

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS  
CENTRAL DIVISION**

**THE ARKANSAS STATE CONFERENCE NAACP, *et al.*,**

**PLAINTIFFS,**

**v.**

**Case No. 4:21-cv-01239-LPR**

**THE ARKANSAS BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT, *et al.***

**DEFENDANTS.**

**DECLARATION OF JOSH BRIDGES**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1746, I declare:

1. I am over 18 years of age and have personal knowledge of the facts set out in this declaration.
2. I am employed by the Arkansas Secretary of State as an Election Systems Analyst. I have held that position since April, 2020, before which I was an Election Coordinator. I have been employed by the Secretary of State since February, 2013. I have significant experience relating to Arkansas's election regulations, including the deadlines relating to the Preferential Primary election.
3. The Secretary of State's Office publishes a calendar of 2022 election dates on its website.<sup>1</sup>
4. The 2022 Preferential Primary election will take place on May 24, 2022. State law sets multiple deadlines before that time relating to election procedures.
5. First, the candidate party filing period for the Preferential Primary runs from February 22 to March 1. *See* Ark. Code Ann. 7-7-203(c)(1). By March 10, 2022, the Secretary of State is required to "certify to the various county committees and to the various county boards of election

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections/voter-information/2022-election-dates/>.

commissioners a list of the names of all candidates who have filed party certificates with the Secretary of State within the time required by law.” Ark. Code Ann. 7-7-203(d)(1).

6. County election officials must have the certified list of candidates from the Secretary of State for each election before they can prepare ballots.

7. By March 14, 2022, the county boards of election commissioners must hold a public meeting in order to draw the “order in which the names of the respective candidates are to appear on the ballots” of the preferential primary election. Ark. Code Ann. 7-7-305(b)(1).<sup>2</sup>

8. By April 7, 2022, the county boards of elections commissioners must prepare absentee ballots and delivery them to their respective county clerks for mailing. Ark. Code Ann. 7-5-407. This includes absentee ballots under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, also known as UOCAVA. Federal law requires that UOCAVA ballots be sent to voters no later than 45 days before the election. 52 U.S.C. 20302(a)(8)(A).

9. Before absentee ballots can be mailed, they must be prepared and printed. This includes multiple rounds of review and quality checks and is a back-and-forth process between county election officials and their vendors. The county boards of election commissioners are responsible for the preparation of ballots. Ark. Code Ann. 7-5-407. These county officials typically contract with a private vendor to complete ballot printing. Depending on a variety of factors, including the number of races and candidates, as well as the workload of the vendor, the time required to prepare and print ballots may vary from county to county. Some counties may take several weeks to print ballots.

10. Any delay in the completion of any upcoming election deadline could lead to difficulty in election officials meeting later deadlines and conducting the election as a whole. For example, if

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<sup>2</sup> Ark. Code Ann. 7-1-108 provides: “If an election law deadline occurs on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the deadline shall be the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.”

county boards do not receive the certified list of candidates in time for their vendors to complete printing ballots, there is a risk of the county missing the deadline to send out UOCAVA ballots and other absentee ballots due to the relatively short amount of time between the deadline for the draw for ballot order (March 14) and the date UOCAVA ballots must be sent under State law (April 8).

11. County-level election officials are currently updating their local precinct data using the street level data from the approved legislative district maps. This database is used to determine the precinct in which voters live and is necessary for both voter registration and the creation of ballots. This is a massive, once-per-decade undertaking for county election officials that is already taking place under an accelerated timetable due to the delay in the release of the 2020 Census data. If the State were required to use a different House district map than the one approved by the Board of Apportionment, these officials would be forced to start over and proceed under an even shorter timetable.

12. Independent candidates for office, who must circulate a petition signed by at least 3% of the number of voters in the last gubernatorial election, may start collecting signatures on January 31, 2022. Ark. Code Ann. 7-7-103. In order to successfully seek ballot access, they must know the legislative district in which they reside, as well as the district of the voters whose signatures they are to collect. What district they reside in also determines the number of signatures they are ultimately required to collect.

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

Executed on this 19th day of January, 2022.

  
Josh Bridges