

North Carolina Supreme Court Declares Voting Maps Unconstitutional

News

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A Jenner & Block team secured a victory when the North Carolina Supreme Court declared that the General Assembly's gerrymandered Congressional and state legislative maps were unconstitutional beyond a reasonable doubt and barred them from being used in future elections.

The Republican-led General Assembly gerrymandered the maps so that Republicans were likely to win 10 of the state's 14 US House seats, as well as veto-proof supermajorities in both houses of the state legislature, even if Democrats won a majority of the statewide votes. Following a trial, the court made fact findings that the maps were intentionally skewed to favor Republicans but held that there was no judicial remedy.

By a 4-3 majority, the North Carolina Supreme Court relied on the findings of fact but held that the state's constitution provides a remedy. The legislature will have until February 18 to redraw the map to account for partisan fairness and plaintiffs in the suit will also be able to submit maps for court review and selection.

Jenner & Block has been working on redistricting cases in North Carolina and other states through its redistricting project, spearheaded by Partners Jessica Ring Amunson and Sam Hirsch. The North Carolina team is led by Partner Zachary C. Schauf, who argued the case in the North Carolina Supreme Court.

"This is a victory for fair maps, free elections, and a government that truly reflects the will of the people. As the Court recognized, the Republican legislative leaders shredded all three of those principles. Now they must start over – and get it right this time," Mr. Schauf commented.

Other key members of the team include Partners Kali Bracey, David Bradford, Benjamin J. Bradford, Alex S. Trepp, and David M. Greenwald and Associates Karthik P. Reddy, Urja R. Mittal, and Mary E. Marshall. Senior paralegal Cheryl Olson and paralegals Thomas Scholtus Adam Weidman assisted. Many others in the firm provided important assistance, including Partners Robert R. Stauffer, David Jimenez-Ekman, and David P. Sanders; Associates Brandon J. Polcik, Huiyi Chen, Allison M. Tjemsland, and Sophia L. Cai; Department Counsel Adam M. Caldwell; senior paralegals Daniel Garcia and Theresa Busch; and paralegals Grace Liberman, Sam Rosen, and Kendall Allen.

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