IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
No. 1:15-cv-399

SANDRA LITTLE COVINGTON, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, et al.,

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF
SEN. GLADYS A. ROBINSON

I, Gladys A. Robinson, am over the age of 18 and fully competent to make this
declaration. Under penalty of perjury, I state the following:

1. I am a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, representing Senate
District 28 (SD 28). I have served in the North Carolina Senate since 2010.

2. The district I represent is one of the nine Senate districts that were struck down in
2016 by the federal court in Covington v. North Carolina as unconstitutional racial
gerrymanders.

2003 and 2011 versions of Senate District 28

3. When I was elected in 2010, SD 28 included primarily southern Guilford County,
with the county and its Senate districts drawn roughly on either side of Interstate
40, which runs east-west across the center of the county. The communities in my
district in the southern part of the county included much of High Point,
Jamestown, and Pleasant Garden. My district also included part of East
Greensboro north of the interstate.

4. The pre-2011 version of SD 28 had a total black voting age population of 44.18%.

5. This is a map of the pre-2011 version of SD 28:
6. Since the 2011 redistricting process, SD 28 has been astride Interstate 40 in the center of the county, made up primarily of a narrow band of communities along the interstate including southern Greensboro and downtown Greensboro. Venturing away from the interstate, the current district has prominent arms reaching out into Northeast Greensboro and into part of eastern High Point, both of which are heavily African-American communities.

7. In the 2011 version of SD 28, the total black voting age population was increased to 56.49%.

8. This is a map of the 2011 version of SD 28:
9. Based on my experience campaigning in and representing such a wide variety of communities in Guilford County since 2010, I am familiar with the demographics and common interests of the various communities in Greensboro and elsewhere in the county.

Proposed 2017 version of Senate District 28

10. My first impression of Senate Bill 691, now S.L. 2017-207 (“the 2017 plan”), was that it didn’t make substantial changes from the original racially gerrymandered district.

11. In the 2017 plan, SD 28 retains its core shape from 2011. Unlike the 2003 version that predated the racial gerrymandering, the district again sits astride Interstate 40 and includes a prominent arm into heavily African-American Northeast Greensboro.

12. This is a map of the 2017 version of SD 28:
Detrimental effects on High Point

13. However, in the 2017 plan, SD 28 no longer includes any part of High Point for the first time in my tenure in the Senate. My own home precinct in High Point was split to place High Point and Jamestown, both of which had been included in the pre-2011 version of SD 28, into separate districts from SD 28.

14. High Point is now part of a district that includes all of Randolph County, SD 26, which I believe will have the effect of submerging the voices of my current constituents in High Point.

15. This change also separates High Point from longstanding communities of interest in Guilford County of which it continues to be a part.

16. Like Greensboro, High Point is one of the two major urban centers in Guilford County and one of three in the larger Triad metro area that includes Winston-Salem in Forsyth County. Ongoing regional planning for the Triad on such major business interests as development around the Piedmont Triad International Airport and hosting the annual High Point Furniture Market involves all three of these urban centers working closely together. Randolph County, which lies outside the Triad, does not share these economic and development interests.

17. High Point also has shared interests with southern Guilford County, with which it shared a district before the 2011 redistricting, including commerce and
development along the Interstate 85/Business I-85 corridor, which bears heavily on the economies of High Point and southern Guilford County but does not extend into Randolph County.

**Detrimental effects on communities of interest in Greensboro**

18. To make up for the exclusion of High Point and Jamestown from SD 28 in the 2017 plan, populous precincts in Greensboro were added to the district. But these additions had the effect of splitting up communities of interest in Greensboro.

19. For example, the Western Guilford High School (G43) and Guilford Baptist Church (G64) precincts, both of which had been split in the 2011 plan, are adjacent to Piedmont Triad International Airport and part of a community of interest related to economic development and employment around the airport. These precincts could have been kept whole in either SD 28, which does not include any other precincts in the airport community of interest, or neighboring SD27, which includes all of the other precincts in the airport community of interest. Both precincts were placed in SD 28, separate from the remainder of their community of interest.

20. Similarly, the Morehead Elementary School (G36), Friendly Avenue Church of Christ (G38), and Greek Orthodox Church (G39) precincts, which are part of the Northwest Greensboro economic, residential, and civic community of interest, are included in SD 28 for the first time in the 2017 plan, while the rest of Northwest Greensboro remains assigned to SD 27.

**Perpetuation of racial gerrymandering through precinct splitting and recombination**

21. Of further concern, precincts split and recombined in the 2017 plan demonstrate how race still predominated in construction of SD 28.

22. For example, the Calvary Baptist Church (JEF2) precinct, which was split in the 2011 plan, remains split in the 2017 plan. But while in 2011 that precinct was split largely along municipal boundaries, the 2017 split no longer follows the municipal boundary for the City of Greensboro. The Calvary Baptist Church precinct includes several pockets of African-American residents.

23. Also in the northeastern part of SD 28, the Brightwood Elementary School (MON2), Hillcrest Baptist Church (G26), and Calvary Christian Center (CG3B) precincts were all split in the 2011 plan. The Brightwood Elementary and Hillcrest Baptist precincts each contain more than 45% black voting age population, and the Calvary Christian precinct contains less than 20% black voting age population. In repairing those splits in the 2017 plan, the Brightwood Elementary and Hillcrest
Baptist precincts have been left whole in SD 28, while the Calvary Christian precinct was removed from SD 28 and assigned to SD 27. Thus, the more heavily African-American precincts were included in the district while the predominantly white precinct was removed from the district.

Rejection of public feedback and less discriminatory alternatives

24. During the legislative process for the 2017 plan, I attended a public hearing on the plan in Jamestown, the Senate Redistricting Committee meeting at which the Senate plan was considered and voted on, and both Senate floor debates and votes on the Senate plan.

25. At each of these stages of the legislative process, the 2017 configuration of SD 28 was publicly criticized as a perpetuation of the 2011 racial gerrymander. In addition to the criticisms I heard during these public meetings and debates, I received emails, phone calls, and in-person feedback from my constituents and other Guilford County residents who opposed the 2017 plan because of concerns that the district lines in Guilford County were drawn in a way that harmed communities of color and perpetuated the racial effects of the 2011 plan.

26. My constituents and other Guilford County residents who contacted me about the 2017 plan were also frustrated and confused. They did not know which districts their neighborhoods were now in or who would be on their ballots. They were tired of what they perceived as never-ending redistricting and upheaval.

27. During the legislative process, I reviewed data provided by legislative staff that showed that the percentage total black voting age population in SD 28 is 50.52% in the 2017 plan.

28. I attended the August 24, 2017 meeting of the Senate Redistricting Committee to consider the 2017 plan, although I am not a member of that committee. During that meeting, Sen. Terry Van Duyn introduced an alternative map of SD 28 intended to correct the racial gerrymander and reduce the percentage of black voting age population in the district to pre-2011 levels. During committee debate, Sen. Van Duyn pointed out that the shape of SD 28 in the 2017 plan was very similar to the shape of the racially gerrymandered district drawn in 2011. Sen. Van Duyn’s proposed version of the district did not double-bunk any incumbents. Yet the committee rejected her amendment by a 9-4 vote.

29. During the Senate floor debate on the 2017 plan on August 25, 2017, I introduced an amendment proposing more compact districts in Guilford County, including a version of SD 28 that returned the black voting age population in the district to pre-2011 levels. My amendment would not have double-bunked any incumbents,
and it split fewer precincts than the 2017 plan. Sen. Ralph Hise, the chairman of the Senate Redistricting Committee, privately asked that I withdraw my amendment and redraw my proposed districts to make them more politically favorable for their incumbents. I agreed to withdraw my amendment that day as a courtesy and consider adjustments before the Senate’s final consideration of the 2017 plan.

30. During the August 29, 2017 Senate floor debate on the 2017 plan, I proposed a revised alternative map of Guilford County in an attempt to compromise. Like my original amendment, my revised alternative map kept communities of interest intact in SD 27 and SD 28, did not double-bunk any incumbents, and returned the percentage black voting age population in SD 28 to pre-2011 levels. This proposed amendment failed in a 12-33 vote along party lines on the Senate floor.

31. Related to double-bunking incumbent senators in Guilford County, it is my understanding that incumbent SD 27 Sen. Trudy Wade has moved from her residence in Greensboro to Pleasant Garden.

**Proposed 2017 version of House District 57**

32. My first impression of House Bill 927, now S.L. 2017-208, was that it did not make substantial changes to the racially gerrymandered districts in Guilford County.

33. I am familiar with the 2011 shape of House District 57 (HD 57) because a substantial part of the district overlaps with my own district in Northeast Greensboro, and because HD 57 was another one of the Guilford County districts struck down by the *Covington* court as an unconstitutional racial gerrymander.

34. During the legislative process, I reviewed data provided by legislative staff that showed that the percentage total black voting age population in HD 57 had been increased to more than 60% in the 2017 plan. According to stat packs for the previous plans, before 2011 HD 57 had a total black voting age population of 21.38%, and in 2011 the total black voting age population was increased to 50.69%.

35. This is a map of the pre-2011 version of HD 57:
36. This is a map of the 2011 version of HD 57:
37. This is a map of the 2017 version of HD 57:
38. The increase in black voting age population in HD 57 greatly concerns me. Based on my experience and knowledge of the communities included in both the 2011 and pre-2011 versions of HD 57, I know that incumbent Rep. Pricey Harrison has been the candidate of choice of African-American voters in her district for years, dating back to before the 2011 redistricting. I am confident that increasing the percentage black voting age population in HD 57 is unnecessary for African-American voters there to continue to elect their candidate of choice.

39. I am also troubled by the pattern of neighborhoods moved into and out of HD 57 to achieve the higher black voting age population numbers in the 2017 plan. In particular, the 2017 plan adds a prominent heavily populated African-American community to HD 57 and removes a prominent heavily white neighborhood, which is assigned to another district.

40. In the 2011 version of HD 57, two precincts in the Irving Park area were split between HD 57 and another district. Irving Park is one of the wealthiest and most heavily white neighborhoods in the city, and is part of a community of interest with other well established neighborhoods close to downtown, most notably Fisher Park. In the 2017 plan, all of the Irving Park area precincts have been removed
from HD 57 altogether and assigned to HD 62, which stretches into Northwest Greensboro, a separate community of interest, and Oak Ridge, a municipality in a rural part of the county. Meanwhile, Fisher Park remains assigned to HD 57 in the 2017 plan, along with other areas near downtown.

41. Furthering the concentration of African-American voters in the district, the 2017 plan adds southeast Greensboro to HD 57. Southeast Greensboro is a densely populated, heavily African-American community. Southeast Greensboro was not included as part of either the 2011 or the pre-2011 version of HD 57.

42. All of the facts and information contained within this declaration are within my personal knowledge and are true and correct.

43. This declaration is not intended to capture all of my knowledge or experiences that may be related to this matter.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 24th day of September, 2017.

Gladys A. Robinson