

October 5, 2015

United States District Court
Eastern District of Virginia
Fernando Galindo, Clerk of the Court
701 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: *Personhuballah, et al v. Alcorn et al*, Case 3:13-cv-00678

Dear Mr. Galindo,

My name is Fred Hussain and I am writing to you my comments on the case of the 3rd Congressional district. I am a native Virginia resident and I have been following the legislative efforts by members of the Virginia General Assembly since 2008 in proposing redistricting reform to address gerrymandering issues, which have been unsuccessful. Specifically, I been following this case presented before the court on declaring the 3rd Congressional district unconstitutional. Ironically, when the General Assembly approved the current Virginia Congressional district maps in 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice granted clearance to Virginia for use in the elections later that year. The result of these outcomes has since created a partisan gridlock within Congress, where both parties have been entrenched within their bases and have become stubborn in not seeking a compromise on the number of popular issues, notably the federal budget and gun control.

The proposal by OneVirginia2021 establishes the criteria to forming an independent bipartisan commission that will be responsible to drawing both the legislative and Congressional districts following the decennial census that fully comply with the Virginia constitution on the basis of compactness and contiguity, to name a few. State Senator John Watkins, who originally proposed legislation on this issue in the Virginia General Assembly session this year, received unanimous support in the state Senate, but was later killed in the House of Delegates subcommittee.

The OneVirginia2021 proposal is a guideline that I request the Special Master to adopt because it provides the framework to addressing not only the violations that the Court declared the 3rd Congressional district unconstitutional, but to redraw the other ten Congressional districts across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Of the eight proposals that was submitted before the court, the Special Master must take into consideration of the proposals from the Governor of Virginia, State Senator J. Chapman Petersen (D-Fairfax) and the Richmond First Club. These three proposals each provide sensible, compact and contiguous boundaries. The proposals also provide respect to the communities represented by one member of Congress, not communities that are divided with the intention to protect an incumbent.


The proposals from both the Richmond First Club and Senator Petersen were each inherited from the statewide redistricting competition for college students across the Commonwealth to provide alternative solutions of redrawing the Congressional districts with results from the 2010 census. Both proposals were declared winners in their respective categories by meeting the criteria set forth by the redistricting competition committee, who believed that each map has the constitutional muster to pass and be enacted for future election cycles.

Both proposals were engineered by the same respective groups that believed in taking on the status quo that has suppressed voter interest where in the past legislative and Congressional election cycles, the incumbents were favored to prevail and win with a percentage in double-digit margins. Each team used the same method of technologies that were available to members of the General Assembly, who enacted both the legislative and Congressional districts that are in use. However, one difference between the college teams' and General Assembly's version was having an independent body, the redistricting competition committee, to oversee the process of drawing these districts without interference from legislators. The result was that these districts were, from my prospective, very balanced meaning that the demographic would be encouraged to supporting a candidate that will serve in the best interests of their constituents.

I recommend that the Special Master **reject** the redistricting proposals submitted by the intervenor-defendants, Mr. Donald Garrett and Mr. Jacob Rapoport. The reason of rejecting the intervenor-defendants is their plan is to work around the status quo by swapping jurisdictions between the neighboring districts, notably the 1st and 7th Congressional Districts, while keeping the 3rd district a majority-minority district. Their plan does not make any boundary changes to the other districts across the Commonwealth.

Mr. Rapoport's proposal makes an argument to creating a new majority-minority district from swapping jurisdictions within the Hampton Roads metro area. However, his proposed majority-minority districts do not seem compact and still does not make any changes to the 2nd Congressional district. Mr. Garrett's proposal is provocative idea to elect all 11 members of Congress at large across the Commonwealth but the majority of the Virginia electorate would never support this idea. This plan is way too radical to for electing an official who may not be representative to a specific region within the Commonwealth, for addressing the priorities of the local citizens.

I hope that you take these comments into consideration for evaluations of the eight redistricting proposals before the court. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the redistricting case.

Sincerely,

Fred Hussain