, as well as experts in demography, political science, redistricting, and mathematics described the harm that the current congressional map has on Black voters’ compared to race-neutral alternative map options, lending further support to the strong evidence of unconstitutional line-drawing by the state. Indeed, the court found that aspects of South Carolina’s congressional map had “bleached” Black voters out of a district and made a “mockery” of traditional districting principles.

The court today ruled that the Legislature unconstitutionally set out to achieve an artificially-low target Black population in Congressional District 1, which includes Charleston County. The court held this violated plaintiffs’ constitutional rights under the 14th Amendment.

Specifically, a unanimous three-judge panel ruled that “[r]educing the African American population in Charleston County so low as to bring the overall black percentage in Congressional District No. 1 down to the 17% target was no easy task and was effectively impossible without the gerrymandering of the African American population of Charleston County.”

*The following comments are from:*

**Leah Aden, deputy director of litigation at LDF:** “The court got it right that plaintiffs, representing Black South Carolina voters, have a right to be free from unlawful racial

discrimination under our Constitution. It is time for the South Carolina Legislature to adopt a fair and non-racially gerrymandered congressional map.”

**Plaintiff Taiwan Scott:** “For decades, South Carolina has tried to push Black voters out of the electoral process and effectively silence us with maps that dilute our political power. Today’s decision finally recognizes this egregious, generations-long effort to box us out of representation. While there is still a lot of work to be done, we are one step closer to rectifying South Carolina’s long history of voter suppression, and one step closer to the representation we deserve.”

**Brenda Murphy, president of the South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP:** “Today’s order from the district court is a crucial win for South Carolina’s Black communities and for our cause to ensure equal and fair political representation in our state. The panel of judges not only found South Carolina’s congressional map to be racially gerrymandered, but also recognized discriminatory intent in drawing the map. This reveals the lengths that were taken to exclude the voices of Black South Carolinians from the halls of the Congress. With this order and its call for barring all future congressional elections in CD 1 and ordering the General Assembly to submit a remedial map, we are emboldened and encouraged that we will see fairer congressional maps for South Carolina.”

**Adriel I. Cepeda Derieux, senior staff attorney with the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project:** “South Carolina lawmakers tried to surgically carve up Black communities in parts of the state to secure their own political power. The court was right to block this brazen effort to undermine voters and our democratic process.”

**Allen Chaney, legal director of the ACLU of South Carolina:** “Today’s ruling is a victory for all South Carolinians. As the court properly found, racial sorting in service of political gain is abhorrent to the principles of fairness, justice, and equal treatment that lie at the core of the Fourteenth Amendment. We look forward to seeing a new congressional redistricting plan that honors the dignity of all South Carolina voters.”

The case, *South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP v. Alexander*, was filed in federal court in Columbia, S.C.

Ruling: <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/FINDINGS-OF-FACT-AND-CONCLUSIONS-OF-LAW.-The-Court-declares-Congressional-District-No.-1-a.pdf>

OR:

<https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/order-south-carolina-state-conference-naacp-v-alexander>

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