

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 1

Common Cause, et al.)
)
v.) 4:22-cv-109
)
Cord Byrd)

)

TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO RECORDING
HOUSE SESSION
APRIL 21, 2022
10:00 A.M.

DIGITAL EVIDENCE GROUP
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4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 2

1 APRIL 21, 2022

2 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Members, the House will
3 come to order. Members, please take your seats.
4 Members and visitors in the gallery, please rise for
5 the prayer. The prayer today will be led by
6 Representative Massullo.

7 Representative Massullo, you may approach
8 the well.

9 REPRESENTATIVE MASSULLO: Thank you,
10 Mr. Speaker.

11 Members, let's pray.

12 Father God, thank you for this beautiful
13 day that you have made. Thank you for the House
14 that you've brought us to, that you have allowed us
15 the ability to serve your people in this state.
16 Thank you for this beautiful government that we have
17 where we can deliberate ideas and disagree with each
18 other and yet move our state continuing forward.

19 Unlike any other country in the world,
20 Lord, you've blessed us. Let us never forget that
21 it's because of your guidance that we have life.
22 It's because of your will that we breathe. It's
23 because of your grace and mercy that we can have a
24 place in this world, that we can make a difference
25 because you indwell us; you empower us. And I pray,

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 3

1 Lord, that we never forget that.

2 As we go through this day, as we finish our
3 work here, as we go home to our friends and our
4 families, let us not forget, Lord, that our duty is
5 to glorify you with our lives. And I pray that you
6 would make that so in our hearts, that it may be our
7 desire as we live this day and the rest of our
8 lives. In your name we pray, Amen.

9 ALL: Amen.

10 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Thank you, Representative
11 Massullo.

12 The clerk will unlock the machine and
13 members will record their presence. Have all
14 members recorded their presence? Have all members
15 recorded their presence? Clerk will lock the
16 machine and announce the presence of a quorum.

17 THE CLERK: 106 members voting. A quorum
18 is present, Mr. Speaker.

19 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Yep. Members and
20 visitors, please remain standing for the Pledge of
21 Allegiance to the flag. The pledge this morning
22 will be led by Representative Will Robinson from his
23 desk.

24 (Pledge of Allegiance)

25 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there corrections to

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 4

1 the journal? Hearing none, show the journal
2 approved. Are there matters on induction and
3 reference?

4 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

5 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there communications?

6 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

7 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there messages from
8 the Senate?

9 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

10 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there reports from
11 standing committees and subcommittees?

12 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

13 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there motions
14 relating to committee and subcommittee references?
15 Are there matters on reconsideration? Are there
16 bills and joint resolutions on third reading?

17 THE CLERK: On the desk, Mr. Speaker.

18 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Read the first bill.

19 THE CLERK: By Senator Rodriguez, Senate
20 Bill 2-C, a bill to be entitled an act establishing
21 the congressional districts of the state.

22 SPEAKER SPROWLS: All right, members. We
23 are going to get into the first bill. In a moment
24 we're going to enter into structured debate.
25 Structured debate this morning on the redistricting

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 5

1 bill we'll have -- be 75 minutes per side in 15
2 minute total increments. I'll go back and forth
3 between representative Willhite, who will be
4 representing the con side of the bill, and Leader
5 Grant on the pro side.

6 Representative Leek, you're recognized to
7 explain the bill.

8 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
9 Mr. Speaker.

10 This is the congressional redistricting
11 bill we heard yesterday.

12 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there amendments?

13 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

14 SPEAKER SPROWLS: All right. Let's begin
15 debate. Representative Willhite, you're recognized.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker. In the difference of opinion side of
18 this bill, would you recognize Representative
19 Geller?

20 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Representative Geller for
21 his different side of opinion. You're recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

24 So members, here we are. Months of looking
25 at this. This House took a position. Our

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 6

1 colleagues across the aisle took a position. We
2 passed something. Frankly, I didn't like what we
3 passed, but we passed -- you remember, one from
4 column A, one from column B. You remember that.
5 The Governor vetoed it, and he has a right to veto
6 it. And here we are back again.

7 But members, we're not doing our job. Our
8 job is just not to pass anything. Our job, as was
9 told to us by Chair Leek numerous times, by the
10 Speaker numerous times, our job is to pass something
11 constitutional.

12 Now, I'm a believer in our judiciary system
13 in this country, and I think it's great that anybody
14 who has a problem with something we pass or
15 something going on can go to the courts, can ask for
16 relief. You can even challenge a law if you believe
17 that law is contrary to our constitution, if you
18 think it's unjust. Some of our greatest leaders,
19 suffragists, civil rights leaders, leaders for the
20 rights of people who want to love who they want to
21 love. Some of our greatest leaders have challenged
22 unjust laws.

23 But please, remember our role. We have
24 something in this country called the Voting Rights
25 Act. It was hard won. It was passed since 1965,

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 7

1 and it interpreted something from almost 100 years
2 before the 14th Amendment. We have in this state
3 standards that 63 percent of our voters voted to put
4 into our Florida Constitution. We call them fair
5 districts.

6 Now, I understand there could be a little
7 bit of politics that might creep into redistricting
8 somehow. But members, our job is to pass something
9 that complies with the Florida Constitution,
10 including those fair districts provisions, and with
11 the federal Voting Rights Act. If you think that
12 the Voting Rights Act contradicts the 14th
13 Amendment, you can go to court and try to get it
14 overturned. But until that happens, that law is the
15 law of the land, and until our Florida Constitution
16 is otherwise interpreted, we're bound by it.

17 This plan cuts minority districts in this
18 state, African-American districts, in half. You
19 don't want to be a part of that, and you don't want
20 to be a part of contradicting the Florida
21 Constitution and the Voting Rights Act. If there is
22 a challenge later, so be it. Our job is to comply
23 with the law as it exists, and this map plainly does
24 not do that. You need to vote it down. Thank you.

25 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 8

1 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
2 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
3 Driscoll?

4 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Driscoll,
5 recognized in debate.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DRISCOLL: Thank you, Madam
7 Speaker.

8 Just the other day, members, when we heard
9 this bill in committee, there was a member of the
10 public who gave testimony. And she said, "I rise in
11 condemnation of this bill." And I had never heard
12 that before, but I thought it was brilliant. Today
13 I debate in condemnation of this bill.

14 Albert Einstein once said that no problem
15 can be solved from the same consciousness that
16 created it. And when I look at what we are doing
17 with this map, when I look at the
18 unconstitutionality of it, when I look at how we're
19 violating separation of powers, I can't help but
20 think that we are reverting back to a consciousness
21 that required us to need fair districts amendments
22 and a federal Voting Rights Act in the first place.

23 I'll make three points. First, the
24 unconstitutional nature of this map. We are plainly
25 in this map denying minority voters the ability to

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 9

1 elect the representative of their choice. We are
2 clearly abiding in retrogression in violation of the
3 14th Amendment. This map clearly constitutes
4 diminishment, when you are taking the number of
5 black congressional representatives and the ability
6 to have representation in black communities from
7 four to five. That is diminishment of 50 percent.
8 Excuse me, 4 to 2. That is diminishment by 50
9 percent. I'm a lawyer, not a mathematician. Sorry
10 about that.

11 What I also have observed in this map is
12 that there is packing. All over the place there is
13 packing. If you look in Tampa Bay where I live, in
14 order to arrive at the new Congressional Districts
15 14 and 15, there's been so much packing I don't even
16 know how you could fit more in that suitcase. We
17 are denying minority voters the candidate of their
18 choice, and it is wrong.

19 The second point that I will make is that
20 this map disregards and disrespects the voters of
21 Florida and procedural process. Members, this map
22 -- we are the ones who are obligated as a
23 Legislature with drawing this map. I don't know how
24 many times poor Chair Leek had to say he couldn't
25 answer a question. Why not? Because he didn't draw

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 10

1 this map, and the committee staff didn't draw this
2 map. He just didn't have the answers. Why?
3 Because we have -- we are in dereliction of our duty
4 as a Legislature. We were the ones who were
5 supposed to draw this map.

6 I heard over and over again, "Well, the
7 Governor is just like any other person, any other
8 person in this process who wanted to submit a map."
9 Everybody who has a veto pen in this room, raise
10 your hand. That's what I thought. Okay.

11 It's only the Governor who has the
12 opportunity and ability and the constitutional
13 authority to veto a map. He is not like every other
14 citizen. He's not like any other citizen in this
15 chamber or any other citizen in the State of
16 Florida. So I'm tired of that. It's time for us to
17 do away with the fiction that this is normal
18 process. This is unprecedented.

19 The third point I'll make -- and I've
20 already touched on this a little bit though -- is
21 about separation of powers. And I really want you
22 to hear me with this one. We are headed down a
23 dangerous road. It is a slippery slope. First it's
24 redistricting; then it's Disney. What's next? I'm
25 afraid to know what's next. We need to stop this

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 11

1 here. You have the ability to stop it here with
2 your vote. This map is unconstitutional, and we
3 should all vote down. Thank you.

4 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite,
5 you're recognized.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Madam Speaker,
7 would you recognize Representative Valdez?

8 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Valdez in
9 debate.

10 REPRESENTATIVE VALDEZ: Thank you, Madam
11 Speaker, and good morning, colleagues.

12 Colleagues, we have an obligation to uphold
13 the oath that we all take to defend our
14 constitution. Unfortunately, I feel the
15 reapportionment proposal before us today fails in
16 that regard. There are decades of precedents of the
17 redistricting processes and countless historical
18 examples of the process being used to marginalize
19 and dilute the power of certain types of voters.
20 That's why the U.S. Congress passed the Voting
21 Rights Act. It's why Florida voters passed the Fair
22 District Amendment in 2010.

23 These are not simply polite suggestions.
24 Following the law and the Constitution is our sacred
25 Duty as elected officials. I have deep concern that

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 12

1 we are, once again, choosing a path that does not
2 serve the interest of Florida voters and will tie
3 our state up in yet more costly litigation due to
4 constitutional issues raised by this map.

5 After the Civil War, our nation underwent
6 something of a second American Revolution, born of a
7 recognition of our past mistake and allowing
8 slavery. As part of that absolution, we adopted a
9 new set of amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the
10 13th Amendment, which outlaw the practice of
11 slavery.

12 Then the 14th Amendment, which guarantees
13 the equal protection of the law to all Americans,
14 and the 15th Amendment, which grants voting rights,
15 regardless of race, color, or previous condition of
16 servitude. These post-Civil War amendments remade
17 the American social contract in profound and
18 positive ways.

19 That 14th Amendment guarantee of equal
20 protection under the law is just as much part of our
21 American identity as the original 10 Amendments of
22 the Bill of Rights. That idea, that idea, the
23 concept of equal protection under the law is a key
24 underpinning of our modern democracy.

25 But when we decide to take steps that

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 13

1 dilute the power of a certain time of American to
2 diminish -- or type of American to diminish their
3 ability to meaningfully participate in our
4 democracy, then at minimum the spirit of equal
5 protection is undermined as well. That means we
6 cannot value the democratic participation of one
7 group over another, because if we do so, we are not
8 ensuring equal protection of the law to all.

9 When we crack open the seat in North
10 Florida that has historically provided an
11 opportunity for minority voters to elect a
12 representative of their choice to Congress, we are
13 not providing equal protection to those voters.
14 Likewise, when laboriously take a Tampa Bay area
15 district across 12 miles of open water, packing
16 minority and Democratic voters into one district to
17 make the surrounding ones less competitive, then we
18 are not providing equal protection to those voters.

19 All we are asking for is this. Let's live
20 up to the spirit of fairness and equal protection.
21 Let's have a fair and open transparent process and
22 draw maps that best serve the people of Florida, not
23 a party, not an agenda, but our constituents.
24 That's why we are here. And to that end, I hope
25 that you will join me in voting down on this map

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 14

1 today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

2 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
4 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative Rayner.

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Rayner in
6 debate.

7 REPRESENTATIVE RAYNER: Thank you, Madam
8 Speaker.

9 Members, I rise in opposition to this map.
10 And I want to be very transparent. You all know I'm
11 running for congress. But I'm going to tell you
12 this. Even if I wasn't running for congress, this
13 is not about me. Because I'm going to start talking
14 about my parents. You all know I love to talk about
15 my parents. I love to talk about my father and my
16 mother. I love to talk about my grandparents. I
17 love to talk about my great-grandparents.

18 And I bring up the fact that I'm running,
19 because I know someone will say, well, she has a
20 vested interest. Yes. I have a vested interest
21 because I'm a black woman in the state of Florida.
22 I have a vested interest because I'm a black
23 resident in the state of Florida. I have a vested
24 interest because I have black constituents. I have
25 friends who are black in Orlando and in Jacksonville

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 15

1 who are concerned about what their representation is
2 going to look like. I have a vested interest
3 because I know the struggles of black and brown
4 folks over the course of 200 plus years in this
5 country, but most certainly in this state. I have a
6 vested interest because I understand that it wasn't
7 until the Voting Rights Act that my parents were
8 able to vote. I have a vested interest because when
9 my grandfather was hauling junk and he was a
10 sharecropper, and he wasn't able to have
11 representation that reflects him, I have a vested
12 interest. And members, even if you may not be black
13 or brown, you should have a vested interest.

14 No longer should we be able to have to
15 kowtow and bow down to a person, to a man that's
16 saying, if you don't do certain things, this will
17 happen. We talk about communism and socialism.
18 That's what happens in socialist countries. People
19 are threatened. People are threatened under the
20 cover of dark. You all, I know we are better than
21 this.

22 So let me tell you this. This is not about
23 Michele Rayner, because Michele Rayner can have a
24 seat, and she don't have to run. But guess what I'm
25 not going to do? What I'm not going to do is let

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 16

1 this moment pass and not make a record. Because I
2 have my mother's blood and my father's blood
3 coursing through my veins. I have my ancestors'
4 blood coursing through my veins. They have fought
5 and come through too much to allow this House to
6 abdicate their duty to a Governor who has political
7 ambition. And yes, I said it - political ambition
8 that's not about the people.

9 So you all, I hope this isn't falling on
10 deaf ears, and I hope that there is political will
11 on the other side of the aisle, political courage to
12 stand up to a bully. Because when you don't stand
13 up to a bully, they give and they give; and they
14 take and they take.

15 So this is our time to stand up to the
16 Governor. This is our time to say, we cannot allow
17 this to happen. This is our time to say that we
18 want to be the free state of Florida. Free means
19 free for everybody. It doesn't matter what party
20 you ascribe to. It doesn't matter what you look
21 like or who you love. It doesn't matter if you
22 disagree with the Governor, because this is the free
23 state of Florida for everybody.

24 And so, members, I am asking you now in
25 this moment to exact political courage and political

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 17

1 will. And I see the time, and thank you, Lord. And
2 I'm going to keep going until my time is continued
3 -- runs out.

4 But I'm asking members of this House, all
5 members, stop worrying about your elections. Stop
6 worrying about who may primary you. Stop worrying
7 about line item vetoes. Stop worrying about those
8 things. Because I know that when people on the
9 outside who are looking at us -- I've gotten all of
10 these text messages on my phone. People on -- and
11 then appropriations too. Thank you. People are
12 tired. Republicans are tired. Democrats are tired,
13 MPAs are tired. Because we ought to be working on
14 --

15 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Rayner --

16 REPRESENTATIVE RAYNER: -- the things that
17 they care about.

18 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Rayner.
19 Your time is expired. The clock stopped over a
20 minute ago.

21 Members, I will remind all of you, we are
22 not talking about personalities today, not
23 personalities of anybody outside this chamber or
24 inside this chamber. We are talking about the maps,
25 and we can talk about the maps. And I would ask

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 18

1 that you confine your comments to the maps and not
2 to personalities.

3 With that, we are trying to get the clock
4 fixed. I think we are good.

5 Leader Grant, you are recognized.

6 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
7 Speaker. Would you please recognize Representative
8 Tuck in debate?

9 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Tuck, you
10 are recognized.

11 REPRESENTATIVE TUCK: Thank you, Madam
12 Speaker.

13 And members, I rise in support of this map
14 today. I've had the honor of being the vice chair
15 of this committee since the beginning, and it's been
16 an open and transparent process the entire time,
17 even before the Governor "got involved."

18 He publicly submitted maps, which is
19 something that anybody can do. He's allowed to do
20 it. Every single member of the public was allowed
21 to do it. We were allowed to do it. He is a
22 citizen of this state. He's allowed to do it just
23 like we are. He even sent multiple staffers to
24 answer our questions ad nauseam.

25 And think about that for a second. How

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 19

1 many bills do we encounter where the Governor sends
2 an entire staff team to help us understand that
3 rationale? Besides the budget, probably zero.

4 Members, this process only happens once a
5 decade. And just because it's different doesn't
6 mean it's bad. Just because it's different, doesn't
7 mean it's wrong. It's just different. Our process
8 was thorough; it was transparent; it was open; it
9 was complete; it was constitutional, and it was
10 good. This map is all of those things. This map is
11 a good map, so I urge you all to vote up on it.

12 Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

13 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Grant,
14 you're recognized.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
16 Speaker. We yield the remainder of our time in this
17 segment.

18 MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Representative
19 Willhite, you're recognized.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
21 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
22 Morales?

23 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Morales,
24 you're recognized in debate.

25 REPRESENTATIVE MORALES: Thank you, Madam

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 20

1 Speaker.

2 Members, I rise up today because we need to
3 focus. Members, fair representation is vital to the
4 state of Florida. We're making history today. A
5 fair map is vital. And if it's not right, then
6 let's do it; let's work together. We can come back.
7 That's what the -- that's why the people voted for
8 us to represent them.

9 We are facing this moment, redistricting.
10 And the point I want to make is that we have to
11 apply by the constitutional law. Our Voters Rights
12 Act, remember we are legislators. We're supposed to
13 do our job. That's what the people gave us our
14 --that vote. Members, please vote down on this
15 bill.

16 Thank you, Madam Speaker.

17 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
19 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative Brown?

20 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Brown in
21 debate.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you, Madam
23 Speaker.

24 In the United States Constitution our
25 forefathers outlined the separation of powers

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 21

1 through three branches of government, and that was
2 the legislative branch, the executive branch, and
3 the judicial branch. The intent though of the
4 separation of powers is to prevent the concentration
5 of unchecked power and to provide for checks and
6 balances.

7 Therefore, it is our constitutional duty as
8 Americans and as a state Legislature to prevent the
9 style -- this type of overreach we're seeing in this
10 map drawn for us by the Governor. His unchecked
11 power has only continued to grow, not only through
12 this proposed map but through the attacks of our
13 freedom to vote through last year's bill, Senate
14 Bill 90, and this year's election police force bill.

15 There are claims that the current maps
16 passed by the Legislature this session violated the
17 U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause. But
18 the truth is his intent is to disenfranchise the
19 same people that this clause was designed to
20 protect. In these proposed maps, Florida will lose
21 black representation in Congress by nearly 50
22 percent, and that doesn't include the barriers that
23 this anti-voter freedom bill that he's put forth
24 will put between every one of us and put barriers
25 between every one of us and the ballot box.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 22

1 In 2010 Florida passed the Fair Districts
2 Amendment 5 and 6 that prohibited politicians from
3 drawing districts to favor themselves and their
4 parties, and to ensure that minority voters have
5 equal opportunity to participate in the political
6 process and have fair opportunity to equal
7 representation of their -- elect representatives of
8 their choice. These amendments among others were
9 approved directly by Florida in a ballot referendum
10 to stop Tallahassee politicians from rigging
11 districts for their own political ambitions. There
12 was no partisan politics involved when that
13 happened. This was the people of Florida directly
14 coming out and saying that they are tired of corrupt
15 politics. So why aren't we really respecting that
16 here?

17 I want to remind my colleagues that
18 Governor DeSantis did not elect you and put you in
19 office. It was the same people of Florida who voted
20 in favor of Fair District Amendments to our
21 Constitution that did. Although I voted down on the
22 Legislative drawing maps, at least those maps went
23 through the appropriate legitimate process and were
24 agreed upon by majority of you here in this room
25 today.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 23

1 I have a serious problem with the Governor
2 and him meddling in the representation of Floridians
3 for his own political gain. And I think that's
4 important to mention here. I have an even bigger
5 problem with folks bullying two entire chambers of
6 Government into doing his bidding. He's making
7 Florida Legislature do his dirty work and to avert,
8 and it adversely affects black constituents.

9 And I will not go down in Florida history
10 as just another pawn for Governor DeSantis. It is
11 not his job to intervene how Floridians are
12 represented. That is between us, the Legislature,
13 the courts, and most importantly, the smart and
14 capable people of Florida who trusted in us to
15 represent them. We are not here to represent just
16 one man out of 22 million people because of his
17 ambition to become president. We are here to make
18 sure that the voices of the people outside this room
19 are heard.

20 MADAM SPEAKER: All right. Representative
21 Willhite, you are recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
23 Speaker. Will you recognize Representative Davis?

24 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Davis in
25 debate.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 24

1 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you, Madam
2 Speaker.

3 As you all know, I represent the city of
4 Jacksonville. And the city of Jacksonville has had
5 a long, exhaustive history when it comes to race. I
6 was born during a time, when Jacksonville still has
7 segregated schools. And it was not until 2018 that
8 the city of Jacksonville officially recognized the
9 terrible events that took place on Ax Handle
10 Saturday, that event that I talked about on this
11 floor as we were discussing the Individual Freedom
12 Bill just two months ago.

13 Colleagues, my community is angry, and I
14 can't even say -- maybe it's not anger. Maybe it's
15 just -- we're just infuriated. We consistently
16 experience attacks. We've been attacked on our
17 right to vote. We've been attacked on our right to
18 protest. We've been attacked now through
19 representation throughout our entire lives.

20 Historically, highway construction and City
21 Planning has focused on removing blight in the
22 Jacksonville Community, which has been used to
23 excuse the demolishing of historic black
24 neighborhoods. Have you heard redlining? Many of
25 you have. It's a discriminatory lending practice on

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 25

1 people of color based simply on where they live.

2 The Eastside neighborhood was redlined for
3 the first time in 1930, and it still suffers the
4 aftermath of that. It is now -- ironically has a
5 highway, the MLK Highway, running directly through
6 the center of this neighborhood. Imagine that. The
7 road that the state has used to crack black
8 communities is named after the man who fought
9 against the exact same thing - offensive, simply
10 offensive. And now these congressional maps
11 proposed that -- proposed by this Governor and
12 entertained by this Legislature now have been so
13 clear about their intentions.

14 Florida voters have already made it clear
15 -- and you've heard that over and over, and you will
16 continue to hear that over and over -- that they
17 want Fair Districts. And it was our job to pass
18 that Fair District Amendment, which we did
19 overwhelmingly in 2010. It's our jobs as
20 representatives to uphold the will of the voters.
21 Are we so tired of doing our jobs that we are going
22 to roll over and accept whatever this Governor hands
23 us? I'll let you think about that.

24 We're going to vote today on these maps
25 that, number one, you know are unconstitutional.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 26

1 These maps have no regard for the Voting Rights Act,
2 no regard to the Fair District Amendment, no regard
3 to the 14th Amendment, no regard to the
4 Constitution, and no regard to Black voters, Brown
5 voters, and communities that I serve as well as you,
6 serving. You represent black and brown communities
7 just like I do.

8 But colleagues, here's the vein of this.
9 You hate when we use the word disenfranchisement.
10 You turn your back; you look the other way. But you
11 have to realize that is exactly what this is.
12 Gutting now CD 4, the protected status leaves us
13 simply without representation. It simply means that
14 the black population in Florida that lives north of
15 the I-4 corridor, their voices will be diluted;
16 their power in this process simply washed away.

17 The only thing I can say as you look the
18 other way, you turn your back, that you know this is
19 unconstitutional, and you know this is unacceptable;
20 and you know that it's offensive. We're tired of
21 being put in this situation by this Legislature.
22 How can you not see that this is wrong? But you do.
23 How much longer are we going to have to fight to get
24 all of you to understand what we're dealing with?

25 Our voice matters. Our votes matters. Our

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 27

1 lives matter. We need to be protecting Florida's
2 black representation in Congress, not attacking it,
3 not diluting it, and definitely not removing it.
4 For those reasons, colleagues, I just urge you to
5 think about everything that all of us will say, and
6 vote no on these maps.

7 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
9 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
10 Edmonds?

11 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Edmonds in
12 debate.

13 REPRESENTATIVE EDMONDS: Thank you, Madam
14 Chair.

15 So Florida became the 27th state in the
16 United States on March 3rd, 1845. By 1850 the
17 population had grown to 87,000, including about
18 39,000 African-American slaves and 1000 free blacks.
19 That comes out to about 46 percent black, 54 percent
20 white in percentage.

21 For those who do not know of Josiah T.
22 Walls, he was a man of historical distinction for
23 Florida. Before he was the former mayor of
24 Gainesville, he died in Tallahassee in 1905. He
25 became the first African-American Congressman in

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 28

1 1871, the only black to represent the Sunshine State
2 until 1993. That is about 119 years of
3 representation without any black representation in
4 the Sunshine State.

5 So we asked, why is Fair Districts and
6 Voting Rights Act important? Well, it's important
7 because it led to people like Alcee Hastings,
8 Corrine Brown, Carrie Meeks, Val Demings, Sheila
9 McCormick, Brian (sic) Donalds. And the whole point
10 --

11 I want to say if you vote yes to this, I
12 want to say that you're basically setting us back 20
13 years. If you feel comfortable voting yes, you have
14 to understand that you probably will be in the same
15 history of the people who created the black holes,
16 of the people who created Jim Crow era laws.

17 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Edmonds?

18 REPRESENTATIVE EDMONDS: Yes.

19 MADAM SPEAKER: I would ask you not to
20 impugn the members of this chamber. If you would
21 like to talk about the policy before us, but to
22 impugn members based on a potential vote is not an
23 appropriate use of the debate time. You are
24 recognized to continue.

25 REPRESENTATIVE EDMONDS: Thank you, Madam

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 29

1 Chair. I appreciate the clarification.

2 MADAM SPEAKER: Just one moment, please.

3 Representative Alexander has asked for a point of
4 clarification.

5 Yes, Representative Alexander.

6 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you, Madam
7 Speaker. And all due respect, but I think history
8 and facts is not impugning anyone in this chamber.
9 I think what the representative was doing, Madam
10 Speaker, was going through a series of historical
11 facts that is relevant to this historic vote that is
12 being taken today. But that's the way I take it.
13 So --

14 MADAM SPEAKER: And while I understand
15 that, and those historical facts may certainly be
16 discussed, to tie it to a yes vote on these maps
17 would be impugning members of this chamber based on
18 the vote that we are about to take today. So if we
19 want to talk about the historical facts, I have no
20 problem with that. That is fair game. But to call
21 out other members of this chamber being related to
22 those historical facts is -- based on a vote is an
23 appropriate. So that is where I would ask the line
24 to be drawn, please.

25 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: May I do a

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 30

1 follow-up?

2 MADAM SPEAKER: You may -- yes.

3 Representative Alexander.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you, Madam
5 Speaker. And a just for the record, that wasn't his
6 intent. I did not hear -- I was paying attention
7 very, very closely, and I respect every member of
8 this chamber, but this is a very serious matter.
9 And just how so many people may be offended by the
10 words in this chamber -- heck, I'm offended by the
11 map.

12 MADAM SPEAKER: And I understand that,
13 Representative Alexander. I am listening very
14 intently too so that I can hopefully call balls and
15 strikes and make sure that we are all having a
16 conversation with the level of decorum that this
17 chamber deserves. And like I said, I have no
18 problem discussing the historical facts. To tie
19 members of this chamber and their vote to those
20 events in history is inappropriate for conversation
21 today. Thank you.

22 Yes, Representative Alexander.

23 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you, Madam
24 Speaker, and it will be my last point. Let the
25 records speak for itself. And hopefully the

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 31

1 representative will continue to express himself in a
2 fact historically driven manner.

3 MADAM SPEAKER: And I will do that. Thank
4 you.

5 Representative Edmonds, you are recognized
6 to continue.

7 REPRESENTATIVE EDMONDS: Thank you,
8 Representative Alexander. Thank you, Madam Chair,
9 and thank you, colleagues.

10 Again, in no form or fashion am I looking
11 to be offensive. I'm just trying to give historical
12 content. So all I'm saying is we went 119 years or
13 a 112 years without representation. If you vote yes
14 on this map, essentially you're going to set us back
15 to the era where we had no representation, or cut it
16 in half from --

17 (Applause)

18 Thank you. Thank you, members. So yes, we
19 are the South, but I hope that we can set a
20 precedence here to show people that it's not about
21 politics, it's about people. So I ask and urge all
22 of my friends, colleagues and members to vote down
23 this map, and let us come back and figure out a good
24 map. Thank you.

25 MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Representative

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 32

1 Willhite.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
3 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
4 Skidmore?

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Skidmore in
6 debate.

7 REPRESENTATIVE SKIDMORE: Thank you, Madam
8 Speaker.

9 I do solemnly swear that I will support,
10 protect and defend the Constitution and government
11 of the United States and of the State of Florida,
12 that I am duly qualified to hold office under the
13 constitution of this state, And that I will well and
14 faithfully perform the duties of state
15 representative on which I am now about to enter, so
16 help me God.

17 We all said those words. I don't know what
18 supporters of this bill and this process have done
19 to justify this mockery to themselves. I can't
20 imagine what gut-check you did, what you said to
21 your reflection in the mirror. You know this is
22 unconstitutional. I know this is unconstitutional.
23 Your failure to uphold your oath and stand up to the
24 bully-in-chief is shameful. Straighten your spine
25 and vote no.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 33

1 MADAM SPEAKER: Again, members, we are here
2 to talk about the policy of the maps and not to
3 discuss individuals in this chamber and their
4 motives or the vote that they're going to take. And
5 I ask you to respect that as we move forward so that
6 we can have a meaningful conversation about this
7 important topic in front of the State of Florida.
8 Representative Willhite, you are recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
10 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
11 Eskamani?

12 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani,
13 you're recognized in debate.

14 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you so
15 much, Madam Speaker.

16 I think the concern that many of us have is
17 that we feel like this map is offensive. And so for
18 those who subscribe to this map, you are,
19 unfortunately, subscribing to what we believe to be
20 a history that is dark and one that we should not
21 repeat.

22 And so with that said, with the few seconds
23 I have left, this does impact Central Florida. It
24 impacts minority access seat right in my community.
25 And I am very worried that the trajectory of this

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 34

1 state not only feeds into what is an
2 unconstitutional vision that benefits one party over
3 the other, but also erases the perspectives of
4 people of color. And I really ask you to take these
5 concerns seriously. Don't just toss them aside.
6 Thank you, Madam Speaker.

7 MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Time having
8 expired, Representative Grant, you're recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
10 Speaker. Would you please recognize Representative
11 Harding in debate?

12 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Harding,
13 you're recognized in debate.

14 REPRESENTATIVE HARDING: Thank you, Madam
15 Speaker.

16 And members, if you served on the
17 Congressional Redistricting Committee, you may have
18 heard similar comments made yesterday in committee,
19 or two days ago. But one of the things that -- the
20 reason that I support this map is, first, I believe
21 it's a constitutional map.

22 Second, it's, there's a process. There's
23 been a process. We had committees. We ultimately
24 passed the map off this chamber. The Governor has
25 an ability to be able to veto that map. In

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 35

1 transparency, we have a map. We've been able to ask
2 questions, as Representative Tuck mentioned as well.

3 But probably the irony that I've seen is
4 that when we talk about process - yesterday we had
5 an amendment for map 8060. And it's interesting
6 because during the regular session not a single
7 member of the democratic caucus proposed a map. We
8 could all propose maps. None were filed. No
9 amendments were filed in the House.

10 And so my point is, on the process we've
11 had a process. Folks have chosen -- and that's
12 beyond my decision -- but folks have chosen in the
13 back rows to not propose maps. So my question is:
14 if we're going to talk about courage -- there was a
15 process to propose maps. And that was that that
16 makes me question what the point would be. I will
17 support these maps today. I urge all my colleagues
18 to do the same thing.

19 And on -- you know, coming back and being a
20 part of a special session, it's our job. When we
21 were elected to serve in the Florida House, our job
22 was to get things like this done. This has to be
23 done every 10 years. And if we've got to keep coming
24 back, if we have to be here for 10 days, that's what
25 it takes. But today we're going to vote on this

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 36

1 map. And I will be supporting it, and I urge my
2 colleagues to do the same thing.

3 MADAM SPEAKER: Members, we'll take a brief
4 moment to recognize newly former Representative Rene
5 Plasencia. Welcome back to the Florida house.

6 Leader Grant, you're recognized.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
8 Speaker. Would you please recognize Representative
9 Beltran in debate?

10 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Beltran,
11 you're recognized in debate.

12 REPRESENTATIVE BELTRAN: Thank you. Thank
13 you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Leader Grant.

14 And I want to start off and thank everyone
15 for their good work on this. This was not an easy
16 process, but we've really gotten to a good product.
17 And as I've said before in committee and on the
18 floor, as bills move through the process -- and the
19 process doesn't always end here on our floor -- the
20 bills get better and better. And that's what we've
21 been able to accomplish here.

22 As we heard yesterday, we got really clean
23 lines. We divide counties fewer times; we follow
24 prominent geographic and political boundaries. And
25 we've continued to improve our product, and I think

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 37

1 we've done this in a fair and impartial way.

2 I want to address a couple of things that
3 were said by the opposition. The first is that some
4 sort of notion of erosion of checks and balances.
5 Well, let's go through what checks and balances are
6 and how that's worked in this process. We have a
7 give-and-take first within our committees, and then
8 with the Senate.

9 And we collaborate with the other chamber.
10 We have a give-and-take. We come to something we
11 can pass. We send it to the other chamber. They
12 send it to us, and then it goes to the Governor.
13 From there he examines it, looks at it. He signs it
14 or vetoes it. If it's vetoed it comes back. We can
15 do an override; we can pass something else. All of
16 that process has been followed up to this point.

17 And then when that's all over, then
18 anything you pass gets challenged in the courts.
19 And everyone has said on both sides that that's
20 probably going to happen. There's going to be some
21 litigation. They've already filed some cases. And
22 all of that's happened. That's exactly the way any
23 sixth grade civics student would expect checks and
24 balances to work. It's worked. Hasn't worked the
25 way it normally works. Hasn't worked to everyone's

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 38

1 liking, but checks and balances are working.

2 I mean, there's a lot of criticisms you
3 could make about redistricting -- generally, the
4 VRA, whatever it is. The fact that checks and
5 balances didn't work in this case, I mean, we spent
6 a lot of time on this. Checks and balances are
7 working, believe me. That's number one.

8 And then number two, there's this notion
9 that the Governor doesn't have some role in our
10 legislative process and that the Governor --
11 somebody said the Governor didn't elect us. Well,
12 okay, fair enough. The Governor didn't elect us.
13 Our constituents elected us, the same constituents
14 that elected the Governor.

15 And by the way, there's people who voted
16 for everyone in this room who voted for the
17 Governor. And I know that. I have people come up
18 to me. They say, you know, I voted for a Democrat
19 for legislator, and I voted for the Governor.

20 The Governor was elected to, among other
21 things, be involved in the legislative process as
22 we've discussed. The Governor's been involved. The
23 Senate's been involved. We've been involved. The
24 courts are going to be involved. The constituents
25 and stakeholders. They were able to come to the

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 39

1 committees and subcommittees and make their voices
2 heard. Everyone's got a voice in this process.

3 Whether it came out exactly the way anyone
4 wanted, you can't say that the process didn't work
5 or that the Governor -- somebody said the Governor's
6 meddling. He was elected to be the chief executive
7 of the state, and now he's meddling. I find that
8 the argument a little bit ridiculous.

9 And then there's another contradiction that
10 we have, which is a month or two ago we had a
11 product. It was passed off this floor. There were
12 criticisms of that product. And some of the
13 criticisms are the same criticisms that they're
14 making now. So when the leadership and the body do
15 something, they did what they thought was right.
16 They were trying to follow the laws they -- as they
17 thought it was at the time, or that they thought the
18 court would interpret it. And the opposition didn't
19 like that.

20 Then we go and we're doing -- we're taking
21 a different approach -- let's be honest about that
22 -- and then they're still not happy. So I don't
23 know if we're supposed to stick to our guns or do a
24 give-and-take with the Governor. It seems no matter
25 what we do, there's a criticism of the process.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 40

1 And then there's the criticisms of the map
2 itself. During the very first block there were two
3 consecutive debates. One of them said they were
4 concerned about packing; somebody used the word
5 packing. The next debate -- another colleague in
6 the opposition was talking about diminishment.
7 Okay. Packing and diminishment are opposite sides
8 of the same coin. They're the opposite thing,
9 right. You either -- if you do too much, then it's
10 packing. You do too little, then it's diminishment.

11 Now, there -- I guess there's some
12 Goldilocks principle. It's not in the VRA. It's
13 not in fair districts. I don't know where this
14 Goldilocks principle is, but I guess legislatures
15 have to calibrate it exactly right. Where is that
16 principle? I don't know where that principle is.
17 The idea that folks are coming with that argument
18 just means that the entire thing is unadministrable.
19 Because neither I, nor the Governor, nor any Court
20 can ascertain what that standard is. And there's a
21 lot of case law. A lot of ink has been spilled
22 trying to ascertain that.

23 But let's talk about what the case law
24 says. The case law, the prevailing federal court
25 case law, basically comes with one proposition,

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 41

1 which is if you're going to take into account these
2 types of things that we're not supposed to take into
3 account -- it says, right there in the 14th
4 Amendment. These arguments have no support in the
5 14th Amendment, the text to the 14th Amendment. But
6 if you're going to do it anyway, it's got to be
7 narrowly tailored. You have to have a compelling
8 State interest, you can't have a sprawling,
9 geographic district, and you have to follow these
10 principles. You really have these exacting
11 principles.

12 And the last couple of federal Supreme
13 Court cases that have reviewed it have said no, the
14 State has not met that burden. Nowhere in that body
15 of the prevailing case law -- and I prefer to follow
16 the text of the Constitution. But if we want to
17 talk about case law, let's talk about case law. It
18 says if you really want to do it, you have to meet
19 these stringent criteria. Nowhere does it say that
20 you have to do it. Nowhere does it say that you
21 should do it. It says if you really want to do it,
22 you're going to be subject to these very stringent
23 criteria.

24 So the suggestion that there's some notion
25 out there that we have to do something that the

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 42

1 opposition is suggesting as opposed to just follow
2 geographic boundaries, draw without reference to
3 that sort of thing, try to do something fair, follow
4 our county lines and major roads, which we've done
5 in this product, I reject that proposition.

6 And the last thing I'll say is: there's a
7 suggestion by the opposition we follow a method. We
8 used to follow that method 50, 100 years ago. We
9 got bad results, okay. It was not the right thing
10 to do. That was not a good part of our country's
11 history. If we drew a school district the way folks
12 are suggesting we should draw a congressional
13 district, if we made a new county or a new
14 municipality in that way, if you did a CDD or you
15 made a -- you know, a private person tried to make
16 an HOA like that, you would be enjoined in federal
17 district court in about 35 seconds.

18 There's very few areas of governance where
19 people even suggest that we do this sort of thing,
20 and this is one of them. And I don't understand
21 why, because we don't do that in a variety of other
22 contexts. So I'd ask everyone to think about that
23 when they vote. Thank you.

24 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Grant.

25 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 43

1 Speaker. We yield the remainder of our time in this
2 segment.

3 MADAM SPEAKER: Having yielded the time in
4 this segment, Representative Willhite, you're
5 recognized.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
7 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
8 Benjamin?

9 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Benjamin in
10 debate.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BENJAMIN: Thank you, Madam
12 Speaker.

13 The 14th Amendment was enacted to protect
14 people like me, people who look like me. Because
15 our country during that time said that people who
16 look like me weren't worthy of citizenship, weren't
17 worthy of the rights that my ancestors slaved for.
18 We weren't worthy. And so Congress in its wisdom
19 sought to protect people like me. And in doing so
20 we breathed life into the 14th Amendment. And the
21 14th Amendment still wasn't good enough to confer
22 upon me the ability to be involved in my government
23 and select its leadership.

24 So we had to breathe life into the 15th
25 Amendment to ensure that we had the right to vote.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 44

1 And in breathing life into that amendment we said
2 that we should not act in a way that would diminish
3 the ability of minorities to elect people to
4 represent them. And I make no bones about it. For
5 many of us that means electing someone who looks
6 like me. That's what it means - my ability to elect
7 someone who looks like me under the premise that
8 they share the same values as I and will come here
9 and speak truth to power.

10 And then Shelby came along and eroded that.
11 Shelby came along and said that although we had over
12 115 to 120 years of no black representation in
13 Congress, that in less than a century we have now
14 somehow been rehabilitated, and we should no longer
15 look at it. But then the people of Florida spoke in
16 fair districts, and the people of Florida said we
17 think is still important to protect representation
18 by minorities. And in Florida we will not diminish
19 that representation. These are common legal
20 principles.

21 Our federal government comes in through the
22 14th Amendment and sets the floor. It says that you
23 must do at least this. And it leads to the state
24 government's inability to regulate higher.
25 Sometimes that meant making more restrictive laws.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 45

1 But in fair district it meant expanding protections,
2 it meant ensuring that the progress of people who
3 look like me wouldn't be diminished.

4 And that's what this map does. It's clear.
5 In 1877 we only had one member of Congress. In 1992
6 we went to three. Today we have five. After today
7 we will only have two. Florida says that we should
8 keep moving forward. Stop setting us back. Let us
9 move forward. Black votes matter. Black voters
10 matter. Black representation matters. I matter; my
11 colleagues matter. Vote down on this bill.

12 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
14 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
15 Diamond?

16 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Diamond in
17 debate.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: Thank you, Madam
19 Speaker.

20 Members, our founding fathers were very
21 worried about the dangers of power. They understood
22 the corrupting nature of power. President George
23 Washington in his farewell address of 1796 warned
24 about how the corrupt and powerful can try to
25 manipulate government. He warned that "cunning and

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 46

1 vicious and unprincipled men will be enabled to
2 subvert the power of the people and to usurp for
3 themselves the reins of government, destroying
4 afterwards the very engines which had lifted them to
5 unjust dominion."

6 Because of these concerns of the dangers of
7 unchecked power and the recognition that power
8 corrupts, the founders sought to find ways to check
9 it, and that, obviously, goes to the heart of the
10 problem we have with this map.

11 We have a duty to do this work. We the
12 Legislature. We do. Not the Governor. We do. And
13 we have a duty to the people who we serve. And we
14 have a duty to follow the law, the fair districts
15 amendment of our state constitution, which was
16 designed to restore the core principles of
17 republican government; that the voters should choose
18 their representatives and not the other way around.
19 We have a constitutional duty under that provision
20 to ensure that the maps that we pass off this floor
21 were not drawn with partisan intent. That is a Tier
22 1 standard.

23 So what do we know? There are a few things
24 we know, but only a few things. We know that this
25 map was drawn by the Governor's office with the help

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 47

1 of his consultants and lawyers. We know that this
2 map was not drawn by our committee's professional
3 staff. We know that this map was not drawn under
4 the supervision of our esteemed chairman,
5 Representative Leek. We know that this map will
6 pass this Legislature with less than 48 or 72 hours
7 of scrutiny in a special session in which this
8 body's own Redistricting Committee did not even meet
9 to consider it. We know that this map will pass
10 with no meaningful opportunity for public comment or
11 feedback.

12 We know that this map has been reported to
13 produce a delegation from this state to Washington
14 of at least 20 Republicans to 8 Democrats. So
15 Republicans would hold over 70 percent of this
16 state's congressional seats in a state that Donald
17 Trump carried with only 51 percent of the vote. We
18 know that this map is riddled with internal
19 inconsistencies. And we know we've had very little
20 time to ask questions about those inconsistencies.

21 So I'm outraged, members. I'm outraged
22 that this is the final product of so much work. I'm
23 outraged by the attack, as my colleagues have so
24 eloquently expressed, on our black representation in
25 Congress, on the attack on our Voting Rights Act, on

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 48

1 our willingness to ignore the requirements of
2 federal law. Members, our duty is to follow the
3 law, not to ignore it.

4 A federal judge who struck down Senate Bill
5 90 recently wrote, "At some point when the Florida
6 Legislature passes law after law disproportionately
7 burdening black voters, this court can no longer
8 accept that the effect is incidental."

9 Black voters matter. Black representation
10 matters. There is a history in this country, as my
11 colleagues have so eloquently described as systemic
12 discrimination, and that is what the United States
13 Voting Rights Act is designed to protect. So
14 members, we are abdicating our duty to the people we
15 have been elected to serve. Please vote no on
16 today's map. Thank you.

17 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
19 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
20 Woodson?

21 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Woodson in
22 debate.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you, Madam
24 Speaker.

25 Colleagues, we are here to do what's right.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 49

1 And we know what is right. The three branches of
2 government, as mentioned earlier, they were
3 established for specific reasons. We know there is
4 something called the separation of powers. And we
5 all are here. We are smart enough to know exactly
6 what that means.

7 As you know, every time I stand here -- I
8 don't stand up on all hearings that we have here in
9 these chambers, but something that important I have
10 to stand up and speak on behalf of the people who
11 elected me. And you know that I am from Haiti -
12 Haiti, where people do not respect laws. They would
13 -- do not respect rules. And I know this is
14 something that we know, that we respect laws and
15 rules. And by not respecting laws and rules, I
16 ended up coming here being of service to the people
17 of these beautiful United States of America, where
18 the State of Florida is where I choose to reside.

19 I have a 13-year old who is looking to
20 become a state legislator. And I have explained to
21 him our duties, the Governor's duties, everyone's
22 duties. And you know, he called me yesterday. And
23 what he said to me was appalling. He said, "You
24 have lied to me." I said, "No. I did not lie to
25 you. I told you the truth. We are responsible to

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 50

1 draw these maps, to discuss these maps, to meet each
2 other halfway, to vote on these maps and submit
3 those maps to the Governor to either approve them or
4 veto them. And once they are vetoed, the court
5 would take over." And he said to me, "Are we doing
6 our job, the job that the people of the state of
7 Florida elected us to do?" I'm talking about a
8 13-year old.

9 So members, we have a duty. If we vote yes
10 on this map today, we are telling the voters that
11 the Fair District Amendments do not matter. We said
12 no thanks to accountability and to fairness, which
13 is what legislators -- as legislators we're supposed
14 to do.

15 Members, you are about to make a mistake,
16 and you have time to do what's right. You want to
17 go down and history as someone who have done what's
18 right. And I'm not going to be long-winded, because
19 we have heard from all the members, from all those
20 who have spoken. But I'm going to leave you with
21 one thing. In the words of Maya Angelou, "Just do
22 right. Right may not be expedient. It may not be
23 popular" -- she said may not be profitable, but I'm
24 going to say it may not be popular -- "but it will
25 satisfy your soul." Let's try to live our lives by

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 51

1 a way that we will not regret. And I'm asking you,
2 please, let's do right by the people of Florida who
3 have elected you to serve in these chambers. Thank
4 you.

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
7 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
8 Bartleman?

9 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Bartleman in
10 debate.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BARTLEMAN: My first morning
12 here I attended a rally on the old Capitol steps. As
13 I waited for it to begin, I sat with an elderly
14 black woman. I saw the pain on her face. This
15 woman grew up in the Jim Crow era. She fought to
16 ensure that her grandchildren grew up in a different
17 world. She saw progress. And after today, she will
18 see the clock turn back, and she will be denied
19 representation.

20 History shows us that there were people in
21 America who lived different experiences like that
22 woman. I am here to be a voice for all Floridians
23 and ensure that everyone has equal representation.
24 Patrick Henry in May of 1765 laid out the taxation
25 without representation argument. This chamber spent

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 52

1 a year drawing a map to meet the U.S. and Florida
2 constitutional standards to ensure fair
3 representation for all, and that map was vetoed.
4 This chamber has always recognized the importance of
5 fair representation. There is a plaque right
6 outside those doors commemorating the black members
7 of the house during the period of the reconstruction
8 and redemption era, and all of their names are
9 listed.

10 I understand why this Legislature has
11 abdicated its duty to draw the map. Who wants to
12 unknowingly -- who wants to knowingly draw an
13 unconstitutional map? We spent a year discussing
14 Tier 1 and Tier 2 guidelines, and now we are voting
15 on a map that clearly violates everything we fought
16 for and discussed. In fact, it is intentionally
17 inconsistent. How can south Florida districts be
18 drawn with Tier 1 adherence and other parts of the
19 state drawn differently with different guidelines?

20 I am that woman's voice. We are that
21 woman's voice. This map diminishes minority
22 representation. It's internally inconsistent, and
23 violates our constitution. I urge everyone to stand
24 up for that woman and all Floridians and vote no.

25 MADAM SPEAKER: Having concluded this

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 53

1 segment, Representative Grant, you're recognized.

2 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
3 Speaker. Would you please recognize Representative
4 Robinson in debate?

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Robinson,
6 you're recognized in debate.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ROBINSON: Thank you, Madam
8 Speaker.

9 And look, members, I'll be brief today. I
10 don't always trust members when they say that, but I
11 will be brief. I couldn't help notice yesterday
12 there were a lot of questions about whether we
13 elevated Tier 2 standards over to Tier 1 standards.
14 We also heard this line of questioning in the
15 subcommittee, and I want to say firmly that that has
16 never been the case. Tier 1 always outranks Tier 2.
17 And in my opinion, that is firmly true in this map
18 before us.

19 Yesterday members also said, "Why are we
20 only hearing about Tier 2? Where's Tier 1?" Well,
21 let's just put that into context really quick. The
22 vast majority of the districts asked about yesterday
23 are not Tier 1 protected districts. Maybe that's
24 why. It's true, there were questions about
25 Congressional District 26, and Congressional

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 54

1 District 26 is a Tier 1 protected district. And
2 even though that district was a bit different than
3 the map that we approved a few weeks ago, Chair Leek
4 explicitly said that the House performed a
5 functional analysis to make sure that district still
6 performs.

7 So members, it seems to me that we actually
8 did hear a lot about Tier 1. There are just many,
9 many more Tier 2 items to be discussed, as they were
10 yesterday. To me it's that simple.

11 And finally, members, I believe in this
12 process. I believe in the process that we have
13 followed. I believe in this map, and I urge your
14 favorable support.

15 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Grant.

16 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
17 Speaker. Would you please recognize Representative
18 Latvala in debate?

19 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Latvala,
20 you're recognized in debate.

21 REPRESENTATIVE LATVALA: Thank you very
22 much, Madam Speaker.

23 Members, I grew up in Jacksonville, and the
24 first time I was eligible to vote was in 2000.
25 Shortly thereafter, I moved to Orlando to go to

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 55

1 school, and I discovered that I was in the same
2 congressional district in both Jacksonville and
3 Orlando. So I did some investigation, and I
4 realized that that congressional district was a
5 skinny line that went from Jacksonville to Orlando
6 and literally had one side of the road in some parts
7 but not the other side of the road, which I thought
8 was ridiculous. And I then found out that it was
9 not drawn by the Republican Party. But that was the
10 definition of gerrymandering.

11 And you know, there's been a lot of talk
12 about minority districts, and a lot of talk about
13 getting rid of minority representation. One thing I
14 have not heard mentioned is a former member of this
15 chamber, who is now in Washington, who is a black
16 man, and that is Representative -- now Congressman
17 Byron Donalds. I believe that his voice matters,
18 his vote matters, and I believe that his
19 constituents who have elected him to Congress in Lee
20 County also agree with that. So thank you.

21 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Grant.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
23 Speaker. We yield the remainder of our time.

24 MADAM SPEAKER: Having yielded the
25 remainder of their time, Representative Willhite,

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 56

1 you're recognized.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
3 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
4 Robinson?

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Robinson F.,
6 you're recognized.

7 REPRESENTATIVE FELICIA ROBINSON: Thank
8 you, Madam Speaker.

9 As I've been sitting here for the last two
10 days listening, I wonder. Where is the consistency?
11 Where is the following the process with these
12 congressional maps? Why do we continue to change
13 the rules to work for a select group of Floridians?

14 Let's look at the maps. These maps -- or
15 this map that we're looking at today has very
16 defined boundaries when it comes to CD 4 and CD 5 of
17 St. Johns River. It was drawn very clearly, and it
18 was pointed out by the drawer of the map that he
19 made sure that he made these clear boundaries so
20 that residents would know their boundaries. The
21 water is a clear mark.

22 However, when it comes to CD 13 and CD 14,
23 these districts don't follow those guidelines.
24 Tampa Bay is water, but it's not used as a clearly
25 defined boundary for that district. That district

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 57

1 actually cuts across the water. Why? Is it that
2 these residents, those Floridians in those districts
3 don't need clearly defined boundaries? It's an
4 inconsistency.

5 This map has explicitly been stated as the
6 Governor's map. The Governor stated in the past
7 that districts should be more than -- should not be
8 more than 150 miles. However, when we look at CD 18
9 and CD 2, both are more than 150 miles; again
10 inconsistent.

11 The Legislature has a process, and I
12 believe one of my colleagues says that I believe in
13 the process. I believed in the process too, when we
14 follow it. From my understanding, the process is
15 that legislation is to be heard in the subcommittee,
16 then the committee, before coming to the floor.
17 Well, we heard this one in the subcommittee, but not
18 in the full committee. We were told when money is
19 attached, it's supposed to go to the Appropriations
20 Committee. We didn't do that, inconsistent again.

21 If we have a process and we are supposed to
22 believe in the process -- and me being an educator
23 and we teach children what the process is, because
24 they're supposed to be their future -- why can't we
25 just follow the process, if the process is what

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 58

1 we're supposed to, you know, do?

2 Basically, this is just not right.

3 Floridians deserve to have the same process applied
4 to all legislation. The same process should be
5 applied to all districts. Let's stop picking and
6 choosing. For decades we have told people that
7 their vote was their voice. For our brown and black
8 communities, they have begun to take that to heart,
9 and they've taken that very seriously. In this past
10 election, our already marginalized communities
11 exercised their right to vote in mass numbers. And
12 I believe that's why we have this type of the map.
13 And the Governor's reaction -- or our reaction is to
14 create a congressional map to minimize voting
15 districts with people of color to show that brown
16 and black votes don't matter.

17 The dismantling of districts, constant
18 attempts to whittle away our rights in an effort to
19 make it harder for everyday working people to vote,
20 blatantly tells me that our votes do matter. And
21 that's why they're strategically trying to stop
22 that. But what it really says is that, again, our
23 votes matter. And it -- and they're trying to make
24 it harder for us to get to the precincts, or to
25 split districts. We know that this dilutes our

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 59

1 voice. I'm speaking to the people now; don't let it
2 happen. As a lawmaker and an educator and a
3 lifelong voter, this really sickens me and it angers
4 me. So I hope that we'll get it right.

5 And the last thing I want to say is, before
6 I got on the floor today I called back home, and I
7 talked to my mom. And her and her seniors -- we
8 call them the golden seniors. They are praying for
9 you all to make the right decision.

10 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
12 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
13 Huschofsky?

14 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Huschofsky,
15 you're recognized in debate.

16 REPRESENTATIVE HUSCHOFISKY: Thank you,
17 Madam Speaker.

18 I want to preface and start off by saying I
19 absolutely love being a member of the State House of
20 Representatives. I feel incredibly honored that the
21 voters in my community elected me to be here to
22 represent them. I take this job incredibly
23 seriously. I am the daughter of two immigrants. My
24 dad actually served in the Army Reserves before he
25 ever became a citizen. This means something.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 60

1 I was super excited when I was put on the
2 Congressional Redistricting Subcommittee because
3 this is a once in a decade process. This is the
4 core of what we do. And I followed all the rules
5 that were given to us. So I want to be clear.
6 They're not my rules. They're the rules that staff
7 gave to us, and we were told over and over again of
8 the rules we need to follow. Not talking to anybody
9 outside about the maps, not going on social media
10 and discussing the maps, but following the Tier 1
11 and the Tier 2.

12 And the Tier 1 that was drilled into us
13 regularly during the committee weeks was that
14 districts shall not be drawn with the intent or
15 result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity
16 of racial or language minorities to participate in
17 the political process or to diminish their ability
18 to elect representatives of their choice. Tier 1.

19 We were part of this process. We were told
20 to talk to staff, leadership. And we did all of the
21 things we were told to do. This map doesn't do
22 those things. We presented an amendment yesterday
23 that was not taken up by this body that was passed
24 in a bipartisan manner that still had CD 10 and CD 5
25 as protected seats under Tier 1 protection. I'd

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 61

1 like to add that that bill did not have in a million
2 dollar appropriation to fight legal challenges, and
3 it also did not change the venue to Leon County for
4 any legal challenges. But that's what this bill
5 does. That's what this map does.

6 Secondly, we were told you have to focus on
7 Tier 1 before you can look at Tier 2. I am a former
8 local elected official. I love my cities and my
9 city people. So for me, keeping cities whole was
10 important, but it was not more important than Tier
11 1. In Tier 2 standard it says, "districts shall,
12 where feasible" -- not mandatory, but where feasible
13 -- "utilize existing political geographical
14 boundaries." Yet we have decided which boundaries
15 we're going to pick. The St. Johns River, we don't
16 want to cross that for whatever reason. Yet Tampa
17 Bay, it's okay to cross.

18 So I bring all this up because I want to be
19 very clear. These are not my rules; these are not
20 my standards. These are the law. These are the
21 standards we were given. We followed it in every
22 subcommittee meeting. We brought our concerns to
23 leadership, to staff on every meeting. And yet,
24 here we are with a map that does not follow the
25 standards we were told to follow. And for that

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 62

1 reason I will be voting no.

2 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Speaker, will you
4 recognize Representative Humphrey?

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Humphrey,
6 you're recognized in debate.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HUMPHREY: Thank you so very
8 much, Madam Speaker.

9 Father, guide my words and deliver my
10 thoughts in a manner that is heard and just.

11 Forgive me, Floridians for not working
12 harder to ensure that my colleagues heard my
13 thoughts in reference to voting against our maps
14 that we passed out.

15 Chair Leek, and to our solid redistricting
16 team, I should have passed out from trying, because
17 I saw this crap coming.

18 When I got here the evenness and the
19 balance of our executive branch, our judicial
20 branch, and our legislative branch is what guided me
21 and balanced out the reason I fight the way I fight,
22 when I saw that each branch of government was
23 balanced.

24 I stood up against one of the branch
25 members when I disagreed with how they decided to

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 63

1 use their executive power. They came after me and
2 tried to take me out in the 2020 elections, but I
3 knew I knew that me standing up was the right thing
4 for me to do as a legislative branch member. I
5 implore you today to understand that we are indeed
6 separate from the executive branch. And I
7 apologize, because I did not stand with my
8 colleagues when I should have as a legislative
9 branch member.

10 But today I say to you that we are not
11 doing what is just and right for the people of
12 Florida. I feel as if I have failed because I
13 didn't speak to just all my colleagues. I always
14 spoke to my policy person and about five of my other
15 colleagues. I said that this was going to happen.
16 It fell on deaf ears because we were trying to be
17 partisan instead of thinking about Florida.

18 Well, my colleagues, you now are in a
19 similar position, because now you are deciding
20 what's best for Florida. But will you be partisan
21 in your delivery, or will you be stronger than me
22 and do what's right against this executive branch's
23 will?

24 I have three nieces: Zoe (phonetic), 13;
25 Callie (phonetic), 7, and Sonai (phonetic), 1.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 64

1 Callie, the 7-year old, when I got elected to
2 office, or -- I got in early. I was confirmed as a
3 state representative elect on qualifying day. And
4 Callie took me into the bathroom like -- which is
5 common for her -- and asked me, "What the heck does
6 it mean, Aunty Nica, to be a state representative?"
7 And I went through all these analogies for Callie.
8 I told her, "Well, I'm going to make laws, and I'm
9 going to help balance the budget, and I'm going to"
10 -- and Callie said, "What does it really mean?" And
11 I said, "Callie we're going to learn together.
12 We're going to learn together what it means for me.
13 And every time I learn something, I'll tell you
14 something more."

15 Callie doesn't understand what the heck is
16 going on, and she's brilliant; she tested gifted.
17 And I'm sure that when they test her again, she'll
18 probably be on the spectrum of something amazing
19 because that's who she is. She came here with me
20 when I got sworn in. She sat right next to me, and
21 she heard when I took my oath of office.

22 So it's back in your hands now. I failed.
23 But I'm looking forward to my colleagues not failing
24 the State of Florida. We have our duty as
25 legislators to do what is right for Floridians,

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 65

1 regardless of our party affiliations.

2 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Will you

4 recognize Representative McCurdy?

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative McCurdy in
6 debate.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Thank you, Madam
8 Speaker.

9 I want to talk to the people at home.
10 Hello, black Floridians at home today that's
11 watching this. The Florida house is about to cut
12 your representation by 50 percent before lunchtime.
13 We shouldn't be in here begging for representation
14 in 2022 or begging you to not diminish minorities'
15 ability to elect representatives of their choice.
16 Alarming, but not that all surprising. Being
17 elected to the Florida Legislature is the one job
18 that you can have in this state. Come to work, and
19 then refuse to do your job.

20 You've heard over and over that the state's
21 Constitution directs the Legislature, directs the
22 Legislature, directs the Legislature to redraw
23 district boundaries. And this charade playing out
24 today will further negatively impact people, people
25 that I represent; people that look like me; people

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 66

1 that talk like me; people that struggle like me;
2 people that already don't have. And we're trying to
3 take more away from them.

4 What this body is saying is that people
5 that already don't have, won't have. People already
6 that -- people that already don't have opportunities
7 won't have representation now. I've had enough of
8 being kicked around in this building, in this
9 chamber, and still being expected to smile and shake
10 your hands and engage in conversation with the same
11 people who are trying to oppress my people.

12 In the words of the late Congressman John
13 Lewis, "Where is the heart of this body? Where is
14 our soul? Where's our more leadership? Where's our
15 courage?" Today it's not in this chamber. By
16 lacking the courage to stand up to Governor
17 DeSantis, his bullying, reject his political games,
18 and uphold our duty as legislators who draw
19 constitutional maps, we have totally failed the
20 people of this state. Vote no.

21 MADAM SPEAKER: Time having expired, Leader
22 Grant, you're recognized.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
24 Speaker. Please recognize Representative Fine in
25 debate.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 67

1 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Fine, you're
2 recognized in debate.

3 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you, Madam
4 Speaker.

5 It's been fascinating to watch this
6 process, and I want to thank the speaker and Chair
7 Leek for allowing me to be the Vice Chair of the
8 full Redistricting Committee. We spent months
9 learning about the law, Tier 1 and Tier 2. I've
10 learned more about redistricting case law than I
11 ever thought I would. It's reconfirmed my belief
12 that I'm very glad that I turned down the
13 opportunity to become a lawyer from my alma mater.
14 And I'm glad I did not go through that process, very
15 much so.

16 You know, there was an allegation yesterday
17 that's frankly brought through today that there was
18 an abrupt change in philosophy, presumably in the
19 configuration of the districts. We've abruptly
20 changed at the behest of the Governor. That's
21 something I'll talk about a little bit. What
22 strikes me as odd though is yesterday in all the
23 time we had for questions, there wasn't one about
24 the Governor's veto or his General Counsel's
25 testimony from committee this week.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 68

1 Now, it's a novel legal question. I don't
2 think there's any debate that there is unresolved
3 legal issues that are going to have to be resolved.
4 And by the way, the maps we pass before I believe
5 had already been heading for the courts. But with
6 any novel legal question, there's going to be many
7 unanswered questions. This is only the second
8 redistricting cycle since the constitutional
9 standard. Courts providing clarity is part of the
10 process.

11 And by the way, there are many people who
12 believe that when that 2016 map was finished for the
13 2010 redistricting, that it was unconstitutional for
14 the same reasons we're going in a different
15 direction today. You know, however, even though
16 there was zero questions of clarification, not a
17 single one, there was plenty of rhetoric, and it's
18 continued today, alleging the definitive
19 unconstitutionality of those districts and in turn
20 the disparagement of a community. Maybe it's a
21 facade. It's inauthentic line of questioning set up
22 for alternative purposes. Perhaps it's set up for
23 future plaintiffs or just to perpetuate a hateful
24 message.

25 So I'd like to talk about three things that

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 69

1 relate to that. The first is: we got to hear a
2 recitation of the oath that we swore when we got
3 elected to follow the State Constitution and the
4 U.S. Constitution. I'd encourage people to go back
5 and take a look at the U.S. Constitution, because
6 many of you don't appear to know it, lawyers and
7 all.

8 See, we do not live in a parliamentary
9 democracy where the percentage of people who look
10 like you, or act like you, or think like you
11 determine your representation. If you want that,
12 there are other countries you can move to where they
13 aggregate the votes of the entire area and then they
14 assign that percentage to seats in their
15 Legislature. That's not how it works here.

16 But I also want to talk about the inherent
17 racism in the concept that many of you support, when
18 you say that minorities have the right or any group
19 has the right to elect the candidates of their
20 choice. I want to use one example from the maps
21 that we passed before, because I remember it.

22 The Jacksonville District that we talked a
23 lot about before, I remember the staff, as I was
24 reviewing it, telling me that it was 35 percent
25 black -- the seat, you know, that would be right

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 70

1 there in the middle of Duval County, 35 black, and
2 that would be enough to guarantee the selection of
3 the candidate of their choice.

4 I want you to think about what that means.
5 It means the other 65 percent don't get a say at
6 all. See, when we guarantee that a group of people
7 gets to select the candidate of their choice, what
8 we're saying is we're guaranteeing those who aren't
9 part of that group get no say. Chew on that one for
10 a little bit.

11 The second thing that I find a little bit
12 hateful is the notion that we violate separation of
13 powers. That we're mindless automatons of the
14 Governor. I would remind all of you that the vast
15 majority of us in the front rows voted against what
16 the Governor -- we were in this room debating the
17 maps when he put out the message saying, "I will
18 veto what you are going to do." He sent it out in
19 Twitter while we were here having that discussion.

20 Very few people in this room have worked as
21 closely with that team downstairs on various issues
22 as I have, and yet I voted against it. We are not
23 mindless automatons. We don't do this because we
24 are bullied. We do this because we think it is
25 right.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 71

1 And lastly, I would like to remind us of
2 history. Because as my good friend, Rep. Alexander,
3 reminded us, history is appropriate to share. And
4 there is a shameless history -- shameful history
5 where there was an effort after reconstruction to
6 make sure that certain groups of people had no say
7 in the process.

8 In 1875 reconstruction ended in Florida,
9 and it was not the Republican Party that was put in
10 charge. In 1880 redistricting was done in this
11 state to disenfranchise minorities, and it was not
12 the Republican Party. In 1890 redistricting was
13 done to disenfranchise minority voters, and it was
14 not the Republican Party. In 1900 it was not the
15 Republican Party. In 1910, and 1920, and 1930, and
16 1940, and 1950, and 1960, and 1970, and 1980 and
17 1990, all those shameful years that you all want to
18 remind us of, it wasn't the predecessors of folks in
19 the front rows who came up with those maps.

20 Today we pass maps that are constitutional.
21 And they will be litigated, and we will learn
22 whether the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution
23 reigns supreme over the Florida State Constitution.
24 That is the discussion at hand. There are some very
25 smart lawyers in this room that I respect quite a

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 72

1 bit, who told me that they think that will happen.
2 I'm going to trust them. I believe these maps are
3 constitutional, and I encourage all of you to vote
4 for them.

5 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Grant.

6 REPRESENTATIVE GRANT: Thank you, Madam
7 Speaker. We yield the remainder of our time in this
8 segment.

9 MADAM SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you. Having
10 yielded the time, Representative Alexander to give a
11 point of order.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Just a point of
13 clarification to the body, I would like to put in
14 the record the word neo-conservatism for the record.

15 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite,
16 you're recognized.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
18 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
19 Learned?

20 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Learned,
21 you're recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you, Madam
23 Speaker.

24 And thank you, you know, to the clerk's
25 office for making sure we had the time stamp on the

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 73

1 on the board today. I think it's important we have
2 the date up there, because I honestly -- based on
3 the last debate I wouldn't know if it's 2022 or 1965
4 with the debate against the abolishment of the
5 Voting Rights Act that we just heard.

6 You know, I'm a simple trigger puller. And
7 I'm certainly not a Harvard-educated lawyer, so I
8 have no idea what any of that means. But what I do
9 know is you all found a way to divide and carve a
10 50/50 state into a 22 to 8 partisan gerrymander.
11 That's what's before us right now. And you found a
12 way to cut minority representation in half at the
13 same time. The outcome speaks louder than your
14 words.

15 People should choose their representatives,
16 not politicians choosing their voters. This flies
17 in the face of the U.S. Constitution, the Florida
18 Constitution, and more importantly, every democratic
19 ideal that we hold dear.

20 When gerrymandered districts make
21 legislators more afraid of primaries than they are
22 of general elections, you end up with folks fighting
23 TV, CNN and Fox News over who can be more divisive.
24 And we saw how that resulted on January 6th of last
25 year.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 74

1 St. Petersburg and Tampa are two different
2 cities. This idea that water makes it contiguous
3 and satisfies a math formula is absurd. Manatees do
4 not vote. This map is a blatant partisan
5 gerrymander. It is designed so the Governor can
6 raise money in California and New York and solidify
7 his primary chances against former President Trump,
8 and he's willing to put black voters in the state of
9 Florida under the bus to do it.

10 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
12 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative Joseph?

13 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Joseph in
14 debate.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you, Madam
16 Speaker.

17 Florida is made up of a beautiful mix of
18 peoples, from our Native American communities, the
19 descendants of colonial settlers, the descendants of
20 enfranchised slaves, and a multi-partisan,
21 multicultural group of immigrants who come here all
22 the time. Our Representatives should be reflective
23 of that diversity to ensure that all of our voices
24 are heard. Those closest to the pain should be
25 closest to decision making. And no one knows our

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 75

1 communities better and the pain better of those
2 communities than those experiencing those pains.

3 So rather than accepting the gerrymandering
4 that had been done by politicians, carving up our
5 communities to silence the voices from and deny
6 resources to certain communities, Florida voters,
7 Democrats and Republicans, voted to amend our
8 constitution to require that we draw Fair Districts.
9 But right now the GOP has the power, and we get
10 that. But there's no need to cheat. You really
11 don't need to stack the deck.

12 By sacrificing black representation on the
13 altar of the Governor's political ambition, we are
14 now stacking the deck 20 to 8, and have the gall to
15 say that somehow this is not partisan. The
16 Governor's map blatantly favors his political party;
17 but not for the benefit of Republicans, certainly
18 not for Democrats, and absolutely not for the people
19 of Florida, but rather to continue to ignore the
20 pains of the people of Florida in favor of lining
21 campaign coffers and financial interests of friends.
22 He claims it's supposed to protect us from
23 discrimination, but does so by discriminating
24 against black representation. But the funny thing
25 is his maps were still able to protect Hispanic

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 76

1 districts just fine.

2 I'll just end with this. Rather than
3 drawing districts that divide us or silence our
4 voices based on what we look like, our ZIP code
5 might be, how much money we have, what language we
6 speak, black representation matters. And Floridians
7 deserve maps that represent all of us, not some of
8 us.

9 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
11 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
12 Thompson?

13 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Thompson in
14 debate.

15 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam
16 Speaker.

17 Members, I shared with you the words of
18 Frederick Douglass before in this chamber, who said
19 that "I will work with anybody to do right and with
20 nobody to do wrong." And this map is wrong. I
21 shared with you Florida's history of poll taxes;
22 that was wrong. And the history of literacy tests;
23 that was wrong. Grandfather clauses that were
24 wrong. Intimidation of African-American voters;
25 that was wrong. Violence, people having their homes

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 77

1 blown up, people being lynched because they wanted
2 representation and they wanted to vote, that was
3 wrong. And this map compounds the problem, and that
4 is wrong.

5 This may be abstract for many of you, but
6 it's flesh and blood to me. Because I have worked
7 with Carrie Meek, I worked with Alcee Hastings, with
8 Corrine Brown; the three people who had to bring a
9 lawsuit, by the way, to be the first African
10 Americans since reconstruction to go to Congress.
11 And that was in 1992, 30 years ago, not ancient
12 history.

13 Last year I went to the funeral of Carrie
14 Meek. I had a chance to visit with Representative
15 Robinson, Representative Woodson, while I was in
16 Miami. And a lot of people were there. Carrie Meek
17 was eulogized by Congressman James Clyburn. Steny
18 Hoyer spoke at her funeral, as did Joyce Beatty, the
19 chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. Frederica
20 Wilson spoke at the funeral, and she reminded people
21 of a time in the Florida Legislature when
22 Republicans and Democrats, blacks and whites, worked
23 together for the good of the State of Florida. She
24 told us about Carrie Meek and Don Gaetz setting up a
25 system of hospice. And hospice was where Carrie

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 78

1 Meek spent her last days. Blacks and whites working
2 together. This is not abstract for me; this is
3 flesh and blood.

4 And I will not sit here today and dishonor
5 the sacrifices, the struggles, all of the things
6 that those individuals did to give us three seats in
7 the United States Congress, and today we have four.
8 And this map, which is wrong, would take us to two.
9 We should not compound the problem.

10 I also shared with you the words of
11 Dr. King who said that, "A man can't ride your back
12 unless it's bent." And so I'm standing tall today.
13 I'm standing straight today, and I will not bow to
14 the ego, to the ambitions of one individual who
15 wants to take us back.

16 Now, it's not about the color of the skin.
17 It's about the lived experience of people who
18 understand that the poor will always be with us, as
19 is said in the Bible. They understand that health
20 care is disproportionately available in certain
21 communities. They understand quality affordable
22 housing is not available in certain communities.
23 They understand about Pell Grants and the need to
24 fight for education in certain communities. They
25 understand the need for economic development in

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 79

1 certain communities. And so it's not about skin
2 color; it's about lived experiences and bringing
3 that perspective.

4 As human beings we tend to have the kind
5 of, I guess, blindness that if it hasn't happened to
6 me, it doesn't exist. And when you look at
7 financial disclosures of people in the legislative
8 process, you understand people come from very
9 privileged backgrounds, in Congress and in this
10 body. And you need the perspective of people who
11 are willing to go outside and to mix with the folks
12 whose voices are not heard here in this chamber.
13 And so you need African Americans in Congress.

14 To the credit of this body, you all
15 followed Tier 1 when you drew the legislative seats.
16 We talked about the 30 seats that were established
17 after the 2010 census. And you made sure that there
18 was no diminishment, that there was no abridgment of
19 equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their
20 choice. Now, we didn't get any more than 30, but we
21 didn't get less than 30. So why is it all right in
22 this map to have less than the four that we had when
23 we began?

24 I want you to stand up. I won't bow. I'm
25 hoping you'll stand with me. I hope you'll stand

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 80

1 tall. Because a man cannot ride your back unless
2 it's bent. Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you, Madam
6 Speaker. Would you recognize Representative Hinson?

7 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Hinson in
8 debate.

9 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: Thank you. Thank
10 you, Madam Speaker. Wow. I'm not bending my back.

11 Most of you know, members, I don't stand
12 down from telling how old I am, my lived
13 experiences. In 1965 when the Voting Right Act was
14 passed, I was a senior in high school. At 15 years
15 old I was marching on lines, and sitting in
16 driveways, and getting spit on for sitting at
17 lunchroom counters. I've been kicked. I've been
18 talked about, and I have been called names you don't
19 even put in the dictionary anymore.

20 Voting Rights Act of 1965, I fought for
21 that. I've met Martin Luther King. I don't just
22 talk about him. He taught me peaceful protest.
23 Huh. And here we are today, 2022, rolling back the
24 tide.

25 You all are pushing this bill like thug

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 81

1 life 101. I didn't get to ask questions about my
2 own proposed district yesterday. I wasn't given
3 that opportunity. So let me tell you about it
4 today, because it -- I've got to call your attention
5 to it. I live in Congressional District 3. If
6 you've got your map, pull it out and look at it. My
7 current CD 3 has six counties: Clay, Marion,
8 Alachua, Putnam, Bradford, and Union. I share this
9 congressional district with several of my esteemed
10 members in the front rows.

11 The proposed District CD3 has 11 counties,
12 11 - 10 red, 1 blue. That's a radical change.
13 Contrary to the sponsor's assertion that it's
14 compact; it is not.

15 Number one, it -- I don't understand these
16 terms so I may be misusing them, but I'm going to
17 use them anyway. It cracks and packs in favor of
18 your party. That's a violation of the Fair District
19 Amendment Tier 1 criteria. It favors your current
20 incumbent, southern belle Kat Kammack, a violation
21 of the Fair District Amendment Tier 1 criteria. It
22 diminishes minority voters from 31 plus percent to
23 less than 15. It took Clay County out, and it
24 matched it with Nassau; and it's given them the
25 minority preference.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 82

1 Congressional District 3 is
2 unconstitutional. The Voting Rights Act of 1965
3 states that majority-minority districts can be
4 created in order to prevent the dilution of
5 minorities' voting strength. It further mandates
6 that "electoral district lines cannot be drawn in
7 such a manner as to improperly dilute minorities'
8 voting power." Everybody's telling you, we're
9 saying it repeatedly.

10 Now, in 2015, according to Ballotpedia,
11 there were nine such districts -- that was just
12 seven years ago -- 2015, nine such districts.
13 Yesterday I heard Chair Leek say it's now three,
14 2022. And after today it will be two. That's some
15 fast-moving train, gentlemen and ladies.

16 He complains about a large malady of
17 ignorance afflicting a sizable chunk of elected
18 officials. That's us. And he laments about
19 America's office holders. That's us. We are
20 abdicating our constitutional responsibility and
21 subverting the power to him. He further complains
22 that this inclination to spend other people's money
23 --

24 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Hinson, the
25 time has expired in debate.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 83

1 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: -- to the tune of
2 \$72,000 a day, might I add. Unless you control the
3 lives of their fellow citizens and a desire to --

4 MADAM SPEAKER: Representative Hinson, the
5 time has --

6 (Members protesting loudly)

7 Members, this is not -- we need a formal
8 recess. We are in formal recess.

9 (Recess taken)

10 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Members, we are back in
11 session.

12 As is obvious, we have members who decided
13 they wanted to hijack our process today. It is my
14 belief and your belief that no member of this
15 chamber has the opportunity to shut down our
16 process, to shut down the job that members -- that
17 people of the public and the people of Florida have
18 asked us to do. We will be concluding our business
19 today. It is my hope that our colleagues would join
20 us and not being disruptive, but we will be
21 finishing our business.

22 It is my understanding that Leader Grant is
23 going to -- has yielded back the balance of his
24 time, which is the final debate block of this bill,
25 and that Chairman Leek --

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 84

1 Chairman Leek, you are recognized on your
2 close.

3 Chairman Leek, having waived close, the
4 question now recurs on final passage of Senate Bill
5 2-C. The clerk will unlock the machine, and members
6 will proceed to vote.

7 The clerk will lock the machine and
8 announce the vote.

9 THE CLERK: 68 yeas, 38 nays, Mr. Speaker.

10 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Show the bill passes.

11 Members, we are now going to proceed to the
12 next two bills. These two bills have got a lot of
13 questions and a lot of attention over the last
14 couple of days. Every member in this chamber should
15 have the opportunity to debate them, to talk about
16 them and to speak their piece. We are going to move
17 on to those two bills. If we can have a civil
18 debate that respects the rules of this House that
19 all of us have voted and agreed to, then we'll do
20 that. If, however, our colleagues continue to try
21 to shut down our process, I will entertain a motion
22 to call the previous question and we will vote on
23 these two bills.

24 It is my hope that we will be able to
25 proceed civilly and with decorum and with respect

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 85

1 for one another. Read the next bill.

2 THE CLERK: By Senator Bradley, Senate Bill
3 4-C, a bill to be entitled, an act relating to
4 independent special districts.

5 (Continued protesting)

6 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Represent Fine, you are
7 recognized to explain your bill.

8 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
9 Mr. Speaker. It seems as Mickey and Minnie have
10 joined us in the chamber today. That said, this is
11 the bill that we discussed yesterday.

12 (Ongoing background shouting)

13 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Members, we will either
14 going into structured debate or we will call the
15 previous question.

16 Representative Renner, you're recognized
17 for a motion.

18 REPRESENTATIVE RENNER: Mr. Speaker, I move
19 the previous question on the bill.

20 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Representative Renner
21 moves the previous question on the bill. This
22 motion is not debatable and requires a majority
23 vote. All in favor, say aye. All opposed, no.

24 Show the bill -- show the motion passes.
25 We will now proceed to call the previous question.

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 86

1 The clerk will unlock the machine, and
2 members will proceed to vote on Senate Bill 4-C.
3 Have all members voted? Have all members voted?

4 The clerk will lock the machine and
5 announce the vote.

6 THE CLERK: 78 yeas, 38 nays, Mr. Speaker.

7 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Show the bill passes.
8 Read the next bill.

9 THE CLERK: By Senator Bradley, Senate Bill
10 6-C, a bill to be entitled an act relating to social
11 media platforms.

12 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Representative Andrade,
13 you're recognized to explain your bill.

14 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker. This is the bill repealing the
16 carve-out that every Democrat voted to oppose last
17 year.

18 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Members, we will either
19 proceed to debate or we will entertain a motion to
20 call the previous question.

21 Representative Renner, you're recognized
22 for a motion.

23 REPRESENTATIVE RENNER: Mr. Speaker, I move
24 the previous question on the bill.

25 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Representative Renner

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 87

1 moves the previous question on the bill. This
2 motion is not debatable. All in favor, say aye.
3 All opposed, no. The motion passes.

4 Members, the question now recurs on final
5 passage of Senate Bill 6-C. The clerk will unlock
6 the machine, and members will proceed to vote.

7 Have all members voted? Have all members
8 voted? The clerk will lock the machine and announce
9 the vote.

10 THE CLERK: 78 yeas, 38 days, Mr. Speaker.

11 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Show the bill passes.

12 Read the next bill.

13 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

14 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there bills on the
15 special order calendar?

16 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

17 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Are there resolutions on
18 the desk?

19 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

20 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Representative Renner,
21 you're recognized for a motion.

22 Mr. Speaker, I move that the House adjourn,
23 to reconvene upon the call of the Chair.

24 SPEAKER SPROWLS: Representative Renner
25 moves to adjourn the House, to reconvene upon call

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 88

1 of the Chair. All in favor say aye.

2 (Multiple ayes)

3 All opposed, no.

4 Show the House is adjourned.

5 (END OF AUDIO RECORDING)

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4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 89

1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

2 I certify that the foregoing is a true and
3 accurate transcript of the digital recording
4 provided to me in this matter.

5 I do further certify that I am neither a
6 relative, nor employee, nor attorney of any of the
7 parties to this action, and that I am not
8 financially interested in the action.

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23 Julie Thompson, CET-1036

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4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 1

A				
A.M 1:13	address 37:2 45:23	alma 67:13	answer 9:25 18:24	16:24 17:4 51:1
abdicate 16:6	adherence 52:18	altar 75:13	answers 10:2	assertion 81:13
abdicated 52:11	adjourn 87:22,25	alternative 68:22	anti-voter 21:23	assign 69:14
abdication 48:14 82:20	adjourned 88:4	amazing 64:18	anybody 6:13	attached 57:19
abiding 9:2	adopted 12:8	ambition 16:7,7 23:17 75:13	17:23 18:19	attack 47:23,25
ability 2:15 8:25 9:5 10:12 11:1 13:3 34:25 43:22 44:3,6 60:17 65:15	adversely 23:8	ambitions 22:11 78:14	60:8 76:19	attacked 24:16 24:17,18
able 15:8,10,14 34:25 35:1 36:21 38:25 75:25 84:24	affiliations 65:1	Amen 3:8,9	anymore 80:19	attacking 27:2
abolishment 73:4	afflicting 82:17	amend 75:7	anyway 41:6 81:17	attacks 21:12 24:16
abridging 60:15	affordable 78:21	amendment 7:2 7:13 9:3 11:22 12:10,12,14,19 22:2 25:18 26:2 26:3 35:5 41:4 41:5,5 43:13,20 43:21,25 44:1 44:22 46:15 60:22 71:22 81:19,21	apologize 63:7	attempts 58:18
abridgment 79:18	afraid 10:25 73:21	amendments 5:12 8:21 12:9 12:16,21 22:8 22:20 35:9 50:11	appalling 49:23	attended 51:12
abrupt 67:18	African 77:9 79:13	America 49:17 51:21	appear 69:6	attention 30:6 81:4 84:13
abruptly 67:19	African-Ameri... 7:18 27:18,25 76:24	America's 82:19	Applause 31:17 80:3	attorney 89:6
absolutely 59:19 75:18	aftermath 25:4	American 12:6 12:17,21 13:1,2 74:18	applied 58:3,5	AUDIO 1:10 88:5
absolution 12:8	agenda 13:23	Americans 12:13 21:8 77:10 79:13	apply 20:11	Aunty 64:6
abstract 77:5 78:2	aggregate 69:13	analogs 64:7	appreciate 5:23 29:1	authority 10:13
absurd 74:3	ago 17:20 24:12 34:19 39:10 42:8 54:3 77:11 82:12	analysis 54:5	approach 2:7 39:21	automatons 70:13,23
accept 25:22 48:8	agree 55:20	ancestors 43:17	appropriate 22:23 28:23 29:23 71:3	available 78:20 78:22
accepting 75:3	agreed 22:24 84:19	ancestors' 16:3	appropriation 61:2	avert 23:7
access 33:24	aisle 6:1 16:11	ancient 77:11	appropriations 17:11 57:19	Ax 24:9
accomplish 36:21	al 1:2	Andrade 86:12 86:14	approve 50:3	aye 85:23 87:2 88:1
account 41:1,3	Alachua 81:8	Angelou 50:21	approved 4:2 22:9 54:3	ayes 88:2
accountability 50:12	Alarming 65:16	anger 24:14	APRIL 1:12 2:1	
accurate 89:3	Albert 8:14	angers 59:3	area 13:14 69:13	B 6:4
act 4:20 6:25 7:11,12,21 8:22 11:21 15:7 20:12 26:1 28:6 44:2 47:25 48:13 69:10 73:5 80:13,20 82:2 85:3 86:10	Alcee 28:7 77:7	angry 24:13	areas 42:18	B 6:4
action 89:7,8	Alexander 29:3,5 29:6,25 30:3,4 30:13,22,23 31:8 71:2 72:10 72:12	announce 3:16 84:8 86:5 87:8	argument 39:8 40:17 51:25	back 5:2 6:6 8:20 20:6 26:10,18 28:12 31:14,23 35:13,19,24 36:5 37:14 45:8 51:18 59:6 64:22 69:4 78:11,15 80:1 80:10,23 83:10 83:23
ad 18:24	allegation 67:16		arguments 41:4	background 85:12
add 61:1 83:2	Allegiance 3:21 3:24		Army 59:24	backgrounds 79:9
	alleging 68:18		arrive 9:14	bad 19:6 42:9
	allow 16:5,16		ascertain 40:20 40:22	balance 62:19
	allowed 2:14 18:19,20,21,22		ascribe 16:20	
	allowing 12:7 67:7		aside 34:5	
			asked 28:5 29:3 53:22 64:5 83:18	
			asking 13:19	

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 2

64:9 83:23 balanced 62:21 62:23 balances 21:6 37:4,5,24 38:1 38:5,6 ballot 21:25 22:9 Ballotpedia 82:10 balls 30:14 barriers 21:22,24 Bartleman 51:8 51:9,11 based 25:1 28:22 29:17,22 73:2 76:4 basically 28:12 40:25 58:2 bathroom 64:4 Bay 9:13 13:14 56:24 61:17 Beatty 77:18 beautiful 2:12,16 49:17 74:17 began 79:23 begging 65:13,14 beginning 18:15 begun 58:8 behalf 49:10 behest 67:20 beings 79:4 belief 67:11 83:14,14 believe 6:16 33:19 34:20 38:7 54:11,12 54:13 55:17,18 57:12,12,22 58:12 68:4,12 72:2 believed 57:13 believer 6:12 belle 81:20 Beltran 36:9,10 36:12 bending 80:10 benefit 75:17	benefits 34:2 Benjamin 43:8,9 43:11 bent 78:12 80:2 best 13:22 63:20 better 15:20 36:20,20 75:1,1 beyond 35:12 Bible 78:19 bidding 23:6 bigger 23:4 bill 4:18,20,20,23 5:1,4,7,11,18 8:9,11,13 12:22 20:15 21:13,14 21:14,23 24:12 32:18 45:11 48:4 61:1,4 80:25 83:24 84:4,10 85:1,2 85:3,7,11,19,21 85:24 86:2,7,8 86:9,10,13,15 86:24 87:1,5,11 87:12 bills 4:16 19:1 36:18,20 84:12 84:12,17,23 87:14 bipartisan 60:24 bit 7:7 10:20 39:8 54:2 67:21 70:10,11 72:1 black 9:5,6 14:21 14:22,24,25 15:3,12 21:21 23:8 24:23 25:7 26:4,6,14 27:2 27:19 28:1,3,15 44:12 45:9,9,10 47:24 48:7,9,9 51:14 52:6 55:15 58:7,16 65:10 69:25 70:1 74:8 75:12 75:24 76:6 77:19	blacks 27:18 77:22 78:1 blatant 74:4 blatantly 58:20 75:16 blessed 2:20 blight 24:21 blindness 79:5 block 40:2 83:24 blood 16:2,2,4 77:6 78:3 blown 77:1 blue 81:12 board 73:1 body 39:14 41:14 60:23 66:4,13 72:13 79:10,14 body's 47:8 bones 44:4 born 12:6 24:6 bound 7:16 boundaries 36:24 42:2 56:16,19 56:20 57:3 61:14,14 65:23 boundary 56:25 bow 15:15 78:13 79:24 box 21:25 Bradford 81:8 Bradley 85:2 86:9 branch 21:2,2,3 62:19,20,20,22 62:24 63:4,6,9 branch's 63:22 branches 21:1 49:1 breathe 2:22 43:24 breathed 43:20 breathing 44:1 Brian 28:9 brief 36:3 53:9 53:11 brilliant 8:12 64:16	bring 14:18 61:18 77:8 bringing 79:2 brought 2:14 61:22 67:17 brown 15:3,13 20:19,20,22 26:4,6 28:8 58:7,15 77:8 budget 19:3 64:9 building 66:8 bullied 70:24 bully 16:12,13 bully-in-chief 32:24 bullying 23:5 66:17 burden 41:14 burdening 48:7 bus 74:9 business 83:18 83:21 Byrd 1:6 Byron 55:17 <hr/> C <hr/> calendar 87:15 calibrate 40:15 California 74:6 call 7:4 29:20 30:14 59:8 81:4 84:22 85:14,25 86:20 87:23,25 called 6:24 49:4 49:22 59:6 80:18 Callie 63:25 64:1 64:4,7,10,11,15 campaign 75:21 candidate 9:17 70:3,7 79:19 candidates 69:19 capable 23:14 Capitol 51:12 care 17:17 78:20 Carrie 28:8 77:7 77:13,16,24,25	carried 47:17 carve 73:9 carve-out 86:16 carving 75:4 case 38:5 40:21 40:23,24,25 41:15,17,17 53:16 67:10 cases 37:21 41:13 caucus 35:7 77:19 Cause 1:2 CD 26:12 56:16 56:16,22,22 57:8,9 60:24,24 81:7 CD3 81:11 CDD 42:14 census 79:17 center 25:6 Central 33:23 century 44:13 certain 11:19 13:1 15:16 71:6 75:6 78:20,22 78:24 79:1 certainly 15:5 29:15 73:7 75:17 CERTIFICATE 89:1 certify 89:2,5 CET-1036 89:23 chair 6:9 9:24 18:14 27:14 29:1 31:8 54:3 62:15 67:6,7 77:19 82:13 87:23 88:1 chairman 47:4 83:25 84:1,3 challenge 6:16 7:22 challenged 6:21 37:18 challenges 61:2,4 chamber 10:15
---	--	---	---	---

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 3

17:23,24 28:20 29:8,17,21 30:8 30:10,17,19 33:3 34:24 37:9 37:11 51:25 52:4 55:15 66:9 66:15 76:18 79:12 83:15 84:14 85:10 chambers 23:5 49:9 51:3 chance 77:14 chances 74:7 change 56:12 61:3 67:18 81:12 changed 67:20 charade 65:23 charge 71:10 cheat 75:10 check 46:8 checks 21:5 37:4 37:5,23 38:1,4 38:6 Chew 70:9 chief 39:6 children 57:23 choice 9:1,18 13:12 22:8 60:18 65:15 69:20 70:3,7 79:20 choose 46:17 49:18 73:15 choosing 12:1 58:6 73:16 chosen 35:11,12 chunk 82:17 cities 61:8,9 74:2 citizen 10:14,14 10:15 18:22 59:25 citizens 83:3 citizenship 43:16 city 24:3,4,8,20 61:9 civics 37:23	civil 6:19 12:5 84:17 civilly 84:25 claims 21:15 75:22 clarification 29:1 29:4 68:16 72:13 clarity 68:9 clause 21:17,19 clauses 76:23 Clay 81:7,23 clean 36:22 clear 25:13,14 45:4 56:19,21 60:5 61:19 clearly 9:2,3 52:15 56:17,24 57:3 clerk 3:12,15,17 4:4,6,9,12,17 4:19 5:13 84:5 84:7,9 85:2 86:1,4,6,9 87:5 87:8,10,13,16 87:19 clerk's 72:24 clock 17:19 18:3 51:18 close 84:2,3 closely 30:7 70:21 closest 74:24,25 Clyburn 77:17 CNN 73:23 code 76:4 coffers 75:21 coin 40:8 collaborate 37:9 colleague 40:5 colleagues 6:1 11:11,12 22:17 24:13 26:8 27:4 31:9,22 35:17 36:2 45:11 47:23 48:11,25 57:12 62:12	63:8,13,15,18 64:23 83:19 84:20 colonial 74:19 color 12:15 25:1 34:4 58:15 78:16 79:2 column 6:4,4 come 2:3 16:5 20:6 31:23 37:10 38:17,25 44:8 65:18 74:21 79:8 comes 24:5 27:19 37:14 40:25 44:21 56:16,22 comfortable 28:13 coming 22:14 35:19,23 40:17 49:16 57:16 62:17 commemorating 52:6 comment 47:10 comments 18:1 34:18 committee 4:14 8:9 10:1 18:15 34:17,18 36:17 47:8 57:16,18 57:20 60:13 67:8,25 committee's 47:2 committees 4:11 34:23 37:7 39:1 common 1:2 44:19 64:5 communications 4:5 communism 15:17 communities 9:6 25:8 26:5,6 58:8,10 74:18 75:1,2,5,6 78:21,22,24	79:1 community 24:13,22 33:24 59:21 68:20 compact 81:14 compelling 41:7 competitive 13:17 complains 82:16 82:21 complete 19:9 complies 7:9 comply 7:22 compound 78:9 compounds 77:3 con 5:4 concentration 21:4 concept 12:23 69:17 concern 11:25 33:16 concerned 15:1 40:4 concerns 34:5 46:6 61:22 concluded 52:25 concluding 83:18 condemnation 8:11,13 condition 12:15 confer 43:21 configuration 67:19 confine 18:1 confirmed 64:2 congress 11:20 13:12 14:11,12 21:21 27:2 43:18 44:13 45:5 47:25 55:19 77:10 78:7 79:9,13 congressional 4:21 5:10 9:5 9:14 25:10 34:17 42:12	47:16 53:25,25 55:2,4 56:12 58:14 60:2 77:19 81:5,9 82:1 Congressman 27:25 55:16 66:12 77:17 consciousness 8:15,20 consecutive 40:3 consider 47:9 consistency 56:10 consistently 24:15 constant 58:17 constituents 13:23 14:24 23:8 38:13,13 38:24 55:19 constitutes 9:3 constitution 6:17 7:4,9,15,21 11:14,24 12:9 20:24 22:21 26:4 32:10,13 41:16 46:15 52:23 65:21 69:3,4,5 71:22 71:23 73:17,18 75:8 Constitution's 21:17 constitutional 6:11 10:12 12:4 19:9 20:11 21:7 34:21 46:19 52:2 66:19 68:8 71:20 72:3 82:20 construction 24:20 consultants 47:1 content 31:12 context 53:21 contexts 42:22
--	---	--	--	--

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 4

contiguous 74:2	41:12 84:14	24:1	57:3	died 27:24
continue 25:16	courage 16:11,25	day 2:13 3:2,7	definitely 27:3	difference 2:24
28:24 31:1,6	35:14 66:15,16	8:8 64:3 83:2	definition 55:10	5:17
56:12 75:19	course 15:4	days 34:19 35:24	definitive 68:18	different 5:21
84:20	coursing 16:3,4	56:10 78:1	delegation 47:13	19:5,6,7 39:21
continued 17:2	court 7:13 39:18	84:14 87:10	deliberate 2:17	51:16,21 52:19
21:11 36:25	40:19,24 41:13	deaf 16:10 63:16	deliver 62:9	54:2 68:14 74:1
68:18 85:5	42:17 48:7 50:4	dealing 26:24	delivery 63:21	differently 52:19
continuing 2:18	courts 6:15 23:13	dear 73:19	Demings 28:8	digital 1:23 89:3
contract 12:17	37:18 38:24	debatable 85:22	democracy 12:24	dilute 11:19 13:1
contradicting	68:5,9	87:2	13:4 69:9	82:7
7:20	cover 15:20	debate 4:24,25	Democrat 38:18	diluted 26:15
contradiction	crack 13:9 25:7	5:15 8:5,13	86:16	dilutes 58:25
39:9	cracks 81:17	11:9 14:6 18:8	democratic 13:6	diluting 27:3
contradicts 7:12	crap 62:17	19:24 20:21	13:16 35:7	dilution 82:4
contrary 6:17	create 58:14	23:25 27:12	73:18	diminish 13:2,2
81:13	created 8:16	28:23 32:6	Democrats 17:12	44:2,18 60:17
control 83:2	28:15,16 82:4	33:13 34:11,13	47:14 75:7,18	65:14
conversation	credit 79:14	36:9,11 40:5	77:22	diminished 45:3
30:16,20 33:6	creep 7:7	43:10 45:17	demolishing	diminishes 52:21
66:10	criteria 41:19,23	48:22 51:10	24:23	81:22
Cord 1:6	81:19,21	53:4,6 54:18,20	denied 51:18	diminishment
core 46:16 60:4	criticism 39:25	59:15 62:6 65:6	deny 75:5	9:4,7,8 40:6,7
corrections 3:25	criticisms 38:2	66:25 67:2 68:2	denying 8:25	40:10 79:18
corridor 26:15	39:12,13,13	73:3,4 74:14	9:17 60:15	direction 68:15
Corrine 28:8	40:1	76:14 80:8	dereliction 10:3	directly 22:9,13
77:8	cross 61:16,17	82:25 83:24	DeSantis 22:18	25:5
corrupt 22:14	Crow 28:16	84:15,18 85:14	23:10 66:17	directs 65:21,21
45:24	51:15	86:19	descendants	65:22
corrupting 45:22	cunning 45:25	debates 40:3	74:19,19	dirty 23:7
corrupts 46:8	current 21:15	debating 70:16	described 48:11	disagree 2:17
costly 12:3	81:7,19	decade 19:5 60:3	deserve 58:3 76:7	16:22
Counsel's 67:24	cut 31:15 65:11	decades 11:16	deserves 30:17	disagreed 62:25
counters 80:17	73:12	58:6	designed 21:19	disclosures 79:7
counties 36:23	cuts 7:17 57:1	decide 12:25	46:16 48:13	discovered 55:1
81:7,11	cycle 68:8	decided 61:14	74:5	discriminating
countless 11:17		62:25 83:12	desire 3:7 83:3	75:23
countries 15:18	D	deciding 63:19	desk 3:23 4:4,6,9	discrimination
69:12	D.C 1:24	decision 35:12	4:12,17 5:13	48:12 75:23
country 2:19	dad 59:24	59:9 74:25	87:13,16,18,19	discriminatory
6:13,24 15:5	dangerous 10:23	deck 75:11,14	destroying 46:3	24:25
43:15 48:10	dangers 45:21	decorum 30:16	determine 69:11	discuss 33:3 50:1
country's 42:10	46:6	84:25	development	discussed 29:16
county 42:4,13	dark 15:20 33:20	deep 11:25	78:25	38:22 52:16
55:20 61:3 70:1	date 73:2	defend 11:13	Diamond 45:15	54:9 85:11
81:23	daughter 59:23	32:10	45:16,18	discussing 24:11
couple 37:2	Davis 23:23,24	defined 56:16,25	dictionary 80:19	30:18 52:13

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 5

60:10 discussion 70:19 71:24 disenfranchise 21:18 71:11,13 disenfranchise... 26:9 dishonor 78:4 dismantling 58:17 Disney 10:24 disparagement 68:20 disproportiona... 48:6 78:20 disregards 9:20 disrespects 9:20 disruptive 83:20 distinction 27:22 district 11:22 13:15,16 22:20 25:18 26:2 41:9 42:11,13,17 45:1 50:11 53:25 54:1,1,2 54:5 55:2,4 56:25,25 65:23 69:22 81:2,5,9 81:11,18,21 82:1,6 districts 4:21 7:5 7:10,17,18 8:21 9:14 22:1,3,11 25:17 28:5 40:13 44:16 46:14 52:17 53:22,23 55:12 56:23 57:2,7 58:5,15,17,25 60:14 61:11 67:19 68:19 73:20 75:8 76:1 76:3 82:3,11,12 85:4 diversity 74:23 divide 36:23 73:9 76:3	divisive 73:23 doing 6:7 8:16 23:6 25:21 29:9 39:20 43:19 50:5 63:11 dollar 61:2 dominion 46:5 Don 77:24 Donald 47:16 Donalds 28:9 55:17 doors 52:6 Douglass 76:18 downstairs 70:21 Dr 78:11 draw 9:25 10:1,5 13:22 42:2,12 50:1 52:11,12 66:18 75:8 drawer 56:18 drawing 9:23 22:3,22 52:1 76:3 drawn 21:10 29:24 46:21,25 47:2,3 52:18,19 55:9 56:17 60:14 82:6 drew 42:11 79:15 drilled 60:12 Driscoll 8:3,4,6 driven 31:2 driveways 80:16 due 12:3 29:7 duly 32:12 duties 32:14 49:21,21,22 duty 3:4 10:3 11:25 16:6 21:7 46:11,13,14,19 48:2,14 50:9 52:11 64:24 66:18 Duval 70:1 <hr/> E <hr/> earlier 49:2	early 64:2 ears 16:10 63:16 Eastside 25:2 easy 36:15 economic 78:25 Edmonds 27:10 27:11,13 28:17 28:18,25 31:5,7 education 78:24 educator 57:22 59:2 effect 48:8 effort 58:18 71:5 ego 78:14 Einstein 8:14 either 40:9 50:3 85:13 86:18 elderly 51:13 elect 9:1 13:11 22:7,18 38:11 38:12 44:3,6 60:18 64:3 65:15 69:19 79:19 elected 11:25 35:21 38:13,14 38:20 39:6 48:15 49:11 50:7 51:3 55:19 59:21 61:8 64:1 65:17 69:3 82:17 electing 44:5 election 21:14 58:10 elections 17:5 63:2 73:22 electoral 82:6 elevated 53:13 eligible 54:24 eloquently 47:24 48:11 employee 89:6 empower 2:25 enabled 46:1 enacted 43:13 encounter 19:1	encourage 69:4 72:3 ended 49:16 71:8 enfranchised 74:20 engage 66:10 engines 46:4 enjoined 42:16 ensure 22:4 43:25 46:20 51:16,23 52:2 62:12 74:23 ensuring 13:8 45:2 enter 4:24 32:15 entertain 84:21 86:19 entertained 25:12 entire 18:16 19:2 23:5 24:19 40:18 69:13 entitled 4:20 85:3 86:10 equal 12:13,19 12:23 13:4,8,13 13:18,20 21:17 22:5,6 51:23 60:15 79:19 era 28:16 31:15 51:15 52:8 erases 34:3 eroded 44:10 erosion 37:4 Eskamani 33:11 33:12,14 essentially 31:14 established 49:3 79:16 establishing 4:20 esteemed 47:4 81:9 et 1:2 eulogized 77:17 evenness 62:18 event 24:10 events 24:9 30:20	everybody 10:9 16:19,23 Everybody's 82:8 everyday 58:19 everyone's 37:25 39:2 49:21 EVIDENCE 1:23 exact 16:25 25:9 exacting 41:10 exactly 26:11 37:22 39:3 40:15 49:5 examines 37:13 example 69:20 examples 11:18 excited 60:1 excuse 9:8 24:23 executive 21:2 39:6 62:19 63:1 63:6,22 exercised 58:11 exhaustive 24:5 exist 79:6 existing 61:13 exists 7:23 expanding 45:1 expect 37:23 expected 66:9 expedient 50:22 experience 24:16 78:17 experiences 51:21 79:2 80:13 experiencing 75:2 expired 17:19 34:8 66:21 82:25 explain 5:7 85:7 86:13 explained 49:20 explicitly 54:4 57:5 express 31:1 expressed 47:24
---	---	--	--	--

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 6

F	40:24 41:12 42:16 44:21 48:2,4 feedback 47:11 feeds 34:1 feel 11:14 28:13 33:17 59:20 63:12 FELICIA 56:7 fell 63:16 fellow 83:3 fewer 36:23 fiction 10:17 fight 26:23 61:2 62:21,21 78:24 fighting 73:22 figure 31:23 filed 35:8,9 37:21 final 47:22 83:24 84:4 87:4 finally 54:11 financial 75:21 79:7 financially 89:8 find 39:7 46:8 70:11 fine 66:24 67:1,3 76:1 85:6,8 finish 3:2 finished 68:12 finishing 83:21 firmly 53:15,17 first 4:18,23 8:22 8:23 10:23 25:3 27:25 34:20 37:3,7 40:2 51:11 54:24 69:1 77:9 fit 9:16 five 9:7 45:6 63:14 fixed 18:4 flag 3:21 flesh 77:6 78:3 flies 73:16 floor 24:11 36:18 36:19 39:11	44:22 46:20 57:16 59:6 Florida 7:4,9,15 7:20 9:21 10:16 11:21 12:2 13:10,22 14:21 14:23 16:18,23 20:4 21:20 22:1 22:9,13,19 23:7 23:9,14 25:14 26:14 27:15,23 32:11 33:7,23 35:21 36:5 44:15,16,18 45:7 48:5 49:18 50:7 51:2 52:1 52:17 63:12,17 63:20 64:24 65:11,17 71:8 71:23 73:17 74:9,17 75:6,19 75:20 77:21,23 83:17 Florida's 27:1 76:21 Floridians 23:2 23:11 51:22 52:24 56:13 57:2 58:3 62:11 64:25 65:10 76:6 focus 20:3 61:6 focused 24:21 folks 15:4 23:5 35:11,12 40:17 42:11 71:18 73:22 79:11 follow 36:23 39:16 41:9,15 42:1,3,7,8 46:14 48:2 56:23 57:14,25 60:8 61:24,25 69:3 follow-up 30:1 followed 37:16 54:13 60:4	61:21 79:15 following 11:24 56:11 60:10 force 21:14 forefathers 20:25 foregoing 89:2 forget 2:20 3:1,4 Forgive 62:11 form 31:10 formal 83:7,8 former 27:23 36:4 55:14 61:7 74:7 formula 74:3 forth 5:2 21:23 forward 2:18 33:5 45:8,9 64:23 fought 16:4 25:8 51:15 52:15 80:20 found 55:8 73:9 73:11 founders 46:8 founding 45:20 four 9:7 78:7 79:22 Fox 73:23 frankly 6:2 67:17 Frederica 77:19 Frederick 76:18 free 16:18,18,19 16:22 27:18 freedom 21:13 21:23 24:11 friend 71:2 friends 3:3 14:25 31:22 75:21 front 33:7 70:15 71:19 81:10 full 57:18 67:8 functional 54:5 funeral 77:13,18 77:20 funny 75:24 further 65:24 82:5,21 89:5	future 57:24 68:23 G Gaetz 77:24 gain 23:3 Gainesville 27:24 gall 75:14 gallery 2:4 game 29:20 games 66:17 Geller 5:19,20,22 general 67:24 73:22 generally 38:3 gentlemen 82:15 geographic 36:24 41:9 42:2 geographical 61:13 George 45:22 gerrymander 73:10 74:5 gerrymandered 73:20 gerrymandering 55:10 75:3 getting 55:13 80:16 gifted 64:16 give 16:13,13 31:11 72:10 78:6 give-and-take 37:7,10 39:24 given 60:5 61:21 81:2,24 glad 67:12,14 glorify 3:5 go 3:2,3 5:2 6:15 7:13 23:9 37:5 39:20 50:17 54:25 57:19 67:14 69:4 77:10 79:11 God 2:12 32:16 goes 37:12 46:9
----------	--	---	--	---

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 7

going 4:23,24 6:15 14:11,13 15:2,25,25 17:2 17:2 25:21,24 26:23 29:10 31:14 33:4 35:14,25 37:20 37:20 38:24 41:1,6,22 50:18 50:20,24 60:9 61:15 63:15 64:8,9,9,11,12 64:16 68:3,6,14 70:18 72:2 81:16 83:23 84:11,16 85:14 golden 59:8 Goldilocks 40:12 40:14 good 11:11 18:4 19:10,11 31:23 36:15,16 42:10 43:21 71:2 77:23 GOP 75:9 gotten 17:9 36:16 governance 42:18 government 2:16 21:1 23:6 32:10 43:22 44:21 45:25 46:3,17 49:2 62:22 government's 44:24 Governor 6:5 10:7,11 16:6,16 16:22 18:17 19:1 21:10 22:18 23:1,10 25:11,22 34:24 37:12 38:9,10 38:11,12,14,17 38:19,20 39:5 39:24 40:19 46:12 50:3 57:6 66:16 67:20	70:14,16 74:5 Governor's 38:22 39:5 46:25 49:21 57:6 58:13 67:24 75:13,16 grace 2:23 grade 37:23 grandchildren 51:16 grandfather 15:9 76:23 grandparents 14:16 Grant 5:5 18:5,6 19:13,15 34:8,9 36:6,7,13 42:24 42:25 53:1,2 54:15,16 55:21 55:22 66:22,23 72:5,6 83:22 grants 12:14 78:23 great 6:13 great-grandpa... 14:17 greatest 6:18,21 grew 51:15,16 54:23 group 1:23 13:7 56:13 69:18 70:6,9 74:21 groups 71:6 grow 21:11 grown 27:17 guarantee 12:19 70:2,6 guaranteeing 70:8 guarantees 12:12 guess 15:24 40:11,14 79:5 guidance 2:21 guide 62:9 guided 62:20 guidelines 52:14 52:19 56:23	guns 39:23 gut-check 32:20 Gutting 26:12 <hr/> H Haiti 49:11,12 half 7:18 31:16 73:12 halfway 50:2 hand 10:10 71:24 Handle 24:9 hands 25:22 64:22 66:10 happen 15:17 16:17 37:20 59:2 63:15 72:1 happened 22:13 37:22 79:5 happens 7:14 15:18 19:4 happy 39:22 hard 6:25 harder 58:19,24 62:12 Harding 34:11 34:12,14 Harvard-educ... 73:7 Hastings 28:7 77:7 hate 26:9 hateful 68:23 70:12 hauling 15:9 headed 10:22 heading 68:5 health 78:19 hear 10:22 25:16 30:6 54:8 69:1 heard 5:11 8:8,11 10:6 23:19 24:24 25:15 34:18 36:22 39:2 50:19 53:14 55:14 57:15,17 62:10 62:12 64:21	65:20 73:5 74:24 79:12 82:13 hearing 4:1 53:20 hearings 49:8 heart 46:9 58:8 66:13 hearts 3:6 heck 30:10 64:5 64:15 Hello 65:10 help 8:19 19:2 32:16 46:25 53:11 64:9 Henry 51:24 high 80:14 higher 44:24 highway 24:20 25:5,5 hijack 83:13 Hinson 80:6,7,9 82:24 83:1,4 Hispanic 75:25 historic 24:23 29:11 historical 11:17 27:22 29:10,15 29:19,22 30:18 31:11 historically 13:10 24:20 31:2 history 20:4 23:9 24:5 28:15 29:7 30:20 33:20 42:11 48:10 50:17 51:20 71:2,3,4,4 76:21,22 77:12 HOA 42:16 hold 32:12 47:15 73:19 holders 82:19 holes 28:15 home 3:3 59:6 65:9,10 homes 76:25	honest 39:21 honestly 73:2 honor 18:14 honored 59:20 hope 13:24 16:9 16:10 31:19 59:4 79:25 83:19 84:24 hopefully 30:14 30:25 hoping 79:25 hospice 77:25,25 hours 47:6 house 1:11 2:2,13 5:25 16:5 17:4 35:9,21 36:5 52:7 54:4 59:19 65:11 84:18 87:22,25 88:4 housing 78:22 Hoyer 77:18 Huh 80:23 human 79:4 Humphrey 62:4 62:5,7 Huschofsky 59:13,14,16 <hr/> I I-4 26:15 idea 12:22,22 40:17 73:8 74:2 ideal 73:19 ideas 2:17 identity 12:21 ignorance 82:17 ignore 48:1,3 75:19 imagine 25:6 32:20 immigrants 59:23 74:21 impact 33:23 65:24 impacts 33:24 impartial 37:1 implore 63:5
--	--	---	--	---

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 8

importance 52:4	intentionally 52:16	John 66:12	69:6,25 72:24	leads 44:23
important 23:4	intentions 25:13	Johns 56:17	73:3,6,9 80:11	learn 64:11,12,13
28:6,6 33:7	intently 30:14	61:15	knowingly 52:12	71:21
44:17 49:9	interest 12:2	join 13:25 83:19	knows 74:25	learned 67:10
61:10,10 73:1	14:20,20,22,24	joined 85:10	kowtow 15:15	72:19,20,22
importantly	15:2,6,8,12,13	joint 4:16		learning 67:9
23:13 73:18	41:8	Joseph 74:12,13	L	leave 50:20
improperly 82:7	interested 89:8	74:15	laboriously 13:14	leaves 26:12
improve 36:25	interesting 35:5	Josiah 27:21	lacking 66:16	led 2:5 3:22 28:7
impugn 28:20,22	interests 75:21	journal 4:1,1	ladies 82:15	Lee 55:19
impugning 29:8	internal 47:18	Joyce 77:18	laid 51:24	Leek 5:6,8 6:9
29:17	internally 52:22	judge 48:4	laments 82:18	9:24 47:5 54:3
inability 44:24	interpret 39:18	judicial 21:3	land 7:15	62:15 67:7
inappropriate	interpreted 7:1	62:19	language 60:16	82:13 83:25
30:20	7:16	judiciary 6:12	76:5	84:1,3
inauthentic	intervene 23:11	Julie 89:23	large 82:16	left 33:23
68:21	Intimidation	junk 15:9	lastly 71:1	legal 44:19 61:2,4
incidental 48:8	76:24	justify 32:19	late 66:12	68:1,3,6
inclination 82:22	investigation	K	Latvala 54:18,19	legislation 57:15
include 21:22	55:3	Kammack 81:20	54:21	58:4
including 7:10	involved 18:17	Kat 81:20	law 6:16,17 7:14	legislative 21:2
27:17	22:12 38:21,22	keep 17:2 35:23	7:15,23 11:24	22:22 38:10,21
inconsistencies	38:23,23,24	45:8	12:13,20,23	62:20 63:4,8
47:19,20	43:22	keeping 61:9	13:8 20:11	79:7,15
inconsistency	ironically 25:4	key 12:23	40:21,23,24,25	legislator 38:19
57:4	irony 35:3	kicked 66:8	41:15,17,17	49:20
inconsistent	issues 12:4 68:3	80:17	46:14 48:2,3,6	legislators 20:12
52:17,22 57:10	70:21	kind 79:4	48:6 61:20 67:9	50:13,13 64:25
57:20	item 17:7	King 78:11 80:21	67:10	66:18 73:21
incredibly 59:20	items 54:9	knew 63:3,3	lawmaker 59:2	Legislature 9:23
59:22	J	know 9:16,23	laws 6:22 28:16	10:4 21:8,16
increments 5:2	Jacksonville	10:25 14:10,14	39:16 44:25	23:7,12 25:12
incumbent 81:20	14:25 24:4,4,6	14:19 15:3,20	49:12,14,15	26:21 46:12
independent 85:4	24:8,22 54:23	17:8 24:3 25:25	64:8	47:6 48:6 52:10
individual 24:11	55:2,5 69:22	26:18,19,20	lawsuit 77:9	57:11 65:17,21
78:14	James 77:17	27:21 32:17,21	lawyer 9:9 67:13	65:22,22 69:15
individuals 33:3	January 73:24	32:22 35:19	73:7	77:21
78:6	Jim 28:16 51:15	38:17,18 39:23	lawyers 47:1 69:6	legislatures
induction 4:2	job 6:7,8,8,10 7:8	40:13,16 42:15	71:25	40:14
indwell 2:25	7:22 20:13	46:23,24,24	Leader 5:4 18:5	legitimate 22:23
infuriated 24:15	23:11 25:17	47:1,3,5,9,12	36:6,13 66:21	lending 24:25
inherent 69:16	35:20,21 50:6,6	47:18,19 49:1,3	83:22	Leon 61:3
ink 40:21	59:22 65:17,19	49:5,7,11,13,14	leaders 6:18,19	let's 2:11 5:14
inside 17:24	83:16	49:22 55:11	6:19,21	13:19,21 20:6,6
intent 21:3,18	jobs 25:19,21	56:20 58:1,25	leadership 39:14	37:5 39:21
30:6 46:21		67:16 68:15	43:23 60:20	40:23 41:17
60:14			61:23 66:14	50:25 51:2

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 9

53:21 56:14 58:5 level 30:16 Lewis 66:13 lie 49:24 lied 49:24 life 2:21 43:20,24 44:1 81:1 lifelong 59:3 lifted 46:4 Likewise 13:14 liking 38:1 line 17:7 29:23 53:14 55:5 68:21 lines 36:23 42:4 80:15 82:6 lining 75:20 listed 52:9 listening 30:13 56:10 literacy 76:22 literally 55:6 litigated 71:21 litigation 12:3 37:21 little 7:6 10:20 39:8 40:10 47:19 67:21 70:10,11 live 3:7 9:13 13:19 25:1 50:25 69:8 81:5 lived 51:21 78:17 79:2 80:12 lives 3:5,8 24:19 26:14 27:1 50:25 83:3 local 61:8 lock 3:15 84:7 86:4 87:8 long 24:5 long-winded 50:18 longer 15:14 26:23 44:14 48:7	look 8:16,17,18 9:13 15:2 16:20 26:10,17 43:14 43:16 44:15 45:3 53:9 56:14 57:8 61:7 65:25 69:5,9 76:4 79:6 81:6 looking 5:24 17:9 31:10 49:19 56:15 64:23 looks 37:13 44:5 44:7 Lord 2:20 3:1,4 17:1 lose 21:20 lot 38:2,6 40:21 40:21 53:12 54:8 55:11,12 69:23 77:16 84:12,13 louder 73:13 loudly 83:6 love 6:20,21 14:14,15,16,17 16:21 59:19 61:8 lunchroom 80:17 lunchtime 65:12 Luther 80:21 lynched 77:1 <hr/> M M 1:24 machine 3:12,16 84:5,7 86:1,4 87:6,8 Madam 7:25 8:1 8:4,6 11:4,6,8 11:10 14:1,2,3 14:5,7 17:15,18 18:6,9,11 19:12 19:13,15,18,20 19:23,25 20:16 20:17,18,20,22 23:20,22,24 24:1 27:7,8,11	27:13 28:17,19 28:25 29:2,6,9 29:14 30:2,4,12 30:23 31:3,8,25 32:2,5,7 33:1,9 33:12,15 34:6,7 34:9,12,14 36:3 36:7,10,13 42:24,25 43:3,6 43:9,11 45:12 45:13,16,18 48:17,18,21,23 51:5,6,9 52:25 53:2,5,7 54:15 54:16,19,22 55:21,22,24 56:2,5,8 59:10 59:11,14,17 62:2,5,8 65:2,5 65:7 66:21,23 67:1,3 72:5,6,9 72:15,17,20,22 74:10,11,13,15 76:9,10,13,15 80:4,5,7,10 82:24 83:4 major 42:4 majority 22:24 53:22 70:15 85:22 majority-mino... 82:3 making 20:4 23:6 39:14 44:25 72:25 74:25 malady 82:16 man 15:15 23:16 25:8 27:22 55:16 78:11 80:1 Manatees 74:3 mandates 82:5 mandatory 61:12 manipulate 45:25 manner 31:2 60:24 62:10	82:7 map 7:23 8:17,24 8:25 9:3,11,20 9:21,23 10:1,2 10:5,8,13 11:2 12:4 13:25 14:9 18:13 19:10,10 19:11 20:5 21:10,12 30:11 31:14,23,24 33:17,18 34:20 34:21,24,25 35:1,5,7 36:1 40:1 45:4 46:10 46:25 47:2,3,5 47:9,12,18 48:16 50:10 52:1,3,11,13,15 52:21 53:17 54:3,13 56:15 56:18 57:5,6 58:12,14 60:21 61:5,24 68:12 74:4 75:16 76:20 77:3 78:8 79:22 81:6 maps 13:22 17:24,25 18:1 18:18 21:15,20 22:22,22 25:10 25:24 26:1 27:6 29:16 33:2 35:8 35:13,15,17 46:20 50:1,1,2 50:3 56:12,14 56:14 60:9,10 62:13 66:19 68:4 69:20 70:17 71:19,20 72:2 75:25 76:7 March 27:16 marching 80:15 marginalize 11:18 marginalized 58:10 Marion 81:7	mark 56:21 Martin 80:21 mass 58:11 Massullo 2:6,7,9 3:11 matched 81:24 mater 67:13 math 74:3 mathematician 9:9 matter 16:19,20 16:21 27:1 30:8 39:24 45:9,10 45:10,11 48:9 50:11 58:16,20 58:23 89:4 matters 4:2,15 26:25,25 45:10 48:10 55:17,18 76:6 Maya 50:21 mayor 27:23 McCormick 28:9 McCurdy 65:4,5 65:7 mean 19:6,7 38:2 38:5 64:6,10 meaningful 33:6 47:10 meaningfully 13:3 means 13:5 16:18 26:13 40:18 44:5,6 49:6 59:25 64:12 70:4,5 73:8 meant 44:25 45:1 45:2 meddling 23:2 39:6,7 media 60:9 86:11 Meek 77:7,14,16 77:24 78:1 Meeks 28:8 meet 41:18 47:8 50:1 52:1 meeting 61:22,23
---	---	---	---	---

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 10

member 8:9 18:20 30:7 35:7 45:5 55:14 59:19 63:4,9 83:14 84:14	70:23 minimize 58:14 minimum 13:4 Minnie 85:9 minorities 44:3 44:18 60:16 69:18 71:11 minorities' 65:14 82:5,7 minority 7:17 8:25 9:17 13:11 13:16 22:4 33:24 52:21 55:12,13 71:13 73:12 81:22,25 minute 5:2 17:20 minutes 5:1 mirror 32:21 mistake 12:7 50:15 misusing 81:16 mix 74:17 79:11 MLK 25:5 mockery 32:19 modern 12:24 mom 59:7 moment 4:23 16:1,25 20:9 29:2 36:4 money 57:18 74:6 76:5 82:22 month 39:10 months 5:24 24:12 67:8 Morales 19:22,23 19:25 morning 3:21 4:25 11:11 51:11 mother 14:16 mother's 16:2 motion 84:21 85:17,22,24 86:19,22 87:2,3 87:21 motions 4:13 motives 33:4	move 2:18 33:5 36:18 45:9 69:12 84:16 85:18 86:23 87:22 moved 54:25 moves 85:21 87:1 87:25 moving 45:8 MPAs 17:13 multi-partisan 74:20 multicultural 74:21 multiple 18:23 88:2 municipality 42:14 <hr/> N name 3:8 named 25:8 names 52:8 80:18 narrowly 41:7 Nassau 81:24 nation 12:5 Native 74:18 nature 8:24 45:22 nauseam 18:24 nays 84:9 86:6 nearly 21:21 need 7:24 8:21 10:25 20:2 27:1 57:3 60:8 75:10 75:11 78:23,25 79:10,13 83:7 negatively 65:24 neighborhood 25:2,6 neighborhoods 24:24 neither 40:19 89:5 neo-conservati... 72:14 never 2:20 3:1	8:11 53:16 new 9:14 12:9 42:13,13 74:6 newly 36:4 News 73:23 Nica 64:6 nieces 63:24 nine 82:11,12 normal 10:17 normally 37:25 north 13:9 26:14 notice 53:11 notion 37:4 38:8 41:24 70:12 novel 68:1,6 number 9:4 25:25 38:7,8 81:15 numbers 58:11 numerous 6:9,10 NW 1:24 <hr/> O oath 11:13 32:23 64:21 69:2 obligated 9:22 obligation 11:12 observed 9:11 obvious 83:12 obviously 46:9 odd 67:22 offended 30:9,10 offensive 25:9,10 26:20 31:11 33:17 office 22:19 32:12 46:25 64:2,21 72:25 82:19 official 61:8 officially 24:8 officials 11:25 82:18 okay 10:10 38:12 40:7 42:9 61:17 72:9 old 49:19 50:8	51:12 64:1 80:12,15 once 8:14 12:1 19:4 50:4 60:3 ones 9:22 10:4 13:17 Ongoing 85:12 open 13:9,15,21 18:16 19:8 opinion 5:17,21 53:17 opportunities 66:6 opportunity 10:12 13:11 22:5,6 47:10 60:15 67:13 79:19 81:3 83:15 84:15 oppose 86:16 opposed 42:1 85:23 87:3 88:3 opposite 40:7,8 opposition 14:9 37:3 39:18 40:6 42:1,7 oppress 66:11 order 2:3 9:14 72:11 82:4 87:15 original 12:21 Orlando 14:25 54:25 55:3,5 ought 17:13 outcome 73:13 outlaw 12:10 outlined 20:25 outraged 47:21 47:21,23 outranks 53:16 outside 17:9,23 23:18 52:6 60:9 79:11 overreach 21:9 override 37:15 overturned 7:14 overwhelmingly
---	--	--	--	---

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 11

25:19	85:24 86:7 87:3	perpetuate 68:23	political 16:6,7	present 3:18
P	87:11	person 10:7,8	16:10,11,25,25	presented 60:22
packing 9:12,13	path 12:1	15:15 42:15	22:5,11 23:3	president 23:17
9:15 13:15 40:4	Patrick 51:24	63:14	36:24 60:17	45:22 74:7
40:5,7,10	pawn 23:10	personalities	61:13 66:17	presumably
packs 81:17	paying 30:6	17:22,23 18:2	75:13,16	67:18
pain 51:14 74:24	peaceful 80:22	perspective 79:3	politicians 22:2	prevailing 40:24
75:1	Pell 78:23	79:10	22:10 73:16	41:15
pains 75:2,20	pen 10:9	perspectives 34:3	75:4	prevent 21:4,8
parents 14:14,15	people 2:15 6:20	Petersburg 74:1	politics 7:7 22:12	82:4
15:7	13:22 15:18,19	philosophy 67:18	22:15 31:21	previous 12:15
parliamentary	16:8 17:8,10,11	phone 17:10	poll 76:21	84:22 85:15,19
69:8	20:7,13 21:19	phonetic 63:24	poor 9:24 78:18	85:21,25 86:20
part 7:19,20 12:8	22:13,19 23:14	63:25,25	popular 50:23,24	86:24 87:1
12:20 35:20	23:16,18 25:1	pick 61:15	population 26:14	primaries 73:21
42:10 60:19	28:7,15,16 30:9	picking 58:5	27:17	primary 17:6
68:9 70:9	31:20,21 34:4	piece 84:16	position 5:25 6:1	74:7
participate 13:3	38:15,17 42:19	place 2:24 8:22	63:19	principle 40:12
22:5 60:16	43:14,14,15,19	9:12 24:9	positive 12:18	40:14,16,16
participation	44:3,15,16 45:2	plainly 7:23 8:24	post-Civil 12:16	principles 41:10
13:6	46:2,13 48:14	plaintiffs 68:23	potential 28:22	41:11 44:20
parties 22:4 89:7	49:10,12,16	plan 7:17	power 11:19 13:1	46:16
partisan 22:12	50:6 51:2,20	Planning 24:21	21:5,11 26:16	private 42:15
46:21 63:17,20	58:6,15,19 59:1	plaque 52:5	44:9 45:21,22	privileged 79:9
73:10 74:4	61:9 63:11 65:9	Plasencia 36:5	46:2,7,7 63:1	pro 5:5
75:15	65:24,24,25,25	platforms 86:11	75:9 82:8,21	probably 19:3
parts 52:18 55:6	66:1,2,4,5,6,11	playing 65:23	powerful 45:24	28:14 35:3
party 13:23	66:11,20 68:11	please 2:3,4 3:20	powers 8:19	37:20 64:18
16:19 34:2 55:9	69:4,9 70:6,20	6:23 18:7 20:14	10:21 20:25	problem 6:14
65:1 71:9,12,14	71:6 73:15	29:2,24 34:10	21:4 49:4 70:13	8:14 23:1,5
71:15 75:16	75:18,20 76:25	36:8 48:15 51:2	practice 12:10	29:20 30:18
81:18	77:1,8,16,20	53:3 54:17	24:25	46:10 77:3 78:9
pass 6:8,10,14	78:17 79:7,8,10	66:24	pray 2:11,25 3:5	procedural 9:21
7:8 16:1 25:17	83:17,17	pledge 3:20,21,24	3:8	proceed 84:6,11
37:11,15,18	people's 82:22	plenty 68:17	prayer 2:5,5	84:25 85:25
46:20 47:6,9	peoples 74:18	plus 15:4 81:22	praying 59:8	86:2,19 87:6
68:4 71:20	percent 7:3 9:7,9	point 9:19 10:19	precedence 31:20	process 9:21 10:8
passage 84:4	21:22 27:19,19	20:10 28:9 29:3	precedents 11:16	10:18 11:18
87:5	47:15,17 65:12	30:24 35:10,16	precincts 58:24	13:21 18:16
passed 6:2,3,3,25	69:24 70:5	37:16 48:5	predecessors	19:4,7 22:6,23
11:20,21 21:16	81:22	72:11,12	71:18	26:16 32:18
22:1 34:24	percentage 27:20	pointed 56:18	preface 59:18	34:22,23 35:4
39:11 60:23	69:9,14	points 8:23	prefer 41:15	35:10,11,15
62:14,16 69:21	perform 32:14	police 21:14	preference 81:25	36:16,18,19
80:14	performed 54:4	policy 28:21 33:2	premise 44:7	37:6,16 38:10
passes 48:6 84:10	performs 54:6	63:14	presence 3:13,14	38:21 39:2,4,25
	period 52:7	polite 11:23	3:15,16	54:12,12 56:11

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 12

57:11,13,13,14 57:21,22,23,25 57:25 58:3,4 60:3,17,19 67:6 67:14 68:10 71:7 79:8 83:13 83:16 84:21 processes 11:17 produce 47:13 product 36:16,25 39:11,12 42:5 47:22 professional 47:2 profitable 50:23 profound 12:17 progress 45:2 51:17 prohibited 22:2 prominent 36:24 proposal 11:15 propose 35:8,13 35:15 proposed 21:12 21:20 25:11,11 35:7 81:2,11 proposition 40:25 42:5 protect 21:20 32:10 43:13,19 44:17 48:13 75:22,25 protected 26:12 53:23 54:1 60:25 protecting 27:1 protection 12:13 12:20,23 13:5,8 13:13,18,20 21:17 60:25 protections 45:1 protest 24:18 80:22 protesting 83:6 85:5 provide 21:5 provided 13:10 89:4	providing 13:13 13:18 68:9 provision 46:19 provisions 7:10 public 8:10 18:20 47:10 83:17 publicly 18:18 pull 81:6 puller 73:6 purposes 68:22 pushing 80:25 put 7:3 21:23,24 21:24 22:18 26:21 53:21 60:1 70:17 71:9 72:13 74:8 80:19 Putnam 81:8 Q qualified 32:12 qualifying 64:3 quality 78:21 question 9:25 35:13,16 68:1,6 84:4,22 85:15 85:19,21,25 86:20,24 87:1,4 questioning 53:14 68:21 questions 18:24 35:2 47:20 53:12,24 67:23 68:7,16 81:1 84:13 quick 53:21 quite 71:25 quorum 3:16,17 R race 12:15 24:5 racial 60:16 racism 69:17 radical 81:12 raise 10:9 74:6 raised 12:4 rally 51:12	rationale 19:3 Rayner 14:4,5,7 15:23,23 17:15 17:16,18 reaction 58:13,13 Read 4:18 85:1 86:8 87:12 reading 4:16 realize 26:11 realized 55:4 really 10:21 22:15 34:4 36:16,22 41:10 41:18,21 53:21 58:22 59:3 64:10 75:10 reapportionme... 11:15 reason 34:20 61:16 62:1,21 reasons 27:4 49:3 68:14 recess 83:8,8,9 recitation 69:2 recognition 12:7 46:7 recognize 5:18 8:2 11:7 14:4 18:7 19:21 20:19 23:23 27:9 32:3 33:10 34:10 36:4,8 43:7 45:14 48:19 51:7 53:3 54:17 56:3 59:12 62:4 65:4 66:24 72:18 74:12 76:11 80:6 recognized 5:6 5:15,21 8:5 11:5 18:5,10 19:14,19,24 23:21 24:8 28:24 31:5 33:8 33:13 34:8,13 36:6,11 43:5	52:4 53:1,6 54:20 56:1,6 59:15 62:6 66:22 67:2 72:16,21 84:1 85:7,16 86:13 86:21 87:21 reconfirmed 67:11 reconsideration 4:15 reconstruction 52:7 71:5,8 77:10 reconvene 87:23 87:25 record 3:13 16:1 30:5 72:14,14 recorded 3:14,15 recording 1:10 88:5 89:3 records 30:25 recurs 84:4 87:4 red 81:12 redemption 52:8 redistricting 4:25 5:10 7:7 10:24 11:17 20:9 34:17 38:3 47:8 60:2 62:15 67:8 67:10 68:8,13 71:10,12 redlined 25:2 redlining 24:24 redraw 65:22 reference 4:3 42:2 62:13 references 4:14 referendum 22:9 reflection 32:21 reflective 74:22 reflects 15:11 refuse 65:19 regard 11:16 26:1,2,2,3,4 regardless 12:15 65:1	regret 51:1 regular 35:6 regularly 60:13 regulate 44:24 rehabilitated 44:14 reigns 71:23 reins 46:3 reject 42:5 66:17 relate 69:1 related 29:21 relating 4:14 85:3 86:10 relative 89:6 relevant 29:11 relief 6:16 remade 12:16 remain 3:20 remainder 19:16 43:1 55:23,25 72:7 remember 6:3,4 6:23 20:12 69:21,23 remind 17:21 22:17 70:14 71:1,18 reminded 71:3 77:20 removing 24:21 27:3 Rene 36:4 Renner 85:16,18 85:20 86:21,23 86:25 87:20,24 Rep 71:2 repealing 86:15 repeat 33:21 repeatedly 82:9 reported 47:12 reports 4:10 represent 20:8 23:15,15 24:3 26:6 28:1 44:4 59:22 65:25 76:7 85:6 representation
---	---	--	--	---

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 13

9:6 15:1,11 20:3 21:21 22:7 23:2 24:19 26:13 27:2 28:3 28:3 31:13,15 44:12,17,19 45:10 47:24 48:9 51:19,23 51:25 52:3,5,22 55:13 65:12,13 66:7 69:11 73:12 75:12,24 76:6 77:2 representative 2:6,7,9 3:10,22 5:3,6,8,15,16 5:18,20,22 7:25 8:1,2,4,6 9:1 11:4,6,7,8,10 13:12 14:2,3,4 14:5,7 17:15,16 17:18 18:6,7,9 18:11 19:13,15 19:18,20,21,23 19:25 20:17,18 20:19,20,22 23:20,22,23,24 24:1 27:7,8,9 27:11,13 28:17 28:18,25 29:3,5 29:6,9,25 30:3 30:4,13,22,23 31:1,5,7,8,25 32:2,3,5,7,15 33:8,9,10,12,14 34:8,9,10,12,14 35:2 36:4,7,8 36:10,12 42:24 42:25 43:4,6,7 43:9,11 45:12 45:13,14,16,18 47:5 48:17,18 48:19,21,23 51:5,6,7,9,11 53:1,2,3,5,7 54:15,16,17,19 54:21 55:16,21	55:22,25 56:2,3 56:5,7 59:10,11 59:12,14,16 62:2,3,4,5,7 64:3,6 65:2,3,4 65:5,7 66:23,24 67:1,3 72:5,6 72:10,12,15,17 72:18,20,22 74:10,11,12,13 74:15 76:9,10 76:11,13,15 77:14,15 80:4,5 80:6,7,9 82:24 83:1,4 85:8,16 85:18,20 86:12 86:14,21,23,25 87:20,24 representatives 9:5 22:7 25:20 46:18 59:20 60:18 65:15 73:15 74:22 represented 23:12 representing 5:4 republican 46:17 55:9 71:9,12,14 71:15 Republicans 17:12 47:14,15 75:7,17 77:22 require 75:8 required 8:21 requirements 48:1 requires 85:22 Reserves 59:24 reside 49:18 resident 14:23 residents 56:20 57:2 resolutions 4:16 87:17 resolved 68:3 resources 75:6 respect 29:7 30:7	33:5 49:12,13 49:14 71:25 84:25 respecting 22:15 49:15 respects 84:18 responsibility 82:20 responsible 49:25 rest 3:7 restore 46:16 restrictive 44:25 result 60:15 resulted 73:24 results 42:9 retrogression 9:2 reverting 8:20 reviewed 41:13 reviewing 69:24 Revolution 12:6 rhetoric 68:17 rid 55:13 riddled 47:18 ride 78:11 80:1 ridiculous 39:8 55:8 rigging 22:10 right 4:22 5:14 6:5 20:5 23:20 24:17,17 33:24 39:15 40:9,15 41:3 42:9 43:25 48:25 49:1 50:16,18,22,22 51:2 52:5 58:2 58:11 59:4,9 63:3,11,22 64:20,25 69:18 69:19,25 70:25 73:11 75:9 76:19 79:21 80:13 rights 6:19,20,24 7:11,12,21 8:22 11:21 12:14,22 15:7 20:11 26:1	28:6 43:17 47:25 48:13 58:18 73:5 80:20 82:2 rise 2:4 8:10 14:9 18:13 20:2 River 56:17 61:15 road 10:23 25:7 55:6,7 roads 42:4 Robinson 3:22 53:4,5,7 56:4,5 56:7 77:15 Rodriguez 4:19 role 6:23 38:9 roll 25:22 rolling 80:23 room 10:9 22:24 23:18 38:16 70:16,20 71:25 rows 35:13 70:15 71:19 81:10 rules 49:13,15,15 56:13 60:4,6,6 60:8 61:19 84:18 run 15:24 running 14:11,12 14:18 25:5 runs 17:3 <hr/> S <hr/> sacred 11:24 sacrifices 78:5 sacrificing 75:12 sat 51:13 64:20 satisfies 74:3 satisfy 50:25 Saturday 24:10 saw 51:14,17 62:17,22 73:24 saying 15:16 22:14 31:12 59:18 66:4 70:8 70:17 82:9 says 40:24 41:3	41:18,21 44:22 45:7 57:12 58:22 61:11 school 42:11 55:1 80:14 schools 24:7 scrutiny 47:7 seat 13:9 15:24 33:24 69:25 seats 2:3 47:16 60:25 69:14 78:6 79:15,16 second 9:19 12:6 18:25 34:22 68:7 70:11 Secondly 61:6 seconds 33:22 42:17 see 17:1 26:22 51:18 69:8 70:6 seeing 21:9 seen 35:3 segment 19:17 43:2,4 53:1 72:8 segregated 24:7 select 43:23 56:13 70:7 selection 70:2 Senate 4:8,19 21:13 37:8 48:4 84:4 85:2 86:2 86:9 87:5 Senate's 38:23 Senator 4:19 85:2 86:9 send 37:11,12 sends 19:1 senior 80:14 seniors 59:7,8 sent 18:23 70:18 separate 63:6 separation 8:19 10:21 20:25 21:4 49:4 70:12 series 29:10 serious 23:1 30:8
---	--	--	---	--

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 14

58:9 59:23 serve 2:15 12:2 13:22 26:5 35:21 46:13 48:15 51:3 served 34:16 59:24 service 49:16 serving 26:6 servitude 12:16 session 1:11 21:16 35:6,20 47:7 83:11 set 12:9 31:14,19 68:21,22 sets 44:22 setting 28:12 45:8 77:24 settlers 74:19 seven 82:12 shake 66:9 shameful 32:24 71:4,17 shameless 71:4 share 44:8 71:3 81:8 sharecropper 15:10 shared 76:17,21 78:10 she'll 64:17 Sheila 28:8 Shelby 44:10,11 Shortly 54:25 shouting 85:12 show 4:1 31:20 58:15 84:10 85:24,24 86:7 87:11 88:4 shows 51:20 shut 83:15,16 84:21 sic 28:9 sickens 59:3 side 5:1,4,5,17,21 16:11 55:6,7 sides 37:19 40:7	signs 37:13 silence 75:5 76:3 similar 34:18 63:19 simple 54:10 73:6 simply 11:23 25:1,9 26:13,13 26:16 single 18:20 35:6 68:17 sit 78:4 sitting 56:9 80:15 80:16 situation 26:21 six 81:7 sixth 37:23 sizable 82:17 Skidmore 32:4,5 32:7 skin 78:16 79:1 skinny 55:5 slaved 43:17 slavery 12:8,11 slaves 27:18 74:20 slippery 10:23 slope 10:23 smart 23:13 49:5 71:25 smile 66:9 social 12:17 60:9 86:10 socialism 15:17 socialist 15:18 solemnly 32:9 solid 62:15 solidify 74:6 solved 8:15 somebody 38:11 39:5 40:4 Sonai 63:25 Sorry 9:9 sort 37:4 42:3,19 sought 43:19 46:8 soul 50:25 66:14	south 31:19 52:17 southern 81:20 speak 30:25 44:9 49:10 63:13 76:6 84:16 speaker 2:2,10 3:10,18,19,25 4:4,5,6,7,9,10 4:12,13,17,18 4:22 5:9,12,13 5:14,17,20,23 6:10 7:25 8:2,4 8:7 11:4,6,8,11 14:1,2,4,5,8 17:15,18 18:7,9 18:12 19:12,13 19:16,18,21,23 20:1,16,17,19 20:20,23 23:20 23:23,24 24:2 27:7,9,11 28:17 28:19 29:2,7,10 29:14 30:2,5,12 30:24 31:3,25 32:3,5,8 33:1 33:10,12,15 34:6,7,10,12,15 36:3,8,10,13 42:24 43:1,3,7 43:9,12 45:12 45:14,16,19 48:17,19,21,24 51:5,7,9 52:25 53:3,5,8 54:15 54:17,19,22 55:21,23,24 56:3,5,8 59:10 59:12,14,17 62:2,3,5,8 65:2 65:5,8 66:21,24 67:1,4,6 72:5,7 72:9,15,18,20 72:23 74:10,12 74:13,16 76:9 76:11,13,16 80:4,6,7,10	82:24 83:4,10 84:9,10 85:6,9 85:13,18,20 86:6,7,12,15,18 86:23,25 87:10 87:11,13,14,16 87:17,19,20,22 87:24 speaking 59:1 speaks 73:13 special 35:20 47:7 85:4 87:15 specific 49:3 spectrum 64:18 spend 82:22 spent 38:5 51:25 52:13 67:8 78:1 spilled 40:21 spine 32:24 spirit 13:4,20 spit 80:16 split 58:25 spoke 44:15 63:14 77:18,20 spoken 50:20 sponsor's 81:13 sprawling 41:8 SPROWLS 2:2 3:10,19,25 4:5 4:7,10,13,18,22 5:12,14,20 83:10 84:10 85:6,13,20 86:7 86:12,18,25 87:11,14,17,20 87:24 St 56:17 61:15 74:1 stack 75:11 stacking 75:14 staff 10:1 19:2 47:3 60:6,20 61:23 69:23 staffers 18:23 stakeholders 38:25 stamp 72:25	stand 16:12,12 16:15 32:23 49:7,8,10 52:23 63:7 66:16 79:24,25,25 80:11 standard 40:20 46:22 61:11 68:9 standards 7:3 52:2 53:13,13 61:20,21,25 standing 3:20 4:11 63:3 78:12 78:13 start 14:13 36:14 59:18 state 2:15,18 4:21 7:2,18 10:15 12:3 14:21,23 15:5 16:18,23 18:22 20:4 21:8 25:7 27:15 28:1 28:4 32:11,13 32:14 33:7 34:1 39:7 41:8,14 44:23 46:15 47:13,16 49:18 49:20 50:6 52:19 59:19 64:3,6,24 65:18 66:20 69:3 71:11,23 73:10 74:8 77:23 state's 47:16 65:20 stated 57:5,6 states 20:24 27:16 32:11 48:12 49:17 78:7 82:3 status 26:12 Steny 77:17 steps 12:25 51:12 stick 39:23 stood 62:24 stop 10:25 11:1
---	--	--	--	--

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 15

17:5,5,6,7 22:10 45:8 58:5 58:21 stopped 17:19 straight 78:13 Straighten 32:24 strategically 58:21 Street 1:24 strength 82:5 strikes 30:15 67:22 stringent 41:19 41:22 stronger 63:21 struck 48:4 structured 4:24 4:25 85:14 struggle 66:1 struggles 15:3 78:5 student 37:23 style 21:9 subcommittee 4:14 53:15 57:15,17 60:2 61:22 subcommittees 4:11 39:1 subject 41:22 submit 10:8 50:2 submitted 18:18 subscribe 33:18 subscribing 33:19 subvert 46:2 subverting 82:21 suffers 25:3 suffragists 6:19 suggest 42:19 suggesting 42:1 42:12 suggestion 41:24 42:7 suggestions 11:23 suitcase 9:16	Suite 1:24 Sunshine 28:1,4 super 60:1 supervision 47:4 support 18:13 32:9 34:20 35:17 41:4 54:14 69:17 supporters 32:18 supporting 36:1 supposed 10:5 20:12 39:23 41:2 50:13 57:19,21,24 58:1 75:22 supreme 41:12 71:23 sure 23:18 30:15 54:5 56:19 64:17 71:6 72:25 79:17 surprising 65:16 surrounding 13:17 swear 32:9 swore 69:2 sworn 64:20 system 6:12 77:25 systemic 48:11 <hr/> T T 27:21 tailored 41:7 take 2:3 11:13 12:25 13:14 16:14,14 29:12 29:18 33:4 34:4 36:3 41:1,2 50:5 58:8 59:22 63:2 66:3 69:5 78:8,15 taken 29:12 58:9 60:23 83:9 takes 35:25 talk 14:14,15,16 14:17 15:17	17:25 28:21 29:19 33:2 35:4 35:14 40:23 41:17,17 55:11 55:12 60:20 65:9 66:1 67:21 68:25 69:16 80:22 84:15 talked 24:10 59:7 69:22 79:16 80:18 talking 14:13 17:22,24 40:6 50:7 60:8 tall 78:12 80:1 Tallahassee 22:10 27:24 Tampa 9:13 13:14 56:24 61:16 74:1 taught 80:22 taxation 51:24 taxes 76:21 teach 57:23 team 19:2 62:16 70:21 tell 14:11 15:22 64:13 81:3 telling 50:10 69:24 80:12 82:8 tells 58:20 tend 79:4 terms 81:16 terrible 24:9 test 64:17 tested 64:16 testimony 8:10 67:25 tests 76:22 text 17:10 41:5 41:16 thank 2:9,12,13 2:16 3:10 5:8 5:16,22 7:24 8:1,6 11:3,10 14:1,3,7 17:1	17:11 18:6,11 19:12,15,18,20 19:25 20:16,18 20:22 23:22 24:1 27:8,13 28:25 29:6 30:4 30:21,23 31:3,7 31:8,9,18,18,24 31:25 32:2,7 33:9,14 34:6,7 34:9,14 36:7,12 36:12,13,14 42:23,25 43:6 43:11 45:13,18 48:16,18,23 51:3,6 53:2,7 54:16,21 55:20 55:22 56:2,7 59:11,16 62:7 65:7 66:23 67:3 67:6 72:6,9,17 72:22,24 74:11 74:15 76:10,15 80:2,5,9,9 85:8 86:14 thanks 50:12 thing 25:9 26:17 35:18 36:2 40:8 40:18 42:3,6,9 42:19 50:21 55:13 59:5 63:3 70:11 75:24 things 15:16 17:8 17:16 19:10 34:19 35:22 37:2 38:21 41:2 46:23,24 60:21 60:22 68:25 78:5 think 6:13,18 7:11 8:20 18:4 18:25 23:3 25:23 27:5 29:7 29:9 33:16 36:25 42:22 44:17 68:2 69:10 70:4,24	72:1 73:1 thinking 63:17 third 4:16 10:19 Thompson 76:12 76:13,15 89:23 thorough 19:8 thought 8:12 10:10 39:15,17 39:17 55:7 67:11 thoughts 62:10 62:13 threatened 15:19 15:19 three 8:23 21:1 45:6 49:1 63:24 68:25 77:8 78:6 82:13 thug 80:25 tide 80:24 tie 12:2 29:16 30:18 Tier 46:21 52:14 52:14,18 53:13 53:13,16,16,20 53:20,23 54:1,8 54:9 60:10,11 60:12,18,25 61:7,7,10,11 67:9,9 79:15 81:19,21 time 10:16 13:1 16:15,16,17 17:1,2,19 18:16 19:16 24:6 25:3 28:23 34:7 38:6 39:17 43:1,3,15 47:20 49:7 50:16 54:24 55:23,25 64:13 66:21 67:23 72:7,10,25 73:13 74:22 77:21 82:25 83:5,24 times 6:9,10 9:24 36:23
---	---	---	---	--

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 16

tired 10:16 17:12 17:12,12,13 22:14 25:21 26:20	Trump 47:17 74:7	34:2 52:13 68:13 82:2	81:17	20:14,14 21:13
today 2:5 8:12 11:15 14:1 17:22 18:14 20:2,4 22:25 25:24 29:12,18 30:21 35:17,25 45:6,6 50:10 51:17 53:9 56:15 59:6 63:5 63:10 65:10,24 66:15 67:17 68:15,18 71:20 73:1 78:4,7,12 78:13 80:23 81:4 82:14 83:13,19 85:10	trust 53:10 72:2 trusted 23:14 truth 21:18 44:9 49:25 try 7:13 42:3 45:24 50:25 84:20 trying 18:3 31:11 39:16 40:22 58:21,23 62:16 63:16 66:2,11 Tuck 18:8,9,11 35:2 tune 83:1 turn 26:10,18 51:18 68:19 turned 67:12 TV 73:23 Twitter 70:19 two 23:5 24:12 34:19 38:8 39:10 40:2 45:7 56:9 59:23 74:1 78:8 82:14 84:12,12,17,23	unconstitution... 8:18 68:19 undermined 13:5 underpinning 12:24 understand 7:6 15:6 19:2 26:24 28:14 29:14 30:12 42:20 52:10 63:5 64:15 78:18,19 78:21,23,25 79:8 81:15 understanding 57:14 83:22 understood 45:21 underwent 12:5 unfortunately 11:14 33:19 Union 81:8 United 20:24 27:16 32:11 48:12 49:17 78:7 unjust 6:18,22 46:5 unknowingly 52:12 unlock 3:12 84:5 86:1 87:5 unprecedented 10:18 unprincipled 46:1 unresolved 68:2 uphold 11:12 25:20 32:23 66:18 urge 19:11 27:4 31:21 35:17 36:1 52:23 54:13 use 26:9 28:23 63:1 69:20	usurp 46:2 utilize 61:13 <hr/> V v 1:4 Val 28:8 Valdez 11:7,8,10 value 13:6 values 44:8 variety 42:21 various 70:21 vast 53:22 70:14 vein 26:8 veins 16:3,4 venue 61:3 vested 14:20,20 14:22,23 15:2,6 15:8,11,13 veto 6:5 10:9,13 34:25 50:4 67:24 70:18 vetoed 6:5 37:14 50:4 52:3 vetoes 17:7 37:14 vice 18:14 67:7 vicious 46:1 violate 70:12 violated 21:16 violates 52:15,23 violating 8:19 violation 9:2 81:18,20 Violence 76:25 vision 34:2 visit 77:14 visitors 2:4 3:20 vital 20:3,5 voice 26:25 39:2 51:22 52:20,21 55:17 58:7 59:1 voices 23:18 26:15 39:1 74:23 75:5 76:4 79:12 vote 7:24 11:2,3 15:8 19:11	24:17 25:24 27:6 28:11,22 29:11,16,18,22 30:19 31:13,22 32:25 33:4 35:25 42:23 43:25 45:11 47:17 48:15 50:2,9 52:24 54:24 55:18 58:7,11,19 66:20 72:3 74:4 77:2 84:6,8,22 85:23 86:2,5 87:6,9 voted 7:3 20:7 22:19,21 38:15 38:16,18,19 70:15,22 75:7 84:19 86:3,3,16 87:7,8 voter 59:3 voters 7:3 8:25 9:17,20 11:19 11:21 12:2 13:11,13,16,18 20:11 22:4 25:14,20 26:4,5 45:9 46:17 48:7 48:9 50:10 59:21 71:13 73:16 74:8 75:6 76:24 81:22 votes 26:25 45:9 58:16,20,23 69:13 voting 3:17 6:24 7:11,12,21 8:22 11:20 12:14 13:25 15:7 26:1 28:6,13 47:25 48:13 52:14 58:14 62:1,13 73:5 80:13,20 82:2,5,8 VRA 38:4 40:12
told 6:9 49:25 57:18 58:6 60:7 60:19,21 61:6 61:25 64:8 72:1 77:24	type 13:2 21:9 58:12 types 11:19 41:2 <hr/> U U.S 11:20 12:9 21:17 52:1 69:4 69:5 71:22 73:17 ultimately 34:23 unacceptable 26:19 unadministrable 40:18 unanswered 68:7 unchecked 21:5 21:10 46:7 unconstitutional 8:24 11:2 25:25 26:19 32:22,22			
topic 33:7 toss 34:5 total 5:2 totally 66:19 touched 10:20 train 82:15 trajectory 33:25 transcript 89:3 TRANSCRIPT... 1:10 TRANSCRIPT... 89:1 transparency 35:1 transparent 13:21 14:10 18:16 19:8 tried 42:15 63:2 trigger 73:6 true 53:17,24 89:2				

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 17

W	7:16 8:18 20:4 20:12 21:9 24:15 25:24 26:20,24 35:14 35:25 39:20,20 39:23 41:2 50:13 56:15 58:1 61:15 64:11,12 66:2 68:14 70:8,8,13 82:8 we've 24:16,17 24:18 35:1,10 35:23 36:16,20 36:25 37:1 38:22,23 42:4 47:19 67:19 week 67:25 weeks 54:3 60:13 Welcome 36:5 went 22:22 31:12 45:6 55:5 64:7 77:13 weren't 43:16,16 43:18 white 27:20 whites 77:22 78:1 whittle 58:18 Willhite 5:3,15 5:16 7:25 8:1 11:4,6 14:2,3 19:19,20 20:17 20:18 23:21,22 27:7,8 32:1,2 33:8,9 43:4,6 45:12,13 48:17 48:18 51:5,6 55:25 56:2 59:10,11 62:2,3 65:2,3 72:15,17 74:10,11 76:9 76:10 80:4,5 willing 74:8 79:11 willingness 48:1 Wilson 77:20 wisdom 43:18	woman 14:21 51:14,15,22 52:24 woman's 52:20 52:21 won 6:25 wonder 56:10 Woodson 48:20 48:21,23 77:15 word 26:9 40:4 72:14 words 30:10 32:17 50:21 62:9 66:12 73:14 76:17 78:10 work 3:3 20:6 23:7 36:15 37:24 38:5 39:4 46:11 47:22 56:13 65:18 76:19 worked 37:6,24 37:24,25 70:20 77:6,7,22 working 17:13 38:1,7 58:19 62:11 78:1 works 37:25 69:15 world 2:19,24 51:17 worried 33:25 45:21 worrying 17:5,6 17:6,7 worthy 43:16,17 43:18 wouldn't 45:3 73:3 Wow 80:10 wrong 9:18 19:7 26:22 76:20,20 76:22,23,24,25 77:3,4 78:8 wrote 48:5	X Y year 52:1,13 73:25 77:13 86:17 year's 21:13,14 years 7:1 15:4 28:2,13 31:12 31:13 35:23 42:8 44:12 71:17 77:11 80:14 82:12 yeas 84:9 86:6 87:10 Yep 3:19 yesterday 5:11 34:18 35:4 36:22 49:22 53:11,19,22 54:10 60:22 67:16,22 81:2 82:13 85:11 yield 19:16 43:1 55:23 72:7 yielded 43:3 55:24 72:10 83:23 York 74:6 Z zero 19:3 68:16 ZIP 76:4 Zoe 63:24 0 1 1 46:22 52:14,18 53:13,16,20,23 54:1,8 60:10,12 60:18,25 61:7 61:11 63:25 67:9 79:15 81:12,19,21 10 12:21 35:23,24 60:24 81:12	10:00 1:13 100 7:1 42:8 1000 27:18 101 81:1 106 3:17 11 81:11,12 112 31:13 115 44:12 119 28:2 31:12 12 13:15 120 44:12 13 56:22 63:24 13-year 49:19 50:8 13th 12:10 14 9:15 56:22 14th 7:2,12 9:3 12:12,19 26:3 41:3,5,5 43:13 43:20,21 44:22 71:22 15 5:1 9:15 80:14 81:23 150 57:8,9 15th 12:14 43:24 1730 1:24 1765 51:24 1796 45:23 18 57:8 1845 27:16 1850 27:16 1871 28:1 1875 71:8 1877 45:5 1880 71:10 1890 71:12 1900 71:14 1905 27:24 1910 71:15 1920 71:15 1930 25:3 71:15 1940 71:16 1950 71:16 1960 71:16 1965 6:25 73:3 80:13,20 82:2 1970 71:16
----------	---	--	--	--

4/21/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 18

1980 71:16	4:22-cv-109 1:4			
1990 71:17	46 27:19			
1992 45:5 77:11	48 47:6			
1993 28:2				
	5			
2	5 22:2 56:16			
2 9:8 52:14 53:13	60:24			
53:16,20 54:9	50 9:7,8 21:21			
57:9 60:11 61:7	42:8 65:12			
61:11 67:9	50/50 73:10			
2-C 4:20 84:5	51 47:17			
20 28:12 47:14	54 27:19			
75:14				
200 15:4	6			
2000 54:24	6 22:2			
20036 1:24	6-C 86:10 87:5			
2010 11:22 22:1	63 7:3			
25:19 68:13	65 70:5			
79:17	68 84:9			
2015 82:10,12	6th 73:24			
2016 68:12				
2018 24:7	7			
202 1:25	7 63:25			
2020 63:2	7-year 64:1			
2022 1:12 2:1	70 47:15			
65:14 73:3	72 47:6			
80:23 82:14	72,000 83:2			
21 1:12 2:1	75 5:1			
22 23:16 73:10	78 86:6 87:10			
232-0646 1:25				
26 53:25 54:1	8			
27th 27:15	8 47:14 73:10			
	75:14			
	8060 35:5			
3	812 1:24			
3 81:5,7 82:1	87,000 27:17			
30 77:11 79:16,20				
79:21	9			
31 81:22	90 21:14 48:5			
35 42:17 69:24				
70:1				
38 84:9 86:6				
87:10				
39,000 27:18				
3rd 27:16				
4				
4 9:8 26:12 56:16				
4-C 85:3 86:2				