



SESSION 2

Gerrymandering and the Levels of Redistricting

We Paved the Way: Background and Lawsuits

Background

Advocates across various organizations have worked ongoing for 10+ years in coalition and other formations to address redistricting and gerrymandering. All with a hyper focus on congressional level gerrymandering and the goal of a constitutional amendment by way of the NC legislature.

Redistricting happens on all levels: local, state and congressional. Over the years, local governments and advocates have fought for fair maps and have achieved marginal success. Such as Robeson County, who in the 1990s won fair representation on the school board, county commission and legislative. This success was achieved through: litigation, community education and subsequently community advocacy, including direct action. Success stories such as these have been overtime either temporary or corrupted due to changes in elected officials, who are responsible for drawing the maps. These changes also occur generationally.

Nationwide for the past 10-20 years, various other states have engaged in fighting for independent commissions or an alternative way of drawing maps, as to distribute the balance of power external to state legislatures or at least dividing that power. We saw these wins achieved in court in: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Grounding

Historically, Black-led organizations created the method of fair redistricting. Every state that has achieved any version of fair maps can attribute that success to organizations such as [SNCC](#), [NAACP](#) and [Southern Echo](#). These organizations and the experts that comprised them laid the fair maps infrastructure for litigation, legislation + community organizing grounded in community education.

Today, numerous court cases have been waged and legislation filed. All using the infrastructure of the past but with less inclusion of the very communities who cracked the code to give us the Voting Rights Act to begin with. Nonetheless, these cases have inched us forward to marginal success. Here are notable court cases and bills filed in recent years.

North Carolina Court Cases

Notable court cases against North Carolina partisan and racial gerrymanders in recent years:

Cases Challenging NC Congressional Districts (US House)

- [Cooper v. Harris](#)
- [Rucho v. Common Cause](#)
- [Common Cause v. Lewis](#)

Cases Challenging NC Senate and House of Representatives Districts

- [NC v. Covington](#) - went to the US Supreme Court, courts ruled the districts violated the Voting Rights Act.
- Common Cause v. Lewis.
- [NC Naacp, LWV, et al. v Lewis](#) (four NC House Districts in Wake County)

Federal Cases

- [Shaw v. Reno](#)

NC Bills Introduced

Notable legislation filed by advocates and progressive leaning organizations to rectify gerrymanders. This bill included specific criteria by which fair map drawing should follow. This bill was a constitutional amendment, considered the "golden standard". This legislation was co-sponsored by Sen. Valerie Foushee.

- Senate Bill [673](#) (2019)—concerning the creation of The NC Citizens Redistricting Commission
- Listing of other introduced [bills](#)

NC Bills Related to Local Redistricting and Census

- Senate Bill [722](#) (2021)—concerning local elections in light of delayed census data



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