

4/20/2022

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 - THE FLORIDA CHANNEL
APRIL 20, 2022
10:00 A.M.

DIGITAL EVIDENCE GROUP
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4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 2

1 APRIL 20, 2022

2 MR. SPEAKER: Members of 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 given by
6 Representative Payne.

7 Representative Payne, you may approach the
8 wall.

9 REPRESENTATIVE PAYNE: Thank you, Speaker.
10 Members, please join me in prayer.

11 Father, today we come before you this
12 morning anticipating for what you have in store for
13 us today. Let us not forget to praise, honor, and
14 worship you. We are expecting to hear your voice,
15 and we will be willing to be used by you in order to
16 fulfill our faithful duties. Father, we ask your
17 blessing on all the members of the Legislature, our
18 House and Senate colleagues, our speaker, our senate
19 president, upon our governor, cabinet members and
20 their families.

21 Lord, we are grateful to be living in a
22 democracy, where so many play a part of making sure
23 the needs of Floridians are met. As we work
24 together to find solutions to difficult problems, we
25 ask that you guide our words so that we speak with

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 3

1 respect and humility to one another.

2 And, Father, finally, we ask a special
3 blessing and prayer for those suffering in the war-
4 torn regions of the Ukraine. Help there be an end
5 to the suffering and violence soon. Protect those
6 in harm's way. All these things we ask in your holy
7 name. Amen.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Amen. Thank you,
9 Representative Payne.

10 The clerk will unlock the machine, and
11 members will record their presence.

12 Have all members recorded their presence?
13 All members recorded their presence.

14 Clerk will lock the machine after presence
15 of a quorum.

16 THE CLERK: One hundred and six members
17 voting in quorum as present, Mr. Speaker

18 MR. SPEAKER: Members and visitors in the
19 gallery, please remain standing for the pledge. The
20 pledge this morning will be embedded by
21 Representative Tant from her desk.

22 REPRESENTATIVE TANT: I pledge allegiance
23 to the flag of the United States of America and to
24 the Republic for which it stands, one nation under
25 God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 4

1 MR. SPEAKER: Are there corrections to the
2 journal?

3 Hearing none. Show the journal approved.
4 Are there matters on induction in reference?

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

6 MR. SPEAKER: Are there communications?

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

8 MR. SPEAKER: Are there messages from the
9 Senate?

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

11 MR. SPEAKER: Are there reports of the
12 standing committees and subcommittees.

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

14 MR. SPEAKER: Read the report.

15 THE CLERK: The Honorable Chris Sprowls,
16 speaker, House of Representative. Dear Mr. Speaker,
17 your rules committee herewith submits a special
18 order for Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

19 Reading of the report, Mr. Speaker.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Renner, you're
21 recognized in the report?

22 REPRESENTATIVE RENNER: Mr. Speaker, the
23 report sets the special order calendar and
24 allocation of times for questions and debate
25 contained in the letter, and I move the adoption of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 5

1 the special order report for today, April 20, 2022.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Are there questions? Are
3 there questions? Is there a debate? All in favor
4 of adoption of the special order calendar, say yea.

5 (Multiple yays)

6 MR. SPEAKER: All opposed, no.

7 (Multiple nos)

8 MR. SPEAKER: Show the special order
9 calendar as adopted. Are there motions relating to
10 committee and subcommittee references?

11 Representative Geller, you're recognized.

12 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker. I rise to make a motion.

14 MR. SPEAKER: You're recognized.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: I rise pursuant to
16 -- thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to -- pursuant to
17 House Rule 11.12 and now move to refer House Bill
18 1C, establishing the congressional districts to the
19 state to the full redistricting committee and to the
20 appropriations committee. And with your permission,
21 Mr. Speaker, at the time, I'd like to debate the
22 motion.

23 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Members,
24 Representative Geller has moved to move the
25 redistricting bill, which is 1C, to the larger

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 6

1 redistricting committee. This is a debatable
2 motion. It will pass or not pass by a majority
3 vote.

4 It is debatable. However, it is only
5 debatable as -- I think as you know, Representative
6 Geller, as to the propriety of the reference. That
7 is the motion.

8 Representative Geller, you're recognized to
9 debate.

10 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker. As to the propriety of the reference
12 to both full redistricting and to appropriations,
13 the appropriations is because there's a million-
14 dollar appropriation included in this bill and that
15 should be heard by the appropriations committee.
16 House Bill 1C is a significant bill and it will
17 alter the electoral landscape of this state for up
18 to 10 years for 22 million people. It's 140 pages,
19 13 sections, in addition to that, a million-dollar
20 appropriation.

21 It was heard yesterday in the congressional
22 redistricting subcommittee, where speakers from
23 across the state came to testify on its impact. At
24 the end, because of time constraints, some of those
25 members of the public were given very short periods

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 7

1 of time, I believe, 60 seconds, and there was just
2 the one hearing. And I understand that in one
3 hearing, there is a limit, but the bill should be
4 treated as every other bill that we've seen.

5 I don't believe there is a rule. It's up
6 to the discretion of the House, but I can't recall a
7 bill that's gone directly from subcommittee to rules
8 and special order without going through a full
9 committee. That's why we have committees. That's
10 the purpose of it. And the principle -- the
11 jurisdiction here is the full redistricting
12 committee. Not referring it and having it heard
13 there is a departure from our customs and practice.

14 There is time it could have been done. It
15 could still be done. And some of us on full
16 redistricting have spent many months preparing for
17 this exact thing, and we have questions. We studied
18 this process and debate that should be heard. An
19 assumption of a rule that we adopted this year on
20 time management, were for the first time, beginning
21 in this -- well, I would say this term last year --

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller, we're
23 getting outside the propriety of the reference.
24 Just keep your debate to the propriety of the
25 reference.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 8

1 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.
2 The assumption we make about full committee is that
3 after subcommittee, full committees will completely
4 vet issues, and that's why limiting time is now a
5 rule that we have. If this is supposed to be an
6 open and transparent, publicly accessible practice,
7 we need to have it heard in accordance with what we
8 have always done heretofore, and it belongs in those
9 full committees.

10 And, therefore, I asked the House,
11 consistent with our practice, procedure, and
12 tradition, to refer this bill to the full
13 redistricting committee and to the appropriations
14 committee. I believe we could get that squeezed in,
15 if that was the choice that the House makes. And I,
16 therefore, ask for your favorable support in this
17 motion.

18 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Members,
19 Representative Geller having closed on his motion
20 under Rule 11.12, members, now we will vote as a
21 majority vote whether or not to send those bills --

22 Representative Joseph, we just did -- he
23 just closed on his motion.

24 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: (Indiscernible)

25 MR. SPEAKER: On the propriety of the

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 9

1 reference. I went to Representative Geller because
2 I didn't see any other microphones, so he just
3 closed on his motion.

4 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: (Indiscernible)

5 Representative Joseph, would you like to be
6 recognized and debate?

7 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: I would.

8 MR. SPEAKER: You're recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank
10 you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for interjecting.
11 We just didn't have the opportunity to debate. I
12 was waiting for that time. This is a highly unusual
13 process that we're in right now. The Legislature
14 has a constitutional duty to draw our redistricting
15 maps.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, you
17 have to keep your debate to the propriety of the
18 reference.

19 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: I understand.

20 MR. SPEAKER: You're recognized.

21 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker. I understand. I'm just trying to
23 explain that. So as far as making sure that we re-
24 ference it, part of the purpose is so that we can
25 fully do our jobs. That's one. Because as a member

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 10

1 of the sub-committee that addressed these
2 congressional redistricting maps, we were cut off in
3 questions. Our debate was limited. The comments
4 from the public was limited. That does not comport
5 to procedural nor substantive due process, which is
6 what this whole thing is supposed to be about. We
7 are not giving the public a reasonable opportunity
8 to participate. We're not giving people --

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, would
10 you like to debate on the propriety of the
11 reference? That is not what you're doing. If you
12 would like to confine your debate to the propriety
13 of the reference, I'll recognize you. You're
14 recognized.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker. So for all of those reasons, I believe
17 that it should be re-referenced to at least the
18 first committee. But because there is also a \$1
19 million appropriation that attaches to it, it should
20 also, as is the practice, be assigned to an
21 appropriations committee.

22 When we look at the information that was
23 provided to us, as far as the impact, we don't have
24 that. So for those reasons, I rise in support of
25 the motion and ask that members would consider

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 11

1 voting up, if not for us, then for the people of
2 Florida to allow the public to have a reasonable
3 opportunity to participate and to have our members
4 have an opportunity to fully execute our duties and
5 to fully vet what we're about to vote on. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Is there additional debate?
8 Is there additional debate?

9 Seeing none, members will now proceed to
10 vote, please.

11 Representative Robinson, you're recognized
12 in debate on the propriety of the reference.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ROBINSON: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker. And I just wanted to be on record
15 saying I truly agree that we should, I mean, just
16 follow the process. We come up here, and we have
17 all these different pieces of legislations that we
18 file and then -- now, I'm a freshman member, but it
19 appears that we pick and choose which one of the
20 pieces of legislation is going to actually follow
21 the full process.

22 I believe that this is something that's
23 hugely -- that's going to affect all Floridians, and
24 it should go through appropriations. Besides, they
25 have a million dollars on it. And yes, it should go

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 12

1 to the full redistricting committee. Everyone
2 should be able to voice their opinion and really
3 truly vet this particular piece of legislation. So
4 I hope that all of my colleagues truly would. Let's
5 just follow the process. It's the process we do for
6 everything else. Let's not change on this
7 particular piece of legislation.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Any additional debate,
9 members? Any additional debate?

10 Seeing none, all in favor of adoption of
11 Representative Geller's motion say yea.

12 (Multiple yeas)

13 MR. SPEAKER: All opposed, no.

14 (Multiple nos)

15 MR. SPEAKER: Show the motion fails.

16 Are there matters on reconsideration?

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

18 MR. SPEAKER: Are there bills on joint
19 resolutions on third reading?

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

21 MR. SPEAKER: Are there bills on the
22 special order calendar?

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

24 MR. SPEAKER: Read the first bill.

25 THE CLERK: By Representative Leek, House

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 13

1 Bill 1C, a bill to be entitled, an act establishing
2 the congressional districts of the state.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Before we get there,
4 Representative Leek, I forgot to mention today is
5 Representative Fine's birthday.

6 Happy birthday, Representative Fine.

7 I'd ask everybody to be nice to
8 Representative Fine today, but let's be honest,
9 that's not going to happen.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek, you're
11 recognized.

12 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Members, today we will be presenting Map
15 P000C0109. This is the map reflected in the data
16 packet in front of you as well as being posted on
17 the Florida redistricting.gov website. This
18 congressional map is an improvement upon the
19 benchmark map with regard to Tier 2 metrics.

20 This map improves county splits by keeping
21 50 counties whole as opposed to the 49 from last
22 decade. It allows 396 cities to remain whole as
23 opposed to 373 in the benchmark map, and it improves
24 upon all three mathematical measures of compactness
25 with respective scores of 0.47 for REOC, 0.81 for

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 14

1 the convex hull, and 0.43 for Polsby-Popper.

2 This map also satisfies the appropriate
3 population deviation at plus or minus a single
4 person. As you may be aware, there are 10 districts
5 in this map that are the exact copies of districts
6 that the Legislature passed during regular session.
7 Those are Congressional Districts 1, 2, 20, 21, 22,
8 23, 24, 25, 27, and 28. You can see those here on
9 the screen. The remaining 18 districts have been
10 newly proposed by the Governor's office and consist
11 of the Congressional Districts 3 through 19 and 26
12 as now seen on the screen.

13 Given that these 18 districts are the new
14 content for this body to review, I would like to
15 focus the majority of my presentation today on those
16 districts. I am more than happy to take questions
17 on the Legislature's districts as well, but I don't
18 want to belabor the explanation of districts that
19 we've already extensively reviewed.

20 Districts 4 and 5. Let's begin in
21 Northeast Florida with Districts 4 and 5. As
22 described yesterday in committee by the Governor's
23 map drawer, Plan P000C0109 creates two new districts
24 in Northeast Florida, consistent with maps
25 previously proposed by the Governor's office. These

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 15

1 two districts are race neutral and overall more
2 compact than the configuration of Districts 4 or 5
3 that were previously passed by the Legislature.

4 The boundary lines between the two
5 districts are mostly the St. Johns River. As you
6 know, Jacksonville is the one city in the state that
7 is larger than a congressional district. It has
8 over 900,000 people and must be split. And the
9 river, which nearly equally divides the city, stands
10 out as a recognizable boundary for these two
11 districts. The southern boundaries of Districts 4
12 and 5 are still exactly as the Legislature proposed
13 them, previously using the Clay Putnam County lines,
14 and where the split occurs within St. John's County
15 is the same.

16 District 6 through 16 and 18. The next
17 several slides visualized changes the central
18 Florida region and on the west coast from Citrus
19 County down to Lake County. As described yesterday
20 in committee by the Governor's map drawer, looking
21 holistically at the region in keeping Brevard,
22 Osceola, and Polk Counties all whole, as was the
23 case of the legislatively passed maps, in effect
24 creates a wall across three quarters in the state.
25 Breaking that wall in Polk County essentially gives

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 16

1 more flexibility and considering the different
2 options for creating more compact districts and more
3 adherence to political and geographical boundary
4 lines in those northwestern Gulf counties of the
5 state. So in effect, splitting Polk County allowed
6 for additional considerations. For example, one
7 Tier 2 improvement that was made by splitting Polk
8 County was being able to keep Citrus and Sarasota
9 Counties whole.

10 District 9 was improved by smoothing its
11 visual and mathematical compactness, including
12 picking up portions of Poinciana, and Polk, and
13 Osceola counties, including the lake that
14 essentially represents that piece of Polk County
15 that, otherwise, sticks into Osceola County.
16 District 9 also extends out slightly at the
17 northwest Osceola border utilizing Highway 27 Ronald
18 Reagan Parkway. This helps with statistical and
19 visual compactness of several districts in the
20 region.

21 These changes also helped create a visually
22 more compact District 11 by essentially turning the
23 wheel of the population. District 11 shifts from
24 the angle shape present in the previous legislative
25 version to a more circular shape, and in

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 17

1 combination, by reshaping Districts 7, 10, 11, and
2 12 allowed for a one less county split in Marion
3 County from three splits down to two splits within
4 the county.

5 District 6 through 11. The next slide
6 shows changes in district 6 through 11 found in the
7 Greater Orlando region. As described yesterday in
8 committee by the Governor's map drawer, these
9 changes return to House concepts found in Plan 8011
10 and also follow more closely with Senate concepts in
11 regards to CD 8.

12 For CD 8, instead of taking the district
13 into southern Volusia County to get the last bit of
14 population, District 8 instead goes into Eastern
15 County. This means this proposed plan only splits
16 Volusia County twice rather than three times. This
17 brings the configuration of District 7 down to the
18 Volusia Brevard County line without increasing the
19 number of districts in Orange County.

20 Essentially, there was a turning of the
21 population wheel in order to not have any negative
22 impact around Orange County while also decreasing
23 the amount of splits in Volusia County.

24 District 10 in this plan is similar to Plan
25 8011 that passed the Congressional redistricting

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 18

1 subcommittee and is very compact, keeping several
2 cities whole within either Districts 9, 10, or 11.
3 The City of Maitland is kept whole in District 10,
4 and the cities of Apopka and Winter Garden are kept
5 whole in District 11.

6 The boundaries between these districts are
7 very much defined by keeping the aforementioned
8 cities whole, utilizing county boundaries. For
9 example, District 10 uses a seminal Orange County
10 line or utilizes major well-recognized roadways and
11 waterways except where necessary to get equal
12 population. The western boundary of District 10
13 between Districts 10 and 11 is largely the Apopka
14 Vineland Road.

15 The borders between District 6 and 11 in
16 the Lake County area is mostly defined by city
17 boundaries and waterways with Lady Lake, Eustis,
18 Mount Dora entirely in District 6, and Fruitland
19 Park, Leesburg, and Tavares entirely in District 11.

20 Moving now over to the west coasts in
21 Districts 11 through 17. As described yesterday in
22 committee by the Governor's map drawer,
23 Congressional District 12 now includes all of Citrus
24 and Hernando Counties, which helps provide a much
25 more squared up shape, improving visual compactness.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 19

1 District 12 is actually still the majority
2 of Pasco County, yielding about 141,000 Pasco County
3 residents in District 15. The boundaries between
4 Districts 12 and 15 are almost entirely defined by
5 state roads and municipal boundary lines.
6 Zephyrhills is entirely included in District 15 and
7 St. Leo, San Antonio, and Dade City are entirely
8 within District 12.

9 District 13 is wholly within Pinellas
10 County. Starting in the western part of the county
11 and working east, Districts 13 and 14 largely
12 utilize US 19 as a divider within Pinellas County
13 except where equal population is achieved in the
14 unincorporated Feather Sound area just north of St.
15 Pete.

16 District 14 starts eastward and moves
17 northward in Tampa Bay. The boundaries of the
18 district are defined by clear recognizable
19 boundaries like major roadways while trying to
20 maintain something of a square or rectangular shape
21 for District 13 to keep it visually and
22 mathematically compact. The linkage of districts in
23 this area are predominantly along roadways including
24 in the northern portion of Districts 14 and 15.

25 Similarly, District 12 and Pasco County

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 20

1 uses a large portion of the Suncoast Parkway squared
2 off at a county road that essentially takes the
3 Suncoast Parkway south before heading east over to
4 the municipality of Temple Terrace. Temple Terrace
5 is kept whole within District 15.

6 Districts 16 and 17 keep both Manatee and
7 Sarasota County's whole. District 16 uses State
8 Road 62 as a clear divider. That is also utilized
9 in Polk County where Districts 15 and 18 come
10 together. This also allows Plant City to be kept
11 whole in District 15. And despite going into three
12 counties, approximately two-thirds of district 15 is
13 populated by Hillsborough County residents.

14 Largely, due to the Tier 2 decision of
15 keeping Sarasota County whole and creating District
16 17 with all of Sarasota, all of Charlotte and
17 unincorporated portions of Lake Counties, the newly
18 composed District 17 required moving the entirety of
19 Hendry County in District 18 and then finding
20 approximately 4,500 residents elsewhere. This plan
21 equalizes the population of District 18 and Collier
22 County, which was already split once.

23 District 18 extends along State Road 82
24 down State Road 29 North, and then east along County
25 Road 46 to get those additional 3500 residents of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 21

1 District 18 to balance out the population.

2 District 26 had to further extend the
3 western boundaries closer towards unincorporated
4 East Naples, utilizing roadways and waterways as
5 boundaries between 26 and 19 in order to balance the
6 population between all of these cities. Even though
7 Polk County is now split in this map, District 18 --
8 it's actually, about two-thirds of the residents are
9 from Polk and one-third from six rural counties.

10 Additionally, this bill appropriates \$1
11 million to the Department of State for expenses
12 related to litigation of the congressional map.
13 This bill also includes language relating to state
14 courts. It requires any state court challenge to
15 the congressional map to be filed in Leon County.
16 It requires all challenges based on state law to be
17 filed in state court rather than in federal court.

18 Under the 11th Amendment to the United
19 States Constitution, the State is immune from suit
20 and federal court on state law grounds. This
21 provision reaffirms the State's immunity under the
22 11th Amendment and makes clear that the State does
23 not waive that immunity. This provision also
24 permits any state court challenge to raise both
25 state law claims and to the extent the Circuit Court

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 22

1 has jurisdiction federal law claims. And finally,
2 it makes it explicit that nothing in the bill
3 precludes federal courts from deciding challenges
4 based on federal law.

5 Mr. Speaker, that is the bill.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Members, we are now in
7 questions on the bill. Questions on the bill.

8 Representative Willhite, you're recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
10 Mr. Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
11 Geller?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller? You're
13 recognized.

14 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker, and thank you for recognizing the
16 motion before. I appreciate that.

17 Chair Leek, how are you this morning? I
18 have a number of questions, Chair. Let me ask you.
19 I understand this is not really necessarily for you
20 to answer, but do you know why we're not going
21 through the full committee?

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller, I
23 think you answered your own question by saying it's
24 probably not appropriate to ask. You're recognized.

25 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 23

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Chair, who drew this map?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Chairman Leek, you're
4 recognized.

5 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: The Governor's
6 office.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller, you're
8 recognized.

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

11 And who specifically?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Yesterday, in
14 committee, Mr. Alex Kelly said that he drew the map.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

16 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Do you know with
17 whom Mr. Kelly consulted in the drawing of the map?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you.

20 Yesterday, Mr. Kelly said that he was the
21 only one who drew this map. I can't tell you who,
22 you know -- and let's talk about this generally.
23 You know, just like we couldn't speak to the Senate
24 process, I can't speak to the Governor's entire
25 process. I can only tell you what Mr. Kelly said.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 24

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

2 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,

3 Mr. Speaker.

4 Did he acknowledge having consulted with
5 some out-of-state consultants who worked with other
6 states in map drawing?

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

8 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

9 Mr. Speaker. Yes.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

11 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Did he identify who
12 those people were?

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Yes.

15 MR. SPEAKER: I think we know the next
16 question. Representative Geller.

17 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,

18 Mr. Speaker. And I think I forgot my "Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker" on the previous questions. So thank
20 you for both.

21 And who did he identify those people as
22 being by name, sir?

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

24 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

25 Mr. Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 25

1 I believe his name was Adam Foltz, who he
2 also explained had only ever drawn for state
3 governments.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Do we have any
6 information that would lead us to know one way or
7 another whether or not, in that consultation or in
8 that drawing, our constitutional standards that the
9 map could not be drawn for the purposes of
10 protecting any incumbent or advancing the interests
11 of any political party were in fact observed?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 I'll do the best I can with the question.
16 I'm not sure I entirely understand. The evidence
17 that you have is before you in this map and in the
18 testimony that Mr. Kelly gave in committee.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

20 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 Well, of course, Chair Leek, I actually
23 don't have before me the testimony from the
24 subcommittee. I'm not a member. That's why I'm
25 asking you whether or not there was something

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 26

1 presented, since it was your bill, and you were
2 present.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: This was presented.
5 The testimony was presented. There is no testimony
6 that would make me conclude that what you're
7 suggesting happened.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

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

11 Looking at the map itself, what infirmity
12 in previous maps past led us to decide that changes
13 were necessary in Tampa Bay?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 I don't believe that's in the map before
18 you. So what we're going through today is the map
19 that's before you, not prior maps.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

21 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 But my question is: we had a map that we
24 deemed constitutional -- well, I did not, but the
25 Chamber apparently deemed it constitutional. As to

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 27

1 the Tampa Bay area, what required a change there?

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

3 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 I don't know that anything required a
6 change. And as we have said many, many times
7 before, that there are innumerable number of maps
8 that can be illegally compliant. So this map is
9 simply different than the map that you saw before.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

11 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,

12 Mr. Speaker.

13 Is there a theory at play here that since
14 two is twice the number of one, that Tier 2
15 standards have become twice as important as Tier 1
16 standards?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

18 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

19 Mr. Speaker.

20 No.

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Why then do we
23 constantly hear about Tier 2 standards as if
24 compactness or political boundaries mattered most
25 when we're flagrantly ignoring the requirement of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 28

1 protecting minority districts and going against
2 explicit language?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller --
4 Representative Geller, we're getting to your --
5 sounds like your debate for tomorrow. Do you have a
6 specific question about as it relates to aspects of
7 this map? You're recognized.

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

10 Why are we not emphasizing the Tier 1
11 standards and seem to be ignoring them in favour of
12 Tier 2 standards?

13 MR. SPEAKER: I think it's going to be
14 difficult for Chairman Leek to answer that question,
15 Representative Geller. Can you point to a specific
16 part of the map that you're referencing?

17 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: I'm done,
18 Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Additional questions?
20 Representative Willhite.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
23 Driskell?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Driskell,
25 you're recognized.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 29

1 REPRESENTATIVE DRISKELL: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 Good morning, Chair Leek. I had some
4 questions about Tampa Bay. So I was curious we
5 talked about it a little bit in committee yesterday,
6 but weren't really able to get into the details with
7 the time limits. But it looks like what we have in
8 this map actually follows a similar strategy that
9 was used about a decade ago that was -- resulted in
10 the maps being struck down in Tampa Bay, that the
11 Court determined it was a partisan gerrymander.
12 And I'm just looking at CD 14, and it looks like
13 there are so many democrats packed in there that it
14 could lead to the same partisan gerrymander. Could
15 you explain for me how we have arisen to the CD 14
16 that's now in the map before us today?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

18 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 I can't speak to the Governor's map
21 drawer's process. What I can tell you is the facts
22 that were, you know, unique to the case that
23 occurred many years ago are just that, unique to
24 that case. This map stands on its own.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Driskell.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 30

1 REPRESENTATIVE DRISKELL: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 I also wanted to try to understand because
4 in the intro to the presentation, we heard that the
5 -- I thought we heard that the county splits were
6 made better. But as best I can tell, looking at
7 8060 and 8019, it's the same number of county
8 splits. So how is this an improvement?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

10 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: By one less county
11 split.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Driskell.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DRISKELL: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 And in terms of cities in the area of Tampa
16 Bay, your map adds or creates a new city split in
17 St. Pete and Lakeland but which were both kept hold
18 in 8019. Can you explain how this is more Tier 2
19 compliant?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

21 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker. No. I can't speak to why the
23 Governor's map drawer chose, you know, this road or
24 that river over another road or another river. What
25 I can tell you is that they are both equally Tier 2

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 31

1 compliant.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Driskell.

3 REPRESENTATIVE DRISKELL: Thank you,
4 Mr. Speaker.

5 And given that the Legislature seems to be
6 following the Governor's direction at this, from
7 what I understood from the Governor, his only
8 complaints were about Northeast Florida, really
9 about CD 5 and maybe CD 4. That being the case, why
10 are we making adjustments to CD 14 and CD 15 in
11 Tampa Bay?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Again, not speaking to the Governor's
16 process but I don't think that's a fair premise.
17 You know, if you looked back at the various maps
18 that have come through, they have changed over and
19 over and over again. And it is still true that you
20 cannot change one line without changing most lines.
21 And so in this instance, we were -- the Governor was
22 able to pick up ten of our districts that we had
23 drafted. So I don't think that it's fair to say
24 that the Governor's premise was only on CD 5 in the
25 northeast area. I think that what this map

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 32

1 represents is an entire improvement on the map.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Driskell.

3 REPRESENTATIVE DRISKELL: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 So I noticed that here there's a lot of
6 talk about following county lines and trying to
7 minimize county splits, but how is following county
8 lines not just a pretext for partisan gerrymandering
9 here? 8019 splits pretty much just as many counties
10 as your map. So if 8060 were adapted to make CD 5
11 just in Duvall, it would actually split two fewer
12 counties than your map. So how is what we're seeing
13 today by following county lines not really just a
14 pretext for the partisan gerrymandering, as we see
15 that the map that the Governor has presented results
16 in a significant Republican advantage over the
17 benchmark maps?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

20 Mr. Speaker.

21 As is the case with the prior maps, I'm not
22 -- we haven't done a performance analysis to know
23 those types of things. Maybe you guys have, but we
24 have not, so I can't speak to the partisan
25 performance of it.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 33

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

2 Representative Brown, you're recognized.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 We heard yesterday there was a compromise

6 by -- that this was a compromising product. Can you

7 speak to that compromise? What were some of the

8 compromises?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

10 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

11 Mr. Speaker.

12 I want to make one thing clear. Governor's

13 office drew the map. Our folks did not draw the

14 map. It is apparent that the Governor's office drew

15 a map that was informed by the prior maps that we

16 have driven. You can see that because of the 10

17 exactly identical districts that we had in our prior

18 maps. I believe that that's what the Governor's

19 office meant by compromise.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,

22 Mr. Speaker.

23 Do you recognize Representative Davis?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis, you're

25 recognized.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 34

1 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 Representative, will either District 4 or 5
4 perform for black candidates of choice?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 No.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis.

10 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 Has any analysis been done to prove yes or
13 no?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 Yes. Recall on the prior maps that we did
18 a functional analysis on CD 5.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 So no analysis, again, just for clarity,
23 has been performed on these maps -- on this map?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 35

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Yes. On CD 4, our staff did a functional
3 analysis and confirmed that it does not perform.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 In terms of compactness, have you looked at
8 whether the Governor's version or the version where
9 Districts 4 and 5 stack up on top of each other with
10 the line going straight through Duvall, and would it
11 be better on compactness?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 I'm not sure I understand that question.
16 Can you rephrase it?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I would. And
19 looking at the Governor's versions of the map, the
20 version where CD 4 and CD 5 are stacked on top of
21 each other with the line going straight through,
22 would it be a difference if we reconfigured that for
23 compactness?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 36

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 We can't do that hypothetically, so we
3 would have to see an exact configuration. Remember,
4 each district will result in a unique compactness
5 score.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
8 Mr. Speaker. I think this is my last question for
9 now.

10 When we were -- when we charged the
11 Governor's office with the ability to draw these
12 constitutional maps using the constitutional
13 criteria, do you have any idea of the hierarchy,
14 because these are the Governor's maps, with the
15 geographic boundaries? For example, did we say that
16 it was more important to follow the major roads and
17 highways as boundaries?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 I don't want to give the indication that
22 I'm accepting your premise, but I can tell you what
23 they told us yesterday in committee about the
24 hierarchy. And they said they came in more in
25 alliance with -- alignment with the House and

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 37

1 Senate's use of Tier 2 criteria than they had
2 previously.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Davis.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker. And last question.

6 Because the Governor drew -- Governor's
7 office drew these maps, were these maps ever
8 presented to you or your team prior to being here
9 today or prior to being in the committee room
10 yesterday?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

12 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Yes. I believe, as has been indicated, I
15 got a preview of the maps, the map that you are
16 seeing today, the Governor's office explained those
17 maps to me, to Chair Seroy (phonetic), and to Ms.
18 Kelly. I think the Senate has also indicated that
19 that same week, they got the same briefing on those
20 maps, but it is the map that you see today without
21 changes.

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker. Would you recognize Representative
25 Williams?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 38

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams,
2 you're recognized.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Thank you,
4 Mr. Speaker.

5 Chair Leek, when you spoke of the Tiers,
6 you said we're using Tier 2 now instead of Tier 1.
7 Could you tell why are we choosing to go to Tier 2
8 instead of Tier 1?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

10 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 No. I did not say that.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Are we using Tier
15 2 now instead of Tier 1?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 No.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: You spoke of
22 unique compacts in each one of these districts. Can
23 you tell me why?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 39

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Very simply, with the redrawing of any
3 district, it would likely result in a different
4 compactness score based on whichever test you use.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: The difference
7 are -- what was the difference? I'm sorry, I didn't
8 understand.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

10 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 When you change the shape in any way of a
13 district, it can result in a different compactness
14 score. So any variation in a district may result in
15 a different compactness score. I hope that answers
16 your question.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Was it taken into
19 consideration that we would be eliminating a seat
20 that would usually be held by a black candidate?

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

22 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

23 Mr. Speaker.

24 Was what taken into consideration and what?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 40

1 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: When the decision
2 was made to use Tier 2 instead of Tier 1 and/or the
3 uniqueness of the compact in each one of the
4 districts.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 Those things aren't related.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Williams?
10 Okay.

11 Representative Willhite.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker. Do you recognize Representative
14 Joseph?

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, you're
16 recognized.

17 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 Chair Leek, the Latino Policy and Politics
20 Initiative at UCLA released a report analyzing
21 Latino voting patterns in South Florida,
22 specifically regarding redistricting. Are you
23 familiar with that report?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 41

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 No. I am not.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

4 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Would you happen to
5 know if the Governor's office is familiar with that
6 report?

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

10 No. I do not.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

12 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 So the report finds that a separate --
15 there are separate and distinct Latino voting blocks
16 in South Florida and throughout Florida that vary by
17 geography and ethnicity, and that it clearly shows
18 that Latino voters do not vote in the same way in
19 South Florida. Continuing to draw the lines based
20 on that faulty assumption denies all Latino voters
21 the ability to elect candidates of their choice --

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, do you
23 have a question about the map? You're recognized.

24 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you, Mr.
25 Speaker. Yeah, it's coming. That's the next thing.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 42

1 So right now, I want to draw your attention
2 to the maps that we have before us, specifically as
3 regards to CD 26, which I asked a little bit about
4 in committee yesterday. In committee, the
5 Governor's office testified that part of their
6 rationale in drawing that particular district, CD
7 26, was because they wanted to maintain Hispanic
8 voters there, and he had to go around and get
9 different population.

10 My question for you is, do you know -- so
11 knowing what I just said about the Latino report
12 that came out of the Latino Policy and Politics
13 Initiative at UCLA and the denial of Latino voters
14 of their voting rights, looking at CD 26, what would
15 you say would be the impact of that, had the
16 Governor's office had that information? Would we
17 have adjusted the map, or would we just leave it the
18 way it is?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, I
20 think you're asking Representative Leek to comment
21 on the veracity of a report he's already said he
22 hasn't read. So do you have a question about that
23 specific district? You're recognized.

24 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you, Mr.
25 Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 43

1 I'm not asking for about the veracity of
2 the report.

3 Just knowing that you should not lump all
4 Latino voters together, which is the point of the
5 report, so forget the report for a second. But if
6 we're accepting the premise that not all Latino
7 voters, whether they're coming from Cuba, other
8 parts of Central and South America, they may not
9 vote the same way. Would it be appropriate to lump
10 them all into one congressional district such as CD
11 26, which is before us?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 I'll try. I think your premise is
16 accepting the veracity of the report, which I have
17 not read. And I think your question is asking the
18 hypothetical, what would someone else have done with
19 that information, which I cannot answer.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

21 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Mr. Speaker, let me
22 try to ask it a different way.

23 Would you acknowledge that not all Hispanic
24 voters vote consistently Republican or consistently
25 Democrat in the state of Florida?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 44

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

2 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

3 Mr. Speaker.

4 If you're asking me to get to the legal
5 conclusion about cohesion, I can't get there with
6 you, right. If you're asking me whether people vote
7 differently and race is not necessarily a
8 determinant on how they vote, I would agree with
9 that.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

11 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you.

12 Yes. I was looking for the second answer
13 to the second question, not the first. Not looking
14 for a legal conclusion. Now, in terms of -- our
15 counsel, the House counsel, it's my understanding,
16 asked the Florida Supreme Court to overturn the
17 requirement that minority groups be politically
18 cohesive in order to be protected from diminishment.
19 And it's my understanding that the Supreme Court
20 declined to accept the House lawyer's invitation to
21 overturn that precedent. Is that correct? Did I
22 understand that correctly?

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

24 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

25 Mr. Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 45

1 I think you're talking about the Governor's
2 request for an advisory opinion in which the House
3 joined. And yes. The Supreme Court declined to
4 give an advisory opinion.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

6 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you.

7 So going back to CD 26, let's focus on the
8 Tier 2 analysis and some of the drawbacks that we
9 see it because we identified some drawbacks in the
10 prior maps that the House had drawn for CD 26, which
11 we addressed in committee, and I think staff made an
12 attempt to address. But now, in the Governor's map,
13 we still have some Tier 2 deficiencies. So looking
14 at the map, I see that there is an additional split
15 of Collier, and it cuts the Immokalee community in
16 half following local streets like County Road 846,
17 which isn't our geographic boundaries database.

18 So considering those infirmities with the
19 current map that we have as it relates to CD 26,
20 have you or anybody concluded that those Tier 2
21 drawbacks are necessary to maintain Tier 1
22 compliance to keep that Hispanic voting group
23 together?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 46

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Again, I can't tell you what the map drawer
3 was thinking when he chose this particular Tier 2
4 criteria over that particular Tier 2 criteria. I
5 can tell you a review of the map shows that it is --
6 this map is equally Tier 2 compliant.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

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

10 When you say it's equally Tier 2 compliant,
11 tell me what analysis you're relying on to state
12 that answer here today.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 The review of the Governor's map by our
17 staff.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

19 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 Because I just identified the deficiencies,
22 and I don't see anything to make sure that they're
23 equal because it looks like it's clearly deficient
24 under Tier 2, not even Tier 1 criteria.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 47

1 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 I suspect the answer lies that we don't
4 agree it's deficient.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

6 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 So Section 7 of the bill at lines 36
9 through 27, and lines 36 through 47 limits venue for
10 actions challenging federal congressional districts
11 to state courts. Can you tell me what your
12 rationale was for that limitation and restriction of
13 venue?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker. Let me address the issue of venue
17 globally, and then we can get into the specifics.
18 You know, globally, the idea is that -- and first of
19 all, it's not new, right. Most actions against the
20 state have to come through Tallahassee. That is a
21 prerogative in this case would be the Department of
22 State that gets sued; that is the prerogative of the
23 state to have that done. This specifies that.
24 Also, we had a carve out, which we discussed
25 yesterday, that says any federal issue can be

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 48

1 brought in federal court.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

3 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 Well, any federal issue can always be
6 brought in federal court. That's a matter for the
7 supremacy clause. I guess my question for you is
8 why specifically choose state courts as opposed to
9 federal courts as the venue for federal
10 congressional districts? And so that I ask -- maybe
11 flesh out the question a little bit more, why not
12 just leave it the way it is now? What's the impetus
13 for having to even make that specific restriction?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

16 Mr. Speaker.

17 The rationale for having the venue clause
18 is that all of the challenges should be brought
19 within the same court. And we believe that court
20 should be a state court as this is an act of the
21 State. The rationale for having them want to be
22 brought in the same state court is so you don't end
23 up with disparate decisions by different judges
24 across the state.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 49

1 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: I agree that it
2 would be good to have one court manage most of those
3 claims, but there are going to be times where
4 specifically considering the fact that the
5 Governor's basis for drawing these maps as he's
6 espoused is to set up a challenge to the Voting
7 Rights Act based on the 14th Amendment, which is a
8 federal question. So knowing that, why not allow
9 federal courts to address that federal
10 constitutional issue as the primary basis? There's
11 always supplemental jurisdiction, as you're aware.
12 So why federal court as opposed to state court based
13 on your rationale?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 This language would allow precisely what
18 you're saying.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 Yesterday, the presenter from the
23 Governor's office made reference to the
24 Legislatures' preferred approach to Tier 2
25 compliance, and I don't know where that came from.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 50

1 I don't remember specifically hearing that in
2 committee, because in committee, we had talked about
3 the prioritization of Tier 1 versus Tier 2, and I
4 know staff had focused on Tier 2. So to the extent
5 that there is some kind of policy decision that was
6 made by the Congressional Redistricting Committee --
7 the larger Congressional Redistricting Committee
8 that I may not be aware of, can you espouse that for
9 us today? Like, what is the basis for the
10 preference of Tier 2 over Tier 1 to the extent it
11 even is a preference?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 First of all, there is no preference for
16 Tier 2 over Tier 1. What the Governor's office was
17 talking about was whether to use communities of
18 interest or what they call CDPs as opposed to Tier 2
19 standards. We have decided in our process to use
20 Tier 2 standards. And initially, I think the
21 Governor's map relied more on communities of
22 interest. And now, with the most recent map, they
23 rely on Tier 2 standards.

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

25 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 51

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 And thank you for the response. There's a
3 million-dollar allocation attached to this
4 particular item which was not in the maps we
5 previously considered. Can you tell me how that
6 million dollars was calculated? What's the basis
7 for that?

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

11 The million dollars is -- well, first of
12 all, the state was always going to have to pay for
13 the litigation regardless of whether we put it in
14 this bill or not. The million dollars is a rough
15 estimate of what it would cost for this litigation.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

17 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you.

18 In light of those anticipated litigation
19 costs, I guess I'm just wondering how that rough
20 estimate came about. You know, you and I both serve
21 as counsel for various government entities, and
22 sometimes we get a quote from outside counsel. Is
23 it based on particular billable hours? Like, what
24 is the basis for that estimate?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 52

1 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 I don't have the formula that was used, but
4 that's what the folks tell us.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph

6 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: All right. Last
7 question on that point. It didn't go through
8 appropriations committee, so how are we coming at a
9 million? Like, why couldn't it be 500 -- and I'm
10 not trying to be facetious. I'm really just trying
11 to get a gauge as to how that number popped up. And
12 if there is no answer --

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, I
14 think it's asked and answered. Do you have an
15 additional question?

16 All right. Representative Willhite.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker. Do you recognize Representative
19 Alexander?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander,
21 you're recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 And thank you, Chairman Leek. In the
25 Governor's advisory opinion request to the Supreme

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 53

1 Court on February 1st, he spoke specifically to
2 geography as a justification for some of his
3 concerns. Am I correct in understanding that the
4 proposed CD 2 stretches 180 miles?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 That's not one of the measures that we
9 have. We don't measure that. So I can't answer
10 your question.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Am I correct that the Governor is proposing
15 this map that we're going to be voting on tomorrow?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 Yes.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Mr. Speaker.

22 So I'm speaking, Chairman Leek, to the
23 advisory opinion, which I think sets the predicate
24 and the premise for his proposed map. He spoke
25 specifically to geography, to the existing CD 5. So

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 54

1 I'm asking just for clarification in regards to the
2 actual size based off mileage -- of miles for the
3 proposed CD 2.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

5 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 I'll do the best -- I cannot -- I believe I
8 have heard the Governor say it's 180 miles. I
9 haven't validated that number. I don't know if it's
10 an estimate or how accurate it is.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 And based off, I think, the information
15 provided, I think you are correct. And I do believe
16 the existing CD 5 expands around about 198 miles, so
17 they're pretty similar. I'm going to continue on --
18 in reference to the proposed map, would you suggest
19 that it is a very unique situation in the 67
20 counties in Florida, that a county would have a
21 majority African American population?

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

23 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 I actually don't know the answer to that

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 55

1 question.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

3 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 I'll try to ask it in a different way. In
6 regards to the proposed map, there is only one based
7 off what is been presented to us, one county in the
8 State of Florida that has a majority African
9 American population, Gadsden County. Based off of
10 that in the Tier 1 standard, does this proposed map
11 diminish those citizens from electing a
12 representative of their choice?

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

15 Mr. Speaker.

16 And the diminishment question is one the
17 Court's ultimately going to have to answer.
18 However, I do not believe Gadsden County has
19 population sufficient to constitute a congressional
20 district without knowing for certain, but I don't
21 believe they do.

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

23 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,

24 Mr. Speaker.

25 And I recognize that aspect of it, Chairman

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 56

1 Leek. But what I'm trying to get an understanding
2 of is, the only majority county that is African
3 American in the State of Florida, will they have the
4 opportunity to elect the representative of their
5 choice, based off the proposed map?

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

9 And I can't begin to speak to what the
10 citizens of Gadsden County -- who they will vote
11 for. I think somebody made the point earlier. You
12 can't assume by race they will vote the same. I
13 think that that's probably true. So I can't begin
14 to tell you what those citizens would do, given the
15 -- you know, the variations in candidates and the
16 like. There's just no way I can tell you that.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 And we won't get into that aspect of it.
21 And I do believe that is appropriate. Let's just
22 move on real quick so I can understand the proposed
23 map, because the premise -- and I'm having this
24 challenge here because on the state maps, we kept
25 talking about minority protected districts. We kept

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 57

1 talking about black protected districts. We're
2 talking about Tier 1 standard, and poof, it just
3 disappeared. And so I'm trying to wrap my mind
4 around that to understand the core essence of this.
5 And so based off of that methodology and that
6 perspective, the proposed map will have how many
7 minority access seats, since we've already
8 established that there are minority access seats in
9 the State of Florida?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

11 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 One, I have to dispute your premise. Tier
14 1 is still a viable option in here. There are
15 protected districts in here. It didn't disappear,
16 right. But your specific question is: under the
17 Governor's map, how many protected districts do we
18 have? We have two black and three Hispanic
19 protected districts.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker. So there are two black protected
23 districts, and so that was suggested. There is an
24 underlying rationale that there are and there is a
25 need to have those type of districts in the State of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 58

1 Florida; is that correct?

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

3 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 Yes.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,

8 Mr. Speaker.

9 I'm going to try to wrap it up. And so
10 based off of that, let me get some clarification.
11 We are now currently at four black protected
12 districts. And so the Governor's proposed map will
13 decrease it to two; is that correct?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

15 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

16 Mr. Speaker.

17 Actually, we were at three in the House.
18 Then the Governor's map has two.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,

21 Mr. Speaker.

22 I'm talking about currently in the State of
23 Florida, not in a proposal. I believe there are
24 four, correct?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 59

1 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 Actually, no. There are only three current
4 black protected districts.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

6 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 For the record, can you tell me what those
9 three are?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

11 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 In the benchmark map, it's 5, 20, and 24.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 Can we speak to the rationale? And I'm
18 almost done, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for your --
19 for the graciousness in the back and forth. I have
20 the utmost respect for Chairman Leek. What was the
21 premise of having racial or minority access
22 districts in the first place? Can you speak to
23 that?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 60

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 I want to be careful here because minority
3 access district is not a phrase used in the law.
4 It's commonly used by media. But I think the --
5 that premise is echoed in the Tier 1 standards.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Mr. Speaker.

8 And the Tier 1 standards are in the
9 constitution, correct?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

11 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 They are in the Florida Constitution. They
14 are not of the United States Constitution.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 Are there any federal laws that speak to
19 this type of representation as well, like civil
20 rights act of anything?

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

22 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you, Mr.
23 Speaker.

24 I think you're referring to the Voting
25 Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act does, and, of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 61

1 course, the 14th Amendment that doesn't allow you to
2 discriminate on the basis of race.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 And so, based off of that -- I'm trying to
7 get clarification because I believe that history is
8 important. And I appreciate the time. So during
9 the period of reconstruction, how many black
10 representatives were there in the State of Florida?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Represent Leek.

12 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 I don't know.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Alexander.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 And it was one. And from 1871, there was
19 only one. And then it took until 1992 to get three.

20 I'm done with my questions.

21 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: All right.

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry, where was I going next?
25 Representative Learned, I'm sorry.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 62

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned,
2 you're recognized.

3 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
4 Mr. Speaker.

5 And thank you, Chairman Leek. That was an
6 enlightening series of questions. I wanted to ask
7 first, because earlier in one of your answers, you
8 were talking about how this map was better because
9 it divided one last county. But my understanding in
10 looking at it is it divides Saint Pete in the way
11 that Saint Petersburg has never been divided before;
12 is that correct?

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 I don't know the history of the division of
17 Saint Pete.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 So Saint Petersburg in the maps that we
22 passed and that, you know, we all agreed were good
23 at the time, was in one district. Now, it's in two.
24 And that's because this district appears to cross
25 Tampa Bay. I wanted to make sure that I understand

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 63

1 correctly that District 14, as you've drawn it in
2 this -- or that the Governor drew in this map, does,
3 in fact, cross Tampa Bay in a way that we all
4 collectively decided we didn't want to do with our
5 map.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

9 I'm sorry, I'm having a little trouble
10 here. I'm only used to talking to Representative
11 Learned on an amendment. So we've said it from the
12 beginning, there is no one single legally compliant
13 map. And the fact that a district looked different
14 in a prior map doesn't mean that it looks different
15 now is inappropriate. So I'm not sure the basis of
16 your question, but this map has Saint Pete drawn the
17 way you suggest.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 My question really is getting at, you know,
22 I feel like there's a conflict in the logic that's
23 being applied to this process versus the process we
24 used, you know, just three weeks ago. So when we
25 were debating before, we were talking about Tier 1

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 64

1 and Tier 2, and the logic when it pertained to
2 Congressional District 5 was, well, we are adding
3 more black voters there. So we're more Voting
4 Rights Act compliant. And this district, the one
5 that I'm kind of focused on right now, District 14,
6 it appears that you're packing more people into that
7 district and packing more African American voters.
8 Is that because you're trying to be more Tier 1
9 compliant with District 14? Is that what you're
10 doing here?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

12 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you.

13 I'll do the best I can with that. Again, I
14 can't speak to the map drawers, you know, reason for
15 choosing this road and that waterway over that road
16 and the other waterway. So I can't speak to the
17 rationale of why it now goes across when we didn't
18 do it. When we did it before, we thought it was
19 legally compliant. And by legally compliant, we
20 thought also compliant with Tier 2. And what our
21 review of this one is that it is equally compliant
22 with Tier 2.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

24 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
25 Mr. Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 65

1 But that's not our charge here, right.
2 We're not charged to be Tier 2 compliant. We're
3 charged to be Tier 1 compliant. My question was
4 about Tier 1 compliance, which our understanding is
5 -- which what I understand is what makes this map
6 unconstitutional, right, because we are effectively
7 disenfranchising these voters. And my question
8 really is about this idea that if you can pack more
9 and more black voters into fewer and fewer
10 districts, is that Voting Rights Act compliant?
11 Because we are, in essence, increasing minority
12 population within those districts and those
13 districts alone.

14 MR. SPEAKER: There's a lot of conclusions
15 packed into that question. Do you have a question
16 about a specific district you'd like to ask
17 Representative Leek?

18 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Yes, Mr. Speaker.
19 I mean, that's my question. Is this the intent that
20 we can pack more and more black voters into fewer
21 and fewer districts in order to maximize Voting
22 Rights Act compliance? Is that the logical
23 conclusion that I'm supposed to be drawing from
24 this?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 66

1 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 It's certainly not our intent, and we have
4 no reason to believe that was the Governor's map
5 drawer's intent.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

7 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
8 Mr. Speaker.

9 What evidence are we using to understand
10 the Governor's intent if his actions are speaking
11 louder than words?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned, you
13 would like to ask a question without making
14 conclusions.

15 Representative Willhite, you're recognized.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker. Will you recognize Representative
18 Campbell?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell,
20 you're recognized.

21 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 Representative Leek, as I understand it,
24 Alex Kelly was the person that drew these maps,
25 correct?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 67

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

2 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

3 Mr. Speaker.

4 Yes. That was his testimony yesterday.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell.

6 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Thank you,

7 Mr. Speaker.

8 And, Representative, did he consult with
9 anyone else in the drawing of these maps?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell, I
11 believe that was answered previously, and I think
12 Representative Leek talked about Mr. Kelly's
13 testimony yesterday. Additional questions?

14 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 What was the methods that he used to
17 establish these maps?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 And I believe that question has also been
22 asked. But he used the Tier 1, Tier 2 standards,
23 and the United States Constitutional standards. I
24 believe that was his testimony.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 68

1 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Hey, Mr. Speaker.
2 How was the census used in the development
3 of these maps?

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

5 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 Again, didn't develop these maps but census
8 data is the fundamental underpinning of any map.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Represent Campbell.

10 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 Yesterday, we heard from Counsel yesterday
13 about strict scrutiny and the Gingles test. What
14 analysis did he use to determine whether or not the
15 Gingle tests were met?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you.

18 Again, I can't speak to his analysis other
19 than what he testified to yesterday. I will point
20 out that the Gingles test only comes into play upon
21 a challenge to the maps.

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell.

23 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 Lastly, where can the public access the

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 69

1 data points to the development of these maps?

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

3 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 There is a data packet in front of you now.

6 There's also a data packet on the website.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell.

8 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Mr. speaker.

9 What website would that be?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

11 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

12 Mr. Speaker.

13 Floridaredistricting.gov.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Campbell.

15 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: That's it.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Mr. Speaker,

18 would you recognize Representative Diamond?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond,

20 you're recognized.

21 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: Thank you,

22 Mr. Speaker.

23 Good morning. I just wanted to follow up

24 on Representative Joseph's questions, specifically

25 with regard to CD 26. I want to further understand

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 70

1 this issue of establishing voter cohesion because my
2 understanding from the case law is that that's the
3 first step in any retrogression analysis. And,
4 specifically, the question is relating to Hispanic
5 voting cohesion in the South Florida. Given what
6 the Florida Supreme Court has said about that issue,
7 are we taking into account, in this map,
8 particularly around CD 26, how those Latinos -- the
9 voting cohesion of those Latino voters in that part
10 of the state?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

12 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 I believe you're talking about the Gingles
15 test, which, once again, is only performed upon a
16 challenge. So the Gingles test is a plaintiff's
17 obstacle declare to bring a claim.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: But I just want to
20 understand that thinking. So, I mean, the Gingles
21 test, that is the law of the Supreme Court, right,
22 the United States Supreme Court. So, I mean, we
23 have to look at that and make certain that we are
24 meeting that test in producing this map. Do we not?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 71

1 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 It is the law of the Florida Supreme Court
4 for plaintiffs who are bringing a claim to challenge
5 the maps -- excuse me, US Supreme Court.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: But I guess I'm
8 just trying to establish. I mean, as I understand
9 these cases, and you've studied them far more than I
10 have, Mr. Chairman, but we have to -- if we're going
11 to draw these districts in -- for instance, like CD
12 26, where we're making these assumptions about
13 Latino voting populations. Let me ask it this way.
14 Has there been any analysis done on CD 26, with
15 regard to the Latino voting population, that there
16 will be sort of a cohesiveness necessary in that
17 voting population in order to defend that district
18 under that test?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

20 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 Remember, the only analysis that we are
23 required to perform is the functional analysis,
24 which has been done. We have not performed the
25 analysis that you're talking about on the Governor's

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 72

1 test --

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

3 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: Mr. Speaker.

4 And do you know if the drafter has
5 performed that analysis? You've said earlier that
6 the drafter was in the Governor's office.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

10 No, I do not.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: In terms of the
13 drafter, I mean, you know, when you established the
14 process that we used during regular session for the
15 drafting of the maps, you established certain
16 processes in terms of retention of records and, you
17 know, efforts to make certain that we were meeting
18 the Tier 1 compliance. What questions did you ask
19 of the drafters to build the same assurances in this
20 process?

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

22 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 Recall that this map, as all of the other
25 Governor's maps, were submitted through the portal.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 73

1 To get through the portal, you have to fill out a
2 form that requires you to answer those kinds of
3 questions.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: So earlier you
6 mentioned that there had been a briefing -- a
7 private briefing for you and Chairman Seroy and your
8 staff from the Governor's office with regard to the
9 map that we're about to vote out today. Were any
10 questions asked in that private briefing about just
11 sort of to provide additional assurances in addition
12 to whatever that form may require?

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 I mean, bluntly, the form asked the very
17 questions you're asking about. And so with that
18 form being filled out, we know the answer to those
19 questions. I can't recall whether we ask any
20 additional questions or whether there's any
21 additional flavor. But the form itself takes care
22 of what you're asking about.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: Thank you,
25 Mr. Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 74

1 And it's been reported that this map will
2 result in a congressional delegation from Florida of
3 20 Republican seats and 8 Democratic seats. Are you
4 aware of those reports?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker. I have heard the same because it's
8 hard to turn on the news and escape it. But I can
9 tell you that we can't validate those reports.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: Do you know if the
12 drafter of this map is aware of those reports?

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 No. I do not.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: So I guess my
19 question, when I hear about those reports is, you
20 know, how can it not be evidence of partisan intent
21 if there is such a substantial difference between
22 the partisan configuration of the state and the
23 partisan effect of this map?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 75

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Let me do the best I can with that. Of
3 course, the US Supreme Court has told us that the
4 mere fact that you have a map that produces -- you
5 know, that favors one party over another is not in
6 itself evidence of partisan intent. So I would say,
7 you know, as far as your premise is concerned, I
8 think you're off. I don't think that is the law.
9 And the fact that -- well, I guess you would have to
10 accept then the performance data that you're talking
11 about. But to do so, meaning that you know the
12 performance data, that your argument in and of
13 itself would be tainted in some way, because you
14 know the performance data. I'm not sure I accept
15 that premise either.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Diamond.

17 REPRESENTATIVE DIAMOND: Thank you very
18 much, Mr. Speaker.

19 In your presentation of the map, you
20 mentioned waterways in different parts of the state.
21 Like for instance, in Northeast Florida, we use the
22 Saint John's River as a natural dividing line. In
23 our county, in Pinellas County, the dividing line
24 was not Tampa Bay, as you know, but was -- us was
25 34th Street, US-19. Can you speak to why the

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 76

1 drafter did not use Tampa Bay as the dividing line,
2 but instead chose to use a street?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

4 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 Again, and let me just say this again. If
7 the question begins with, "Why did the drafter do
8 this," the answer is always going to be I can't tell
9 you precisely why the drafter did this. But I can
10 tell you that the Tier 2 boundaries that the drafter
11 used are as legally compliant as the Tier 2
12 boundaries that we used in our prior maps.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Who did I say
15 next? I'm sorry. Mr. Speaker, do you recognize
16 Representative Humphrey?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Humphrey,
18 you're recognized.

19 REPRESENTATIVE HUMPHREY: Thank you very
20 much, Mr. Speaker.

21 It's interesting to see you on the wall and
22 in person at the same time. But anyways, I have a
23 question for -- thank you for recognizing me,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 And, Chair Leek, man, do I have to say I'm

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 77

1 sorry, and I'll explain that in debate tomorrow, and
2 not in regards to my questions, by the way. So we
3 have funds set aside in this bill to deal with any
4 legal matters that should come up in reference to
5 this bill. My question is: what happens when this
6 map is challenged?

7 My next question is: if you could just
8 detail the steps of what happens when this map is
9 challenged, and whether or not we'll have to have a
10 special election if the outcome is that these maps
11 are deemed invalid in areas.

12 My third question is --

13 MR. SPEAKER: My recommendation is let's
14 just take one at a time, if we can.

15 Representative Leek.

16 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 I don't know that I can describe the
19 universe of things that could happen if these maps
20 are challenged because I think, you know, the
21 challenges are unknown at this point. But it will
22 go to court, and the Court will make a ruling on
23 whether the challenge is upheld or not.

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Humphrey.

25 REPRESENTATIVE HUMPHREY: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 78

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Chair Leek, in the past, when the maps were
3 challenged, did we have to have a special election?
4 I wasn't here for it, and I'm not asking this
5 because I know the answer. I'm really asking
6 because I don't know.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

10 No. We didn't have to have a special
11 election.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Humphrey.

13 REPRESENTATIVE HUMPHREY: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Chair Leek, did the creators of the map
16 explain why the two seats that sit in South Florida,
17 the black protected seats, were not touched?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

19 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
20 . Speaker.

21 I'm trying to recall back to the testimony,
22 which is available. If you'd like -- I think you
23 might have actually been in the committee room as
24 well. But my recollection is they felt that those
25 seats were Tier 1, Tier 2 compliant, met a

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 79

1 compelling state need and were narrowly tailored.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Humphrey.

3 REPRESENTATIVE HUMPHREY: Thank you very
4 much, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Will you
7 recognize Representative Gottlieb?

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Gottlieb,
9 you're recognized.

10 REPRESENTATIVE GOTTLIEB: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 I just have one question, Rep Leek, and
13 that is, having listened to your answers, which is
14 that the Governor's office drew these maps, and this
15 body did not. How does that not violate the
16 separation of powers?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

18 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 Of course, the Governor's always had a role
21 in it from day. And this narrative that we are
22 somehow abdicating our responsibility because the
23 Governor had no role in it is just plainly false.
24 So the Governor always had the opportunity to draw a
25 map, just like the ACLU, just like the League of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 80

1 Women Voters, just like, you know, the hundreds of
2 citizens who drew maps. Looking at their maps, even
3 taking up their maps is not an abdication of our
4 responsibility, nor is it a violation of separation
5 of powers. It's just simply part of the process
6 that is permissible.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Mr. Speaker, will
9 you recognize Representative Smith?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith, you're
11 recognized.

12 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
13 . Speaker.

14 Chair Leek, are these maps race neutral as
15 the Governor has requested?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you.

18 I believe the Governor used the term, "race
19 neutral" as a counterbalance to predominantly based
20 upon race. And the maps are both race neutral in
21 areas, and, you know, protected -- also based on
22 race in the areas that are protected.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

24 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: So it's not one or
25 the other.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 81

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker.

4 So what is the distinction between which
5 areas of the state we've decided to have race
6 neutral and which areas of the state are not race
7 neutral?

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

11 All of those protected districts are not
12 race neutral.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: The Governor's
15 counsel stated in his memo that equal opportunity
16 districts for minority voters are tantamount to
17 segregation. He used that argument to eliminate CD
18 5. Is it also the position of the House that equal
19 opportunity districts for minority voters are
20 tantamount to segregation?

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

22 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 I don't recall hearing the Governor's
25 office say those words, but the answer is no. And

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 82

1 that's why these districts also contain protected
2 districts.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

4 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
5 . Speaker.

6 I'm hoping that you can explain a little
7 bit further the difference between these districts.
8 The Governor said that districts need to be compact,
9 and they shouldn't have tendrils or spill into other
10 -- or into the middle of other districts. If you
11 look at CD 20, can you explain why the tendrils of
12 CD 20 that extend eastward, especially the one that
13 cuts into the heart of CD 23, are acceptable in
14 South Florida if they are prohibited in North
15 Florida?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 You're overstating the law and letter.
20 Remember the first thing is population, right, plus
21 or minus one person. So you're necessarily going to
22 have to go different places to get to that zero
23 population, that equal population. And I think what
24 you're seeing is that one -- the CD 20 is certainly
25 more compact than CD 5 was.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 83

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,

3 Mr. Speaker.

4 And I'm not trying to denigrate CD 20. I'm
5 just trying to get you to explain to us and explain
6 to me the inconsistency there. Why is that tendril
7 cutting into CD 23? What is the purpose of that
8 tendril?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

10 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,

11 Mr. Speaker.

12 And again, Representative Smith, you're
13 putting too much emphasis on uniformity. The
14 purpose of that is equal population.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,

17 Mr. Speaker.

18 So just to clarify, the purpose of that
19 tendril is not to protect the strength of racial and
20 language minorities in that district?

21 MR. SPEAKER: You couldn't hear it?

22 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Yeah.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith, can you
24 repeat the question.

25 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 84

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Chair Leek, you just stated that the
3 purpose of that tendrill was to ensure equal
4 population. So what you're also saying is the
5 purpose of that tendrill in Congressional District 20
6 is not to ensure the ability of racial or language
7 minorities to elect the candidate of their choice?

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

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

11 No. I don't think you can draw all that
12 corollary. CD 20 is a protected district.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 I also want to jump back to the Governor's
17 office, and how they drew the map. I'm curious.
18 Did they keep records to prove they were not drawn
19 in a way that was driven by partisan intent? And
20 did you request that they keep records to prove that
21 or disprove it in a court of law?

22 MR. SPEAKER: I think Chairman Leek
23 answered that in response to Representative
24 Diamond's questions.

25 Is there any additional information you'd

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 85

1 like to add, Representative Leek?

2 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: (Shakes head).

3 MR. SPEAKER: You have additional
4 questions, Representative Smith?

5 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: No, nothing else.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.
7 Yield back the 23 seconds?

8 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Yes, sir.

9 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Representative
10 Eskamani, you're recognized for your question.

11 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 Very quick question for you, Chair Leek. I
14 know that one of the arguments being made by the
15 Governor's office with CD 5 is that there is no
16 apparent state interest in keeping it to be minority
17 access, But the courts disagree with that. I mean,
18 does the weight of the courts not compel the state
19 to have an interest?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Leek.

21 REPRESENTATIVE LEEK: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 Actually, there is no court opinion
24 precisely on that issue.

25 MR. SPEAKER: All right, members. Time

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 86

1 having expired in questions, we are in amendments.

2 Are there amendments?

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

4 MR. SPEAKER: Take up the First Amendment.

5 THE CLERK: Representative Jenne offered
6 the following amendment with title, Amendment,
7 Barcode 717833. Remove lines 95 through 3647 and
8 insert in amendment.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Leader Jenne, you're
10 recognized on your amendment.

11 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker. Good to see you.

13 Members, essentially what this amendment
14 does is it adopts plan 80/60, which was the Senate
15 plan in place of this proposed map. This particular
16 plan has the following characteristics: divides the
17 state into 28 congressional districts with a
18 population of 769,221 people. Each district will
19 grow by 42,876 people, compared to the pre-existing
20 map.

21 It establishes four protected African-
22 America districts, CD 5, 10, 20, and 24. It
23 maintains the Gadsden to Duval configuration known
24 as CD 5. It establishes three protected Hispanic
25 districts, CD 25, 26, and 27. The plan, we believe,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 87

1 improves on most Tier 2 metrics compared to the
2 underlying benchmark plan. It does also reduce city
3 splits and improves compactness.

4 Mr. Speaker, that is the amendment.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Are there questions on the
6 amendment? Are there questions?

7 Representative Robinson.

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

10 Representative, I just wanted to ask. And
11 this particular map was drawn by who?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Jenne. Leader
13 Jenne.

14 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: The specific
15 individual, not sure, but I know this was the map
16 that was approved by the Senate and with bipartisan
17 support.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ROBINSON: Follow-up.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Robinson.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ROBINSON: So this map was
21 draw by the Legislature as part of our duty,
22 correct?

23 MR. SPEAKER: Leader Jenne.

24 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Yes, it was. This
25 was crafted by our colleagues across the hall in the

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 88

1 Senate. And this was a plan that they did vote on
2 and overwhelmingly had bipartisan support.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

4 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you, Mr.
5 Speaker.

6 And thank you for this good amendment,
7 Leader. In addition to keeping the current
8 configuration from Gadsden to Duval, does this map
9 also provide for the continued election of an
10 African-American congressional representative in the
11 Orlando area?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Leader Jenne.

13 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Yes. Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 And thank you, Representative Geller, for
16 that particular question. Yes, it does. And that
17 was a difference between the two chambers. I'm not
18 casting aspersions, but that was a difference. The
19 Senate treated CD 10 as a protected seat. The
20 House, we did not do so.

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 Leader Jenne, does this map preserve the
25 previous configuration of what has been the existing

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 89

1 district that involves representation in Pinellas
2 County as opposed to the new map that we're looking
3 at today?

4 MR. SPEAKER: Leader Jenne.

5 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Yes, sir. It's much
6 closer.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

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

10 Does this map continue as the map in front
11 of us does to provide for the election of an
12 African-American representative to congress in
13 Broward in Palm Beach County, by making certain
14 deviations from compactness so that that protected
15 district can remain protected?

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Jenne.

17 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Yes, sir. It does.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

19 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 Do you know the vote by which this map
22 passed the Senate?

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Jenne.

24 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Yes, sir. I do. I
25 have it here. I believe the count was 36 to 4. 36

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 90

1 to 4.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Geller.

3 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 So in addition to having overwhelming
6 bipartisan support, in your estimation, Leader
7 Jenne, does the map that you are proposing as an
8 amendment comply with the Florida Constitution Fair
9 District's provision, as well as the Voting Rights
10 Act of 1965?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Leader Jenne.

12 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Thank you,

13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Representative Geller. Yes, it does. I
15 believe it does. I believe if you look at the
16 statistics of each of these districts, I believe you
17 will find that to be the absolute case.

18 MR. SPEAKER: Additional questions,
19 members? Additional questions? I see no additional
20 questions. We are in -- are there amendments to the
21 amendment?

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

23 MR. SPEAKER: Are there substitutes?

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

25 MR. SPEAKER: We are in debate. Members

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 91

1 who wish to be recognized in debate.

2 Representative Geller.

3 REPRESENTATIVE GELLER: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker. Members, I urge you to support this

5 map for a lot of reasons. This amendment is a

6 better plan. This amendment does not require a

7 million dollars to be appropriated in for

8 anticipated litigation. This amendment complies

9 with the Florida and Federal Constitution. This

10 amendment does not fly in the face of them. If

11 someone thinks that not only the Florida

12 constitution, but the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the

13 law for almost 60 years in this country, is

14 unconstitutional, they have a right to take that to

15 court.

16 If someone thinks that the 14th Amendment

17 prohibits anything race-based, which I heard today

18 and is wrong; if someone thinks that the 14th

19 Amendment does not have language that would, as

20 interpreted by the courts, allow consideration if

21 there is a compelling state interest, and you use

22 the most narrowly tailored means possible to achieve

23 the result, remembering that that amendment was

24 passed as a remedial measure and its very name says

25 it was equal protection. It's designed to protect.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 92

1 But we should not ignore the constitution of the
2 state and federal law in anticipation that someone
3 might challenge those things and take them and maybe
4 get them reversed. We should comply with the law as
5 it exists, as it's been interpreted for almost 60
6 years. We should comply with it, and anyone who
7 doesn't agree is free to raise that challenge. We
8 should not ignore what 63 percent of the voters of
9 Florida said for us to do.

10 Members, this map, which passed the Senate
11 36 to 4, is -- doesn't that say something? Isn't
12 that a statement to all of us? Members, we should
13 adopt this amendment. We should comply with the
14 very clear dictates of Tier 1, which is more
15 important than Tier 2, and of the federal Voting
16 Rights Act. And if somebody wants to take those to
17 court, and say they're wrong, we've been wrong in
18 interpreting the 14th Amendment for 150 years, well,
19 by God, this is America. They have a right to do
20 that. God bless anybody who wants to raise a
21 challenge and get it determined. But until the
22 courts change that, we must comply with the law as
23 it is written, as our voters told us to do.

24 Please adopt this amendment. Thank you.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Additional debate?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 93

1 Additional debate?

2 Seeing none, Leader Jenne. You're
3 recognized to close.

4 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Mr. Speaker, thank
5 you as always.

6 Members, it's a simple amendment. It's a
7 request to take the Senate plan. It is not my plan.
8 I do not claim any authorship over it. I claim
9 nothing other than someone who has to be anything
10 other than someone who has reviewed these maps.

11 I put this forward in the spirit of
12 compromise. Because, members, having been through
13 this redistricting process now for a second time, I
14 can tell you that it's very difficult, if not
15 outright impossible, to make a perfect map in which
16 every single line is in its proper place. But I
17 believe, and I think my caucus also believes, that
18 this is infinitely better than the map that is
19 actually in front of us today, especially in terms
20 of Tier 1.

21 But what about Tier 1? We spent months
22 discussing the maps. And Tier 1 was the absolute
23 apex of our guidelines. But now it has been cast
24 aside like democracy's detritus. Why? Because of
25 an abrupt change in philosophy. I will not condemn

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 94

1 that change. I will not comment on that change, but
2 it is due to an abrupt change in philosophy.

3 When we convened here earlier this year,
4 the VRA meant something. The Fair Districts
5 Amendment meant something. Tier 1 meant something.
6 These guided the entire process, and now they're
7 being tossed aside. Well, members, for me
8 personally, those things, the VRA, Fair Districts
9 Amendment, Tier 1, that still means something to me.
10 That still means something to a lot of members on
11 this floor today.

12 So I ask your favorable support of this.
13 Members, the car is not in neutral. The car is
14 speeding ahead. We have one last exit before we
15 ride over the cliff. I suggest we put on that turn
16 signal and get off right now. Thank you.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Members, Representative Jenne
18 having closed on his amendment, all in favor of
19 adoption of the amendment say yea.

20 (Multiple yeas)

21 MR. SPEAKER: All opposed, no.

22 (Multiple nos)

23 MR. SPEAKER: Show the amendment fails.
24 Read the next amendment.

25 THE CLERK: Representative Joseph offered

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 95

1 the following amendment with title, Amendment
2 Barcode 799545. Remove lines 3627 through 3647, and
3 insert in amendment.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, you're
5 recognized to explain your amendment.

6 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 Section 7 of the bill before us, there's a
9 couple of things. One of which is it selects venue
10 in Leon County, right here, and it presets that.
11 And I'm just going to read it. "An action
12 challenging the state's congressional districts on
13 state constitution or state law grounds must be
14 brought in state court."

15 And earlier during questioning, you heard
16 some of the rationale as to why. And the purpose of
17 this amendment is just to do what I think is more
18 appropriate, which is to allow litigants to choose
19 which venue is more appropriate depending on the
20 nature and the crux of their case. It is not
21 unusual to have questions of law that both involve
22 state and federal issues. That's why you have
23 supplemental jurisdiction. It's not complicated.
24 That is a decision that I believe should be made,
25 and we should allow for that flexibility,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 96

1 considering that these are federal congressional
2 seats that we're talking about. We're not talking
3 about state House seats or state Senate seats.
4 We're talking about our federal congressional seats.
5 So I think it would be more than appropriate to
6 eliminate just that section. So the amendment is
7 really simple and straightforward. And all it does
8 is it removes lines 3627 through 3647 from the bill
9 and leaves the law in its place, and to the extent
10 that the bill sponsored talked about how federal
11 questions can be addressed in federal court. That's
12 always the case. That's the whole point of the
13 supremacy clause.

14 So that is the amendment. I ask that
15 members support it. There's a lot of things that
16 we're doing that are novel. There's no need to
17 introduce this additional component into the
18 process. And that is the amendment, Madam Speaker.

19 MADAM SPEAKER: Having explained the
20 amendment, are there questions of the sponsor? Are
21 there questions?

22 Seeing no questions, is there an amendment
23 to the amendment?

24 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Madam
25 Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 97

1 MADAM SPEAKER: Is there a substitute
2 amendment?

3 THE CLERK: None on the desk, Madam
4 Speaker.

5 MADAM SPEAKER: And debate, is there a
6 debate on the amendment?

7 Representative Eskamani, you are
8 recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you so
10 much, Madam Speaker. I just want to say thank you
11 to the Representative for bringing forth this good
12 amendment. This is just an example of good
13 government. Let's ensure people have concerns, have
14 the time to make those concerns expressed. If folks
15 feel like these maps are in good legal standing,
16 they should not have an issue with this amendment.

17 Thank you, Madam Speaker.

18 MADAM SPEAKER: Additional debate?

19 Representative Driskell.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DRISKELL: Thank you, Madam
21 Speaker. And happy birthday to you -- or belated
22 birthday.

23 Members, this is a drum I'll continue to
24 beat in terms of thinking about how we use procedure
25 and making sure that we are not using procedure as a

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 98

1 weapon against the people of the State of Florida.
2 It's problematic, okay. There's procedure, and
3 there's substance in the law. Two distinct things.
4 But what happens sometimes -- what I'm noticing is a
5 dangerous trend in this Legislature, which is that
6 we are now amending legislation, or amending bills,
7 or adding procedural weapons to these bills, and I
8 really don't like it. We need to give the people
9 the opportunity to be heard in court. There's no
10 reason why this can't be heard in federal court.

11 And I understand there's a provision at the
12 end of 1(c) that talks about this does not preclude
13 any action being brought in federal court. But,
14 actually, it's internally inconsistent to me, that
15 provision of the bill and then the prior provision
16 saying that you can't bring this in federal court.
17 So I don't understand what we're doing here.

18 And I thank you, Rep Joseph, for this
19 amendment, because you really are trying to hold us
20 accountable and making sure that we are meeting with
21 due process in a procedural way that we need to for
22 the people of Florida.

23 So thank you for this. I'll be up on your
24 amendment today.

25 MADAM SPEAKER: Additional debate?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 99

1 Members, additional debate?

2 Representative Joseph, you're recognized to
3 close on the amendment.

4 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you, Madam
5 Speaker. So the portion of the House bill that's an
6 issue with the redistricting bill is it's a
7 jurisdiction of federal courts. And it conflicts
8 with the Voting Rights Act in 28 USC 1367, which
9 provides supplemental federal jurisdiction over
10 state law claims that are closely related to federal
11 claims. It takes precedent. So the supremacy
12 clause should control, and state law must concede to
13 federal law, which states that federal courts have
14 jurisdiction over these maps.

15 And as a practical matter, I know that
16 there are few attorneys in the room, but state
17 courts and federal courts are different. They just
18 are. In terms of their susceptibility to a number
19 of things -- and I'm not here to impugn the court,
20 but there's a reason that we have these things in
21 federal court. And as we're seeing these attacks
22 that are being mounted on, you know -- effectively
23 what we're complaining about, what the crux of a lot
24 of folks are complaining about, is the delusion of
25 these maps proposed by the Governor of black votes.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 100

1 That's the underlying concern. So if we are
2 decreasing representation based on the 14th
3 Amendment -- so people may not be too familiar with
4 the 14th Amendment, and I want to keep it tied to
5 the reason for my amendment is there was a US
6 Supreme Court case called Dred Scott. Some of you
7 may not be familiar with it, but it held that the
8 black man had no right that the white man had to
9 accept. And that black people could never be
10 citizens of these United States. That was basically
11 the premise of that case. That led to the passage
12 of a couple of things. But after the 13th
13 Amendment, the United States thought that we were
14 good. Slaves are free. But it wasn't so because
15 the states who were resisting these new rights that
16 were being exercised and allotted to black people
17 were just not falling in line.

18 So Republicans, interestingly enough, led
19 by Thaddeus Stevens at the time, who proposed the 14
20 Amendment -- Republicans proposed the 14th Amendment
21 to ensure that black people had all the privileges
22 and immunities, had equal protection under the law
23 that other folks did. It was really that simple.
24 So the purpose of the 14th Amendment is to just make
25 sure that we're equal.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 101

1 And many of you may be familiar with the
2 Three-fifths clause that exists in the Constitution,
3 which counted black people as three-fifth of a
4 person. Another thing the 14th Amendment did was
5 take care of that. It made us a full person. So
6 when I look at these maps who are trying to make
7 people, black people, count as less --

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, your
9 time has expired. I'll just give you a moment to
10 conclude.

11 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Mr. Speaker, that's
12 very kind. When I hear 14th amendment being used to
13 make our voices and our representation be slashed by
14 practically 50 percent, that's offensive to the
15 whole point of the 14th amendment. And that
16 Republican body recognizes it. And I hope at some
17 point, these Republicans are Republicans because I
18 don't think it's a Republican versus Democrat issue.
19 This is not and doesn't need to be.

20 With that, I ask for your favorable support
21 on this amendment to keep it in federal courts where
22 it actually belongs. Thank you.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph having
24 closed on her amendment, all in favor of adoption of
25 amendment, say yea.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 102

1 (Multiple yeas)

2 THE COURT: All opposed, no.

3 (Multiple nos)

4 THE COURT: Show the amendment fails.

5 Read the next amendment.

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

7 MR. SPEAKER: Read the next Bill.

8 COURT CLERK: By Representative Fine and
9 others, House Bill 3C, a bill to be entitled "An Act
10 relating to independent special districts."

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine, you're
12 recognized to explain your bill.

13 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker, and thank you for acknowledging my
15 birthday earlier. Normally, I would be spending
16 today at Disney World. I don't think that's going
17 to be happening.

18 So with that, I'm pleased to present House
19 Bill 3C. This is a very simple bill that would
20 expire or sunset all special districts created
21 before 1968 when the Florida Constitution was
22 established on June 1st of next year. And that is
23 the bill.

24 MR. SPEAKER: Members, we are in questions.
25 Representative Willhite.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 103

1 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Okay. Will you
2 recognize Representative Duran?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran, you are
4 recognized.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 And, Representative, thank you for
8 introducing this simple bill. I wanted to kind of
9 ask you, give you just a little bit of insight into
10 the necessity of this bill. You know, this is a
11 special session. We are operating in -- not in
12 regular hours. We're not meeting during a regular
13 session. Oftentimes, when we use special sessions,
14 it's for issues of time-sensitive nature. For
15 instance, we just talked about congressional maps
16 and redistricting, the necessity for us to get here
17 to make sure that those maps are passed so that
18 something can be passed and used during the next
19 electoral cycle.

20 We have come here for COVID and to deal
21 with the issues of restriction, which folks believed
22 needed to be handled quickly. We've dealt with
23 issues of passing our budget. And so those are
24 critical issues with time-sensitive nature to them.

25 Can you, kind of, give me what is it about

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 104

1 HB 3C that makes it so important that we have to be
2 here for a special session and discuss this issue?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

4 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 We didn't make the call for the special
7 session, so it wasn't up to me what issues we
8 discussed here in this session. But certainly, once
9 that call was amended, -- gosh, was it yesterday?
10 And then this became something that we were asked to
11 take a look at. We came up with this bill, and we
12 filed it.

13 Why, in general, is this a good idea to do
14 now? I think when you kick the hornet's nest,
15 sometimes issues arise, and we've seen that in other
16 issues that I've worked on. When the hornet's nest
17 got kicked, we realized that there were 133 special
18 districts that were created before the Florida
19 Constitution was passed in 1968. One hundred and
20 twenty seven of those special districts in the
21 previous 55 years did the right thing and chose to
22 update themselves to be consistent with that 1968
23 Constitution, which made some very large changes.
24 Six did not. And as we dug into those six, part of
25 the issue is those six special districts had all

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 105

1 sorts of wacky powers that none of us would ever
2 vote for today. In part, because the 1968
3 Constitution is what created -- which is something
4 that I'm not a huge fan of -- all of this home rule
5 power for local governments. And before that, local
6 governments had to come here in order to do just
7 about everything. And because of that, these very
8 long pre-1968 charters for these special districts
9 are constructed in a world that no longer exists.
10 These six districts had 55 years to come back and
11 get these things updated. Once we found the
12 problem, we've come, and we've addressed it.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran.

14 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 I appreciate that long extensive answer. I
17 think at the beginning of that answer, you had said
18 the Governor, I guess, made the call, and there is
19 some problem. I didn't hear in the answer that
20 there was a specific problem that was being --
21 that's impacting Floridians right now, an emergency
22 of some sort of situations or issue. But I did hear
23 something, and I want to explore it a little bit
24 with you.

25 You just sort of said that "when you poke"

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 106

1 -- I think you said yesterday, "When you poke the
2 bear," and I think today you just said it, "When you
3 kicked the hornet's nest." And I think yesterday,
4 you also said, "When you kicked the bee's nest."
5 What do you mean? What is that? Is that an action?
6 Is somebody taking a specific action or something
7 that I should -- you can elaborate a little bit more
8 in detail here?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran, I'm
10 going to allow the question because Representative
11 Fine did say it, so I think it's fair game. But I
12 do want to keep our questions today on the substance
13 of the bill.

14 Representative Fine, you're recognized.

15 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you. I'd
16 answer it this way. Sometimes when an issue comes
17 to the fore, you identify problems. So let me give
18 you an analogy of something else that I worked on
19 which was somewhat similar.

20 Several years ago, we realized that a
21 university in the state of Florida had effectively
22 stolen \$85 million and used it to do something that
23 they shouldn't have done. As we dug into that
24 issue, something we didn't expect to be dealing
25 with, we learned the problem partly happened because

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 107

1 universities were sitting on billions of dollars of
2 excess cash. The hornet's nest had been kicked.
3 The issue arose to the service. We discovered a
4 problem, and then we came and tackled it. That's
5 what's happened here. The hornet's nest was kicked.
6 The bee's nest was kicked. The bear was poked, I
7 could probably come up with six or seven other
8 analogies. But that happened. An issue came to the
9 surface, we started taking a look at it, and we
10 identified this issue.

11 THE COURT: Representative Duran.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: All right. I'm not
13 trying to be cutesy here. I'm trying to understand
14 --

15 MR. SPEAKER: Let's ask a question on the
16 bill, okay?

17 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 I'm trying to get an answer. I think
20 there's some level of specificity that I'm trying to
21 get at it. We are here in a special session about
22 special districts. Maybe that might be the reason
23 this is being discussed right now, but we are
24 eliminating specific special districts.

25 So let me do this. There are six special

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 108

1 districts that potentially will be eliminated
2 because of the bill that you're proposing, the
3 legislation that's in front of us. Can you walk me
4 through what each one of these special districts'
5 actions, may have been the emergency, or some
6 situation of time-sensitive nature, maybe, you can
7 identify as to why we need to take action right now,
8 today?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

10 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you. We don't
11 have to take action today. We could choose to vote
12 down the bills, but this was brought up in the call
13 by the Governor as something that he wanted us to
14 address. We are not targeting six special
15 districts. We're actually targeting 100 percent of
16 the special districts that failed over the last 55
17 years to update themselves in order to be consistent
18 with the 1968 Constitution.

19 I will tell you, again, as you kick the
20 hornet's nest, one of those six districts was
21 required by law to do that at some point in the last
22 20 years and chose not to do that. It is not Reedy
23 Creek, which would be your obvious question, but
24 they were all asked to do it. And, interestingly,
25 in the case of Reedy Creek, because you're

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 109

1 interested in that, I believe, they have, multiple
2 times, gone out for special debt financing and other
3 things where they've had multiple opportunities to
4 do what 127 other special districts chose to do,
5 which is update to that post 1968 constitutional
6 world, and they did not.

7 Again, you kick the hornet's nest, issues
8 rise up. I'm glad we're dealing with it right now.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran.

10 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 So when I listened to your explanation
13 yesterday and your answers right now, we keep
14 saying, "When you kicked the hornet's nest" Who is
15 "you" in this situation that we were talking about?

16 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Members, I'm
17 going to -- Representative Fine, you can answer that
18 question. We're six minutes inward, we are yet to
19 get to the substance of the bill.

20 Representative Fine.

21 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Sure. I'm not
22 tending to be evasive. I mean, I think the issue of
23 special districts arose around all of the media
24 tension and subject to when Disney began speaking
25 about bills that we actually hadn't passed in this

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 110

1 Legislature. And so I think that arose the issue of
2 special districts. People went and started taking a
3 look at them and they discovered these sorts of
4 issues. I think that's what happens. When an issue
5 rises to the surface, as I mentioned in the case of
6 UCF, sometimes problems are found that should then
7 be tackled. And obviously, in this case, the
8 Governor of the state of Florida said, go and fix it
9 this session, and this is our solution to do it.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 All right. So let me ask you a question
14 that I think will kind of helped me understand this.
15 So the hornet's nest in the situation we're talking
16 about, you keep explaining the reason why is, I
17 guess, us or you. And what we're going to do here
18 is eliminate -- what we're proposing to do is by
19 June next year, if we do not take any other action
20 and the Governor signs this bill, there will be six
21 districts potentially who will be removed, special
22 districts that will be eliminated. And I think if
23 you could elaborate on what is the process then
24 between now and then for those districts? Do you
25 have any idea? Has there been any discussion

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 111

1 between you and the Governor's office as to what
2 needs to be done or what the impact might be for
3 those special districts in preparation for being
4 dissolved?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

6 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you.

7 And that is a great question relevant to
8 the substance of the bill. So the bill says that
9 these six special districts will be sunsetted on
10 June 1st of next year. If they don't do something
11 that frankly they should have done a long time ago,
12 which is become consistent with the 1968
13 Constitution, the process to do that -- some of them
14 may say, look, we're good. We were created 55-plus
15 years ago. No one's ever really thought about it.
16 Maybe we don't need it anymore. That's certainly a
17 possibility.

18 In the case of others, if they wanted, they
19 can come to us. They would have a local bill
20 filled. That local bill could be filed by any
21 member of the Legislature. So I could, for example,
22 file the bill to reconstitute the Reedy Creek
23 Improvement District or any of the other ones. And
24 then that bill would go through the local bill
25 process, where the delegation in which that special

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 112

1 district was would have to decide if they wanted it
2 brought to the Legislature as a local bill. If they
3 vote yes, it would come as a local bill, and then it
4 would go through our legislative process the same
5 way as any other local bill would. If it passed the
6 House and the Senate, it would go to the Governor,
7 and the Governor would sign it. That is the process
8 to reconstitute these districts, as has been done
9 127 other times over the past 55 years.

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 I just have one last final question, and I
14 think in both your explanation yesterday, I heard
15 you -- and I think, also in social media, you were
16 kind of explaining the necessity for this bill. You
17 had mentioned that Disney is a guest of the state.
18 And set aside Disney, this idea of a company being a
19 guest of state, can you explain to me what that
20 means? Because I'm just kind of looking up the
21 definition of guest, and understanding --

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Duran, can we
23 ask the question on the substance of the bill?
24 You're recognized.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Mr. Speaker -- yeah

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 113

1 -- and in all due respect, yes. And I think this is
2 a part of the substance of the bill because we are
3 taking action because of a particular company's
4 actions, I would propose, and it's being promoted
5 that way on social media. And I think if you are a
6 company operating in the state of Florida, this
7 potentially can impact your -- the way you operate,
8 the way you decide to speak out or conduct
9 yourselves. And so to my -- I'm just trying to get
10 to the core essence of what we're dealing with here,
11 and that's really why I'm trying to get him to give
12 me some more information for it.

13 MR. SPEAKER: I totally understand,
14 Representative Duran, why you're asking the
15 question. I think, obviously, I expect you're going
16 to address that issue eloquently in debate tomorrow.
17 Today, in questions, we've got 34 minutes, and I
18 want to have opportunities for folks to ask
19 questions like the one you just asked, which is
20 about the mechanics of this bill and how it impacts
21 special districts and so forth. You're recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE DURAN: Back to
23 Representative Willhite.

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite,
25 you're recognized.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 114

1 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Mr. Speaker,
2 would you recognize Representative Hinson?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson, you're
4 recognized.

5 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker. I was a little surprised and caught
7 off guard, but thank you.

8 Representative Fine, we're back at it again
9 today. How many jobs will be lost by the
10 elimination of this district?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

12 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 That will be a decision of the local
15 governments that get the districts, should that
16 happen, using their home rule authority, which is
17 something I've thought, in the back rows, you all
18 seem to like.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: I think, yesterday
21 you said 80,000. Part of those job losses will
22 include the Reedy Creek firefighters. What will
23 happen to them, do you know?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

25 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 115

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 I'm going to do many things today. I'm not
3 going to allow my words to be misstated. What I
4 said yesterday, when you incorrectly asked how many
5 jobs worked for Disney and said 10,000, and I
6 corrected you. And I said 80,000. None of those
7 80,000 work for the Reedy Creek Improvement
8 District.

9 That said, to try to answer your question,
10 there are 382 employees of the Reedy Creek
11 Improvement District, and what happens to those
12 employees will be the decision of the local
13 governments using their home rule powers to do what
14 they think best.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson.

16 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: Thank you so much
17 for that final answer. We have to wait for the
18 different counties to decide, the local authority?
19 By that, you mean the two counties or three counties
20 that these areas govern?

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

22 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Ah, there we go.
23 Some of you might have been happy about that. So
24 that will be a decision -- first off, there's many
25 decisions. The folks behind Reedy Creek may seek to

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 116

1 bring their charter up into compliance with the 1968
2 constitution. If they do that, that will be a
3 discussion that happens, you know, over the next
4 year or so. Should that not happen, should they not
5 seek to renew or should the Legislature and the
6 Governor not renew it, under Florida law, those
7 assets and liabilities and everything else would
8 transfer to those local governments.

9 In this specific case of Reedy Creek,
10 because I know that's the one you're interested in -
11 - and I'm happy to talk about any of the six. Reedy
12 Creek actually is spread across four local
13 governments. There is a portion South of Osceola
14 Orange County line, and then there's a portion north
15 of the Osceola Orange County line. That portion
16 north of the Osceola Orange County line actually has
17 unincorporated Orange County, as well as two cities,
18 the City of Bay Lake, Florida, and the City of Lake
19 Buena Vista, Florida. It will be up to Orange
20 County again, using those glorious home rule powers
21 to make a decision about how they split that between
22 them and those two cities?

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson.

24 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: Thank you so much.
25 Thank you so much for that answer.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 117

1 Yesterday, you had not talked to any of
2 those counties, but you said you would do it right
3 after the meeting. Have you had an opportunity to
4 talk to those counties?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

6 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 Again, that was not what I said yesterday.
9 I think I was asked have I spoken to voters and
10 things like that. I had spoken to -- prior to the
11 meeting, a representative of one of the two counties
12 had reached out to me prior to the meeting to ask
13 questions. I had that conversation yesterday. I've
14 not had any additional conversation since.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson.

16 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 Does this movement require a referendum?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

20 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 It does not.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson.

24 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: I believe it does,
25 and I believe this violates the Constitution.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 118

1 However, from the proclamation, it says it is
2 necessary to review such independent special
3 districts to ensure that they are appropriately
4 serving the public interest. So what example do you
5 have that this special district is not appropriately
6 serving the public interest?

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

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

10 I reject the premise of the question. That
11 is not what the statute says.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Hinson.

13 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: Repeat that,
14 please?

15 MR. SPEAKER: I think he said it's not what
16 the statute says.

17 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: I'm sorry, sir?

18 MR. SPEAKER: He said it's not what the
19 statute says.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: It's not what the
21 statute said. I heard.

22 So one final question. We have kicked the
23 bear or kicked the hornet's nest. Someone has. Do
24 we care about the consequences of this action we're
25 taking today?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 119

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

2 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker.

4 We do, which is why these aren't sunsetted
5 immediately. They're sunsetted in June 1st of next
6 year. So there's the ability to have a discussion
7 about how to deal with this over the next year. It
8 also provides those local governments, if they
9 choose not to get these special districts
10 reinstated, time to come up with a plan for how to
11 handle it. If it was a knee-jerk reaction, we would
12 just say they're gone today. So people have between
13 now and June 1st, which I would note is after next
14 year's regular session, to figure out those things.

15 MR. SPEAKER: You have a follow up,
16 Representative Hinson?

17 REPRESENTATIVE HINSON: My final question
18 and comment is I believe it is a knee-jerk reaction.
19 I came back here to deal with constitutional maps.

20 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

21 MR. SPEAKER: Members, just as a reminder,
22 tomorrow is debate on this bill. I'd ask you not to
23 have biting comments in your responses to questions,
24 or in your questions, or in your responses to
25 answers to questions. I'm sure we'll have a great

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 120

1 opportunity for all of us to do that tomorrow to
2 your heart's content. However, today is about
3 questions on the substance of the bill.

4 Representative Willhite.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker. Will you recognize Representative
7 Thompson?

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Thompson,
9 you're recognized.

10 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 Representative Fine, you indicated a few
13 minutes ago that the responsibilities of the special
14 districts would then move to local government. And
15 in the case of Reedy Creek, they manage flood
16 control, utilities, roadways, emergency services,
17 pest control, parking, conservation, they build
18 public roads, transportation, bridges. What is the
19 cost to local government now to support those kind
20 of operations?

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

22 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 I'm going to try to answer that question in
25 a different way. Last year, Reedy Creek spent about

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 121

1 \$178 million operating itself, raising the money
2 from Reedy Creek. One of the options that will be
3 available to those local governments, should they
4 choose to do that using their home rule authority,
5 would be to create an MSTU that would purely
6 replicate this exact same structure at no cost to
7 the taxpayers. They could redo it exactly how it's
8 being done today, except they would have the home
9 rule control. We would be de-preempting effectively
10 this special district from being under the auspices
11 of those two counties and those two cities.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Thompson.

13 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Representative Fine, speaking of the
16 taxpayer, what would be the cost, the additional
17 cost for Floridians and taxpayers if Reedy Creek did
18 not fund the kind of services that I described
19 earlier?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

21 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 I mean, that's sort of a hypothetical
24 question, but I would answer with a hypothetical
25 answer. If the four local governments using their

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 122

1 home rule authority wish to continue having those
2 functions, continue using the funds that exist
3 today, they would be able to do that. And so the
4 answer would be zero.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Thompson.

6 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker. And this is my final question.

8 We many times give incentives for companies
9 to move to Florida. Do you perceive this to be a
10 disincentive for Reedy Creek, for Disney to stay in
11 Florida rather than move someplace else?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

13 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 I don't mean to be flippant, but I don't
16 think it'd be really easy to put, you know,
17 Cinderella's Castle on a truck and drive it
18 somewhere else. That said, I don't think this
19 Legislature would ever allow another company to
20 independently govern itself as Disney was allowed in
21 1967. So as the universe of companies that are
22 allowed to self-govern is one, and it hasn't
23 happened in the last 55 years. And I don't see it
24 happening again. I don't think so. In fact, I
25 think one could argue it could be good from a

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 123

1 business development perspective.

2 So, for example, Disney has competitors
3 that do not enjoy these same special privileges -for
4 example, Universal. Disney has four theme parks;
5 Universal has three. Universal doesn't get to
6 create the Jurassic Park Improvement District to
7 govern itself. They have to abide by the laws of
8 the cities and the counties where they exist.

9 So to some degree, outside companies might
10 say, oh, good, a special privilege that's extended
11 to one of my competitors no longer exists. We're
12 all on the exact same playing field.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Thompson.

14 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 And Representative Fine, Cinderella's
17 Castle has existed. They just celebrated 50 years,
18 and bring people from throughout the world to
19 Central Florida. And the example that you used is
20 that you don't have other districts that govern
21 themselves; is that correct?

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

23 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 No. That was not what I said. This Reedy

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 124

1 Creek Improvement District is the only example where
2 we effectively allow a company to self-govern. We
3 don't say to Harris Corporation, which is one of the
4 larger employers in my district, you can have the
5 Harris Corporation Improvement District and govern
6 yourself. We don't say to Amazon or we don't say to
7 Universal or any other large employer, you can
8 create your own self-governing unit. This is a
9 unique situation for a single company that has
10 competitors that do not benefit from those same
11 provisions that they do.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Thompson.

13 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 I represent the area where Disney is
16 located. It's the largest employer in Central
17 Florida. Is this a job-killing bill?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

19 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 I don't believe so. I mean, the services,
22 the functions will still continue. They'll just be
23 part of the local government. Again, I would
24 believe that those advocates of home rule would
25 think that this would be a real big benefit.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 125

1 Because now, instead of some big faceless company
2 being able to govern itself, we'd have local control
3 and local politicians who know their communities
4 best, who would be able to really make sure things
5 are being governed in the best way possible.

6 So for those advocates who constantly come
7 in here talking about the benefits of home rule, I
8 would think this would be a huge benefit for the
9 area, because now we would be giving a whole lot of
10 power back to those four municipalities to govern
11 appropriately.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Thompson.

13 REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 And, Representative Fine, how long, in your
16 understanding, would it take for a local government
17 to figure all of this out, whereas Disney's had over
18 50 years to perfect the operations that they
19 currently are responsible for?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

21 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 And sort of not to be nuanced about it, but
24 Reedy Creek Improvement District is separate.
25 Disney doesn't run it. It is an independent

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 126

1 district. You're talking about 382 employees, the
2 overwhelming majority, which by the way work for the
3 fire department. So the amount of things that would
4 have to be figured out over the next year is truly
5 not all that great. I believe a year would be
6 certainly adequate in order to do that.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.
8 Representative Willhite.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
10 Mr. Speaker. Do you recognize Representative
11 Gottlieb?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Gottlieb,
13 you're recognized. Any questions?

14 REPRESENTATIVE GOTTLIEB: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 Rep Fine, I just have one question. Can
17 you tell me who authored this bill?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

19 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 It's my name on the top. It's my bill.

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Would you
24 recognize Representative Smith?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 127

1 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 Chair Fine, yesterday you said in committee
4 on your closing remarks, you got me on one thing.
5 This bill does target one company, well, Disney
6 World.

7 So my question is: why not just name the
8 Reedy Creek District in the bill since they are the
9 target. Is that not legal? And did you have to
10 write it as a general law to void your bill being
11 declared invalid?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

13 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 The reason for that -- the reason I made
16 that statement in committee is because this bill
17 does affect 100 percent of the companies that are
18 allowed to self-govern in the state of Florida.
19 There is only one. There's not one of ten. There's
20 one of one, so 100 percent of the companies in that
21 situation are being affected. I think the issue is
22 this pre 1968 issue is a legitimate issue.

23 One of these other five special districts
24 has the right to tell property owners that live five
25 miles outside the border of their special district

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 128

1 what they can do with their land. I mean, I want
2 you to understand that you don't live in the special
3 district. You don't have any say. You don't pay
4 taxes. You don't get to vote for the people that
5 are in charge. But because you live 4.7 miles away,
6 that special district can tell you what you can do
7 with your land. That's not in Reedy Creek. That's
8 in another one of these. So there are odd things
9 that exist in all six of these pre-constitution
10 charters that we are saying need to be taken a look
11 at over the next year.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Chair Fine, you disacknowledged that the
16 other six special districts are caught up in it.
17 Are they just, I guess, a casualty of this vendetta
18 against Disney? Or did they also kick a hornet's
19 nest as well, and that's why we're targeting them in
20 general law?

21 MR. SPEAKER: I think the last answer is
22 responsive to that. Do you have additional --

23 Representative Fine, you're recognized.

24 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
25 Mr. Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 129

1 I reject the premise of the question.

2 Again, what we were looking into were special
3 districts, and we found that there were issues in
4 all of them. The analogy I would use again -- I've
5 used the UCF analogy. I will use it again. When we
6 had the issue with the misappropriation of \$85
7 million at UCF, we recognized that this was a
8 problem at all 12 of our state universities and 28
9 colleges. So we didn't just address the funding
10 issues that we found at UCF. We addressed them in
11 all of them.

12 That hornet's nest, again, the theft of \$85
13 million kicked a hornet's nest that made us
14 recognize there was an issue that was broader, and
15 we went and tackled it. We're doing the same thing
16 here.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

18 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 Thank you, Chair Fine, for explaining it in
21 that way because you're mentioning UCF and the
22 justification there. What did Disney do? Did they
23 violate any kind of state-issued guidance? Did they
24 break the law, or did they just hurt your feelings?

25 MR. SPEAKER: You don't have to answer

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 130

1 that, Representative Fine.

2 Representative Smith, do you have a
3 question on the bill? You're recognized.

4 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 And with all due respect, this is crafted
7 specifically on the bill which has been declared
8 repeatedly as being motivated by political
9 retaliation and retribution.

10 So my question here, Chair Fine, is you
11 mentioned before, Harris Corporation, you know, the
12 reason we're not going after them is they don't
13 govern themselves. Fair, but also I suppose they
14 didn't kick the hornet's nest. So if the Harah's
15 Corporation begins standing up for trans-kids, would
16 you craft a bill to punish them as well?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith, that is
18 not on the substance of the bill. I anticipate that
19 you're going to have opportunity tomorrow to debate
20 and raise all the issues that you'd like to raise,
21 but today, this is about questions on the substance
22 of the bill. Do you have a question on the
23 substance and mechanics of the bill? You're
24 recognized.

25 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: No. Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 131

1 Mr. Speaker. The answers are very clear. No
2 further questions.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite

4 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Do you recognize
5 Representative Bartleman?

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Bartleman,
7 you're recognized.

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

10 I have a serious concern about the \$2
11 billion worth of debt that this special district
12 has. Will that debt then be passed on to the two
13 counties that are taking over this special
14 district's responsibilities?

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

16 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 As I've reviewed their financial statements
19 of \$1.1 billion in debt but to answer your specific
20 question, this is what happens in statute when a
21 special district is dissolved. We have 1800 of
22 them, and what happens is all assets and all
23 liabilities are given back to the local governments,
24 but as is the ability to raise the revenues that
25 those special district previously had done.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 132

1 So, yes, they will assume -- somehow those
2 four districts will assume that \$1.1 billion, but
3 they will also have the ability to gain and recoup
4 the revenues that previously were paying for that
5 debt. And in theory, they will be made whole.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Bartleman.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BARTLEMAN: Thank you,
8 Mr. Speaker.

9 Are you concerned about compounding that
10 debt unto those counties' existing debt and how that
11 will impact the bond rating of those counties and
12 their ability to go forth with other projects that
13 are important to their citizens?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

15 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 I'm not, and this actually goes to -- I
18 actually know something about it instead of
19 politics. The revenue stream it uses to support
20 those bonds is very stable, and so any bond rating
21 agency would acknowledge that when they're thinking
22 through the bond. These bonds do not have a lot of
23 risk in general.

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Bartleman.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BARTLEMAN: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 133

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Hypothetically, is it possible that Disney,
3 who you claim clicked the hornet's nest, could, like
4 any other industry in Florida, be afraid to operate
5 in Florida now because of retribution, because they
6 believe something different, and pack up their toys
7 and walk away, thus leaving --

8 There are many scenarios. They could stop
9 investing in that area. They could build another
10 park somewhere else that would be their main park.
11 Then they leave, and the revenues are not there,
12 thus strapping those taxpayers with a private
13 companies' debt. And we're on the hook for
14 everything because if I was a company like Disney,
15 if there was a way, I would find a way to pack up my
16 toys and walk away after this.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

18 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 Again, I think in the case of the situation
21 you're talking about, this is sort of an
22 impossibility to do. However, again, what I would
23 note is if it requires special treatment, the
24 ability to self-govern in order to recruit a company
25 to operate in Florida, I think we have much bigger

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 134

1 problems. As I said before, by eliminating, should
2 that be what happens, special privileges from one
3 company to operate in a competitive marketplace,
4 you're actually opening up the market for the
5 existing competitors and potentially new ones.

6 I would argue you could make a case that
7 other theme park companies might go great. The
8 deck's not stacked against me. I'm going to build a
9 theme park in Florida. So I think you could make
10 the argument the other way just as well because
11 again, what we're talking about are special
12 privileges that no other company in the state of
13 Florida enjoys.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite

15 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Do you recognize
16 Representative Arrington?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Arrington,
18 you're recognized.

19 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 Chair Fine, do you know how many active
22 construction projects are currently going in Reedy
23 Creek?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

25 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 135

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 I don't know the exact number, but I know
3 that it is substantial.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Arrington.

5 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 And, Chair Fine, do you know what will
8 happen to these jobs and these projects if this bill
9 passes?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

11 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 Nothing for the next year, but then it will
14 be up to those, you know, great in-touch-with-the-
15 community local politicians who will use their home
16 rule authority to manage things best as opposed to
17 this unaccountable-to-voter special district where
18 the Legislature has preempted those outstanding
19 local elected officials from doing their jobs.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Arrington.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 And I believe you answered those before but
24 I just want to check. So those local governments
25 that are so excited to take on these projects, have

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 136

1 you spoken to them, and have they voiced those
2 opinions to you?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

4 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 As I said before, one of the four
7 municipalities has reached out to me, and I have
8 spoken to them.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Arrington.

10 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 And, Chair Fine, do you mind sharing that
13 conversation or what their feedback was. Were they
14 in support of this legislation?

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

16 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 I don't mind sharing it. It was a lobbyist
19 for one of the four, and they really were just
20 calling to ask questions. I mean, it wasn't the
21 elected officials themselves. And, again, there's
22 opportunity over the next year to have those
23 discussions. The idea isn't -- half the bill speaks
24 to the idea of re-chartering should these local
25 elected officials in these special districts wish to

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 137

1 continue to go down this path.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Arrington.

3 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Thank you,
4 Mr. Speaker.

5 So I just want to clarify then. So our
6 local governments elected officials or the folks
7 that are employed there, they have not been reached
8 out to or that have not discussed this with you?

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Arrington, I
10 think he's now answered that several times. You
11 have additional questions?

12 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker. I just have one more, please.

14 Then, Chair Fine, do you know would these
15 roads then, should this bill pass, will they become
16 county or state roads that are inside of Reedy
17 Creek?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

19 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 As would happen in any dissolution of a
22 special district, those assets would be transferred
23 to those four municipalities. All of the roads that
24 will be south of the Osceola-Orange County line
25 would become Osceola County roads. All of the roads

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 138

1 north of the Osceola-Orange County line would be up
2 to Orange County, using their home rule powers to
3 decide whether they want them to be county roads, or
4 in the case of the roads in Bay Lake, Florida, and
5 Lake Buena Vista, Florida, do they want those roads
6 to become city roads. But that will be one of great
7 home rule decisions that they get to make.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Could you
10 recognize Representative Daley.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Daley, you're
12 recognized.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 And good afternoon, Representative Fine, I
16 think you know or may know over the last couple of
17 years, I've actually worked pretty extensively -- I
18 know Chair Toledo knows this -- on reforming special
19 districts particularly as it relates to four of my
20 districts.

21 As a matter of fact, one of those four is
22 on the chopping block here. So I guess what I ask
23 is, you know, you keep mentioning, well, this has,
24 you know, happened since the whatever it is, 1968.
25 So if that's the case and it's been going on for

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 139

1 that long, why the urgency? Is the urgency is
2 simply because the hornet's nest was kicked that all
3 of a sudden, we've have this brainstorm of good
4 idea, and we need to ram it through during the
5 special session so much so we added it to the call?
6 And now we're before special session?

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Daley,
8 Representative Fine has already answered that
9 question a number of times specifically from
10 Representative Duran. You're recognized.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thanks, Mr. Speaker,
12 and so that's fine.

13 So to go in that same direction then, I
14 guess, what did the Sunshine Water Control District
15 do to kick the hornet's nest? Was that just
16 collateral damage?

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine has also
18 answered that question, but since it was specific to
19 a particular district, do you want to say anything
20 about that particular district, Representative Fine?

21 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you.

22 I think the issue for that district would
23 be, again, over the last 55 years. And I should
24 check. They may be the one that broke the law. One
25 of the other five did. I just don't remember which

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 140

1 one. But they haven't done what a 127 other special
2 districts have done, which is modernize their
3 charter to be consistent with that constitution of
4 1968. That is the issue that we uncovered.

5 Again, the hornet's nest is kicked. You
6 say what's going on? You start taking a look, and
7 you go, oh, my gosh. There is an issue. I don't
8 subscribe to the notion that you should kick the can
9 down the road when you find a problem. We found a
10 problem. The Governor wanted to address in a call,
11 so we're getting it done. And by the way, by doing
12 it now, we're giving them more time to figure out
13 how to resolve this before June 1st of next year.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Daley.

15 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 And thank you for that answer. You know,
18 Chair Fine, quick question. And it goes, you know,
19 based on the substance of the bill and based on your
20 own explanation, if this body doesn't act, if this
21 bill goes through and passes and this body doesn't
22 act -- or the local bill, they get filed and
23 everybody doesn't move for one reason or another.
24 Maybe it's politics. Maybe it's policy, whatever
25 the reason. If that plays out, you've already said

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 141

1 that all of the assets and the liabilities will be
2 transferred to the local government. So based on
3 the substance of the bill, have you considered
4 renaming this bill The Central Florida Tax Increase
5 Act Of 2022?

6 MR. SPEAKER: The question about the
7 substance of the bill. The question about renaming
8 it is not about the substance of the bill. You have
9 a question?

10 REPRESENTATIVE DALEY: Well, I have five
11 other name ideas, Mr. Speaker, but I guess I'll hold
12 them for later.

13 MR. SPEAKER: I'm sure we'll hear them in
14 debate.

15 Additional questions?

16 Representative Willhite.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
18 . Speaker.

19 Do you recognize Representative Woodson?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson, you
21 are recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 Chair Fine, I know you answered some of my
25 questions yesterday, but I have one for point of

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 142

1 clarification, actually. Regarding the \$1.1 billion
2 debt that Rep Bartleman mentioned, you stated that
3 government has the ability to pick that up, right,
4 if they picked up the services; is that correct?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

6 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you.

7 On the Florida statue, any assets and any
8 liabilities of the special district that is
9 dissolved get reverted to the local governments
10 where the special districts are. In the case of
11 Reedy Creek, that \$1.1 billion would be allocated to
12 those two counties and those two cities.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 And you also mentioned that they have the
17 ability to raise the revenues; is that correct?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

19 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
20 Mr. Speaker.

21 Sure. They could create a municipal --
22 MSTU that would replicate the revenue structure that
23 Reedy Creek is doing right now and generate those
24 revenues that are necessary to handle that debt
25 obligation. Again, we're going to trust those great

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 143

1 local officials to use their home rule powers to run
2 this territory, that the Legislature had prevented
3 them from doing, preempting their ability to do that
4 for 55 years.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 And, Rep Fine, if they raised the revenues,
9 who do you anticipate to pick up those revenues, if
10 not the taxpayers?

11 THE SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

12 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 There are taxpayers that are paying the
15 revenues today. If they structured the MSTU in a
16 certain way, it would be the same taxpayers that are
17 paying those taxes today. Those monies aren't
18 generated, like out of the air. There are taxpayers
19 that are paying the taxes to the Reedy Creek
20 Improvement District today. Again, if using their
21 home rule powers, these local politicians who've
22 been preempted for more than 50 years thought this
23 was the right thing to do. They could set up the
24 MSTU to have those same taxpayers continue to pay
25 those same taxes.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 144

1 MR. SPEAKER: Rep Woodson.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: And thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker, for the indulgence. I really
4 appreciate this.

5 Rep Fine, my question to you. At this time
6 now where we have people in our communities,
7 taxpayers in our communities who can't afford to
8 even put food on their table, is that the right
9 thing to do at this time?

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

11 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 There's nothing about this bill that would
14 require assuming, again, any of these special
15 districts were not renewed. They would require a
16 different taxpayer to begin to be paying anything
17 again. If you believe, as I hear all the time, that
18 we should trust local elected officials to do what's
19 best for their local communities, they will make
20 those decisions for what is best, again, getting rid
21 of the yoke of 50 years of preemption by the state
22 of Florida.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
25 Mr. Speaker, and this would be my last question.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 145

1 In light of the fact, Chair Fine, that this
2 was done so quick -- we got the bill yesterday, and
3 no one had the time to really vet anything in the
4 bill -- would that be fair to us to really take the
5 time to give the taxpayers more time to vet this
6 process in order for you to come up with this bill?

7 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

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

11 The bills aren't very long, so it doesn't
12 take very long to read. Again, what I would say is
13 the half of the bill deals with the explicit notion
14 of seeking reauthorization prior to June 1 next
15 year. You can make -- you can have the belief,
16 because it's true that there will be an ongoing
17 discussion over the next year, I would presume, with
18 these six special districts and their legislators
19 and the Legislature in general about the right path
20 forward. It does not say these are going to be
21 sunsetted, and there is nothing that can be done
22 about it. It says these 6 are going to do the exact
23 same thing the 127 have done before it, which is
24 come into consistency with the 1968 constitution.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 146

1 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Do you recognize
2 Representative Learned?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned,
4 you're recognized.

5 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 And thank you, Representative. You know, a
8 couple of months ago, three weeks, I guess, we
9 passed the Local Business Protection Act. And if I
10 remember quoting the bill sponsored that day, he
11 said that it was passed because of punitive actions
12 and overreaches of big government. And it basically
13 says, when a government -- a big government does
14 something that punishes a business or hurts a
15 business, they're able to sue and recoup 15 percent
16 of their business losses. My question is: are we
17 going to be liable for 15 percent of Disney's global
18 losses if that happens?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

20 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 I'm not familiar enough with that bill that
23 you're describing and how it would relate in this
24 instance. However, if memory does serve -- and that
25 was a discussion, again, about those great local

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 147

1 politicians and not what we do here at the state
2 level.

3 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

4 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 And you're correct. The bill said that the
7 state government's actions aren't -- we're holding
8 local government to a different standard than we
9 hold ourselves. That is true. But since we're
10 defaulting this to a local government --

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned, you
12 can save your debate comments for debate tomorrow.
13 You can ask your question. Your recognized.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker. And I'm sorry. I'm not trying to
16 debate. I'm just trying to clarify with, you know,
17 the answer here.

18 So if this is saying that the local
19 government is liable for these losses, and we are
20 putting all the responsibility, the debts onto that
21 local government. So now, that local government,
22 the middle class, you know, taxpayers of Orange
23 County are liable for Disney's global losses? Is
24 that because of this Twitter fight with the
25 Governor?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 148

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned,
2 Representative Fine already answered your question.
3 Do you have additional question?

4 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: I'm sorry,
5 Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry. I did not hear him
6 actually answer.

7 So we're transferring Disney's global
8 losses to a local government?

9 MR. SPEAKER: No, sorry. He did not say
10 that. You asked him a question about the bill that
11 was passed previously during session. He said that
12 he wasn't familiar that much with the process, but
13 if he recalled, it applied to local government.

14 Do you have an additional question? You're
15 recognized.

16 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker. And, you know, I guess not answer
18 aside.

19 So Disney Corporation is the largest
20 taxpayer of Reedy Creek Special District; is that
21 correct?

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

23 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 I believe that is the case.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 149

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

2 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker.

4 So the premise that I heard in your answers
5 to other people was that their continued tax
6 payments are servicing Reedy Creek's billions of
7 dollars of debt. So if that debt is now being
8 transferred to Orange County, is Disney still -- is
9 Disney now paying Orange County? Is that --

10 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

11 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you.

12 Talking to the logistics of it, that \$1.1
13 billion would be transferred to those four
14 municipalities. They could choose to create an MSTU
15 that would tax the current taxpayers in the same
16 way, generating those revenues from those taxpayers,
17 in this case, largely Disney, that could be used to
18 service that debt.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Follow-up.

20 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 So I guess my understanding is that the
23 premise for how we are not going to saddle middle
24 class taxpayers of Orange County with a billion
25 dollars of new debt, \$2 billion of new debt,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 150

1 depending on which one you're looking at, the
2 premise is because we assume that Orange County is
3 going to do something. It is not done by default,
4 right. We are assuming they are going to take an
5 action based on what we're doing here today. Do I
6 understand that correctly?

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

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

10 I understand your reluctance to trust local
11 politicians to do the right thing. However, yes.
12 We are assuming that these local politicians will
13 use their home rule authority to create an MSTU to
14 replicate the revenues that they would then use to
15 pay for these debts.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Last question,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 And I'm sorry. You keep saying this, but
20 you're saying to replicate the revenues. What
21 you're saying is raising taxes, correct?

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

23 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 No. I am not saying that at all. I want

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 151

1 to be clear about this. If Disney is paying a
2 million dollars to Reedy Creek, and instead of
3 paying that million dollars to Reedy Creek, they're
4 paying that same million dollars to the MSTU that
5 these local governments have created, it is still
6 \$1,000,000. It is not a tax increase. That's
7 simple math.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite, we
9 have time for one more question.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker. Do you recognize Representative
12 Joseph?

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph.

14 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you, |
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 As I mentioned in committee yesterday,
17 Florida Statute 189.072 governs the dissolution of
18 independent special districts. And at that time,
19 you acknowledge that that law was law. But it seems
20 that none of the requirements, in order to dissolve
21 a special district by the Legislature, have been
22 followed. And I wanted to know if you had anything
23 you wanted to add for the good of the body as to why
24 you're not following Florida law?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 152

1 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 As you chose to remind me yesterday, I'm
4 not an attorney, so I decided to go and learn
5 something that turns out you don't have to be an
6 attorney to understand the law. 189.072, says, "In
7 order for the Legislature to dissolve an active,
8 independent special district, created an operating
9 pursuant to a special act, the following things have
10 to be done." The bill that we're proposing today is
11 not a special act. Maybe they don't teach what
12 special acts are in law school. I don't know. But
13 there's nothing inconsistent with this bill today.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Joseph, one
15 follow-up. You're recognized.

16 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 So it's your position that the reason
19 you're not following the law that applies for the
20 dissolution of special districts is because, this --
21 your position is this particular law does not apply
22 because it's created by a special act. Is that my
23 understanding?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine, brief
25 answer.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 153

1 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 No, it's not. The law that we're passing
4 is entirely consistent. If you read, which I
5 presume they teach, it says, if you're going to
6 dissolve a special district pursuant to a special
7 act using a special act. We are not proposing to
8 pass a special act today. We are passing a general
9 bill. This is not simply a matter of
10 interpretation. This is simply how the law works.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Time having expired, we're in
12 amendments. Are there amendments?

13 COURT CLERK: On the desk, Mr. Speaker.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Pick up the first amendment.

15 COURT CLERK: Representative Eskamani
16 offered the following amendment with title,
17 Amendment Barcode 189965. Remove lines 23 through
18 31 and insert an amendment.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani,
20 you're recognized to explain your amendment.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you so
22 much, Mr. Speaker.

23 Members, you all know that I have always
24 been one of the most vocal voices when it comes to
25 corporate accountability. And I have filed other

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 154

1 amendments that unfortunately were out of order
2 around taxes issues, and maybe one day we'll get to
3 them. But I did sit in on the committee yesterday
4 and shared a lot of the concerns made by those who
5 are speaking to what dissolution would mean for
6 Orange, Osceola County of the Reedy Creek district,
7 in particular around the transfer of debt, also
8 around the fact that this is a independent district,
9 not a dependent district, which means the ad valorem
10 taxes that are collected to Reedy Creek disappear.
11 They're not transferred despite misinformation out
12 there.

13 And so hearing the concerns made by my
14 Republican colleagues, specifically, they pointed
15 out some powers of the special district that do seem
16 inappropriate. And so that speaks to the nuclear
17 fission power plant, which back in the 60s, I feel
18 like that was probably a very popular concept as it
19 was, you know, shining anew, but we have other types
20 of energy production today that have grown in
21 Florida. So this would strike that.

22 It would also strike eminent domain powers
23 that are outside of the district boundaries. It
24 would strike the ability to construct roads are
25 exclusive and that supersede the authority and

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 155

1 jurisdiction of FDOT. It would strike the ability
2 to build infrastructure projects outside of the
3 district boundaries, and you will not be able to
4 change the boundaries of the district without
5 another special act.

6 And, again, this is a scalpel approach
7 versus a sledgehammer. And I do think it's
8 important to examine all the special districts,
9 community development districts, but we should do so
10 with more public input.

11 To add this to a special session order, an
12 hour before some of us even got here, myself as an
13 example, is not good government. And so I do think,
14 especially, as a member of the Joint Legislative
15 Audit Committee, we audit special districts all the
16 time. We look at their finances. We decide if they
17 are problematic or not. And so for me, in bringing
18 this forward as an effort to hear what those
19 concerns were, what I've heard from the Governor,
20 and what I've heard from committee members, and to
21 do a scalpel instead of a sledgehammer.

22 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

23 MR. SPEAKER: Are there questions on the
24 amendment? Are there questions on the sponsor?

25 Seeing none, are there amendments to the

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 156

1 amendment?

2 Representative C. Smith, any questions?

3 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,

4 Mr. Speaker.

5 Representative Eskamani, you mentioned in
6 your presentation of the amendment that rather than
7 taking a sledgehammer, like Chair Fine is doing by
8 abolishing the Reedy Creek District, you're taking a
9 scalpel.

10 Are you essentially, with your amendment,
11 cutting to the chase and putting forward thoughtful,
12 researched reforms that are really the result of
13 community input and lots of stakeholders who have
14 voiced these concerns over many years; and kind of
15 cutting to the chase so that we don't have to deal
16 with this back and forth between the Governor and
17 Disney for the next year, which we know is political
18 theatre?

19 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith, I'm
20 confident that you can ask those questions without
21 mentioning other members or making comments about
22 other people that are irrelevant to the substance of
23 the bill.

24 Representative Eskamani, would you like to
25 answer that leading question? You're recognized.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 157

1 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 So, yes, Representative Smith. To some of
4 your questions, I just want to add that I don't
5 think even I can be as thoughtful as I want to be,
6 candidly, because, you know, this is not been on a
7 lot of our radars for a while now. Now, there are a
8 lot of other issues that I've given a lot of thought
9 to around combined reporting, looking at Chair
10 Payne.

11 And so, you know, I think there are so many
12 other concepts that we can, as a body, vet and
13 debate and understand. But I have to tell you that
14 even Orange, Osceola counties have not been able to
15 give us an analysis of the impact of this bill. I
16 just spoke to our tax collector this morning. It's
17 been really difficult to get specifics, to the point
18 where we're hearing rumors online, and it's not
19 actually speaking to what would dissolution look
20 like. But what I have heard are these shared
21 concerns about some of these authorities that are
22 granted that people don't like. And I feel like,
23 consistently, hearing those same concerns that would
24 apply equally to every special district is something
25 that we could consider in the short period time that

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 158

1 we have.

2 I don't think it's good government to
3 exercise punitive powers on one institution because
4 you're upset of what they did. If there are serious
5 concerns about some of these specifics in this
6 amendment, then let's address that. And let's not
7 exercise the bully pulpit for just punitive
8 measures.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Additional questions?

10 Representative Smith, I give you one
11 follow-up. You're recognized.

12 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Thank you, Representative Eskamani. Have
15 you heard from any Reedy Creek workers, any Disney
16 workers who are concerned they might be losing their
17 job? My understanding is that abolishing the Reedy
18 Creek District means abolishing the jobs of 356
19 people who work for the District and 400 utility
20 employees of Reedy Creek. So would your amendment,
21 at least, help them sleep at night and alleviate
22 their concerns that their job would be gone next
23 year when the district is abolished?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani.

25 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 159

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 Yes. And just to add to that, there is
3 also 2000-plus contract workers with the Reedy Creek
4 Improvement District. So though as we heard during
5 the earlier debate, there is, you know, 80,000-plus
6 jobs at Walt Disney World and many who are our
7 constituent. But the Reedy Creek District
8 specifically has, you know, 350 sum employees, and
9 then they have the utility at 400. And they have
10 2000 plus contractor workers.

11 And I have constituents who work at Reedy
12 Creek, and we also have firefighters who are with
13 the Reedy Creek Improvement District. That's about
14 200 firefighters. To be clear, members, these are
15 not firefighters that are with the County. They're
16 firefighters that have a Reedy Creek Improvement
17 District. These are very cool firefighters. They
18 are trained to know the theme parks. They're
19 trained to know how to deliver emergency services in
20 very crowded environments. They also are proud to
21 say that there has never been any life loss at Reedy
22 Creek due to fire. And that's because of the
23 strength of the team, but also of the building
24 permit, or actually, the building code in Reedy
25 Creek is stronger than that in the state of Florida.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 160

1 And so we have heard a lot of these
2 concerns. And so in order to alleviate those
3 concerns -- because what this bill does is create a
4 lot of uncertainty, especially for those workers.
5 And so what my amendment does is it eliminates some
6 of the wacky stuff that was mentioned in this
7 process, but it doesn't create the uncertainty of
8 job loss, doesn't create panic among Orange and
9 Osceola counties and surrounding areas. And it
10 doesn't allow government to be used as a tool of
11 punishment.

12 And so that's the point of this amendment
13 and I do hope folks take it seriously.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Fine, time has
15 expired, but I want to give you -- you've had your
16 mic up. So you have an opportunity to ask a
17 question. You're recognized.

18 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 Can you explain to me what the first line
21 or the first -- the six words of your bill means --
22 your amendment, "Notwithstanding any law to the
23 contrary?" Can you explain what that might mean to
24 the substance of your amendment?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 161

1 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you, sir,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 This was delivered to me from bill
4 drafting, and we asked them to draft an amendment
5 under very short notice to reflect our desire to
6 remove those pieces. If there's a correction you
7 want to make, if you agree with the substance, have
8 a correction you want to make, I encourage you to
9 file an amendment to the amendment. I would accept
10 it.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Yeah. One follow-up.

12 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you.

13 I will get to the broader point in debate.
14 Are you aware that your amendment -- since it says,
15 "a special district," you said -- but I heard this
16 is a scalpel not a club. Are you aware that your
17 amendment would affect 1843 special districts?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani.

19 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Mr. Speaker,
20 thank you.

21 I don't think any special district should
22 have these powers.

23 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Are there
24 amendments to the amendment?

25 SECRETARY: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 162

1 MR. SPEAKER: Are there substitute
2 amendments?

3 SECRETARY: None on the desk, Mr. Speaker.

4 MR. SPEAKER: We are in debate. Members
5 which to be recognized in debate. Representative
6 Fine.

7 REPRESENTATIVE FINE: Thank you,
8 Mr. Speaker.

9 I make two comments. This amendment does
10 nothing. That was the purpose of my -- actually,
11 literally, it accomplishes nothing. It says
12 notwithstanding any law to the contrary, you can't
13 do these seven or eight things. The six charters
14 for those special districts are laws to the
15 contrary. So it doesn't change any powers of any of
16 those six special districts. It accomplishes
17 nothing. But what it could do to a special district
18 that might not have a charter, including 22 in
19 Central Florida, is it might -- and actually, it
20 might. It would. it would affect their ability to
21 do eminent domain even with permission of the
22 landowners and surrounding counties.

23 It would actually do other things that are
24 good. It would say that they can't change the
25 boundary. If you are in a special district right

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 163

1 now or you're next to a special district and you buy
2 a piece of property and you want to move into that
3 special district, you can say, hey, take me in. And
4 if you can work that out with everybody, you can do
5 that. It would take that power away.

6 So the amendment does nothing to solve the
7 claim. And by the way, whereas what we're doing
8 goes after a class of 6 special districts out of
9 1800, this would target 1800 special districts.
10 With that, I ask you to vote it down.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative C. Smith in
12 debate.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Since this is debate, I think it's
16 important to correct the record on what the sponsor
17 has just mentioned that the amendment accomplishes
18 nothing. I think what he meant to say is that the
19 amendment does not accomplish his stated goal of
20 punishing corporation --

21 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith --
22 Representative Smith, you can debate on your own
23 behalf. You don't have to attack your colleagues in
24 debate. By all means, you can get to the point of
25 what you're saying without doing that.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 164

1 You're recognized, Representative Smith.

2 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker.

4 Again, I will restate that the reality is
5 that this bill -- this amendment, unfortunately, is
6 not targeting Walt Disney World and, therefore, must
7 be rejected. And I think it's important to clarify,
8 not to impugn anyone's character, that that is the
9 point of the underlying bill. That's not a
10 subjective statement. These are statements that
11 have been made by writers of the bill, that the
12 point is to attack Disney.

13 So, folks, if you are surprised by the fact
14 that Rep Eskamani's amendment impacts 1800 special
15 districts, oh, my God, how can we do that? Well,
16 that's because it's crafted in a way to really
17 address that these special districts shouldn't have
18 special privileges in a way that doesn't target
19 anyone or single them out. Isn't that what we
20 should be doing? Shouldn't we be writing policy
21 based on what we know is good for Floridians as
22 opposed to writing policy based on retribution
23 against people who spoke out against legislation?

24 I think Representative Eskamani's amendment
25 is a very good one. And if you actually believe

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 165

1 that special districts shouldn't get these special
2 favors, you will vote for Representative Eskamani's
3 amendment so that you can defend that it was not
4 targeted against any particular corporation that
5 kicked a hornet's nest. Thank you.

6 MR. SPEAKER: Additional debate?
7 Additional debate?

8 Representative Davis.

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

11 Just don't want to say much. But I will
12 add that I serve on that committee with
13 Representative Eskamani when it comes to auditing,
14 and this legislative body does have a process. It
15 has a process where stakeholders are able to come
16 and speak. We can hear both sides in that
17 committee. We know what's happening, when it's
18 coming to that community. And I think the sponsor
19 of this bill has actually brought a community before
20 us to be audited maybe not this year, but some years
21 back.

22 But special district with a charter,
23 special district without a charter, there is still a
24 process in place that this body holds dear. There
25 is a committee that deals with this. And we do have

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 166

1 a procedural process. So to have this before us --
2 and I will not allow the reason why we should be
3 here to go awry. I am angry that we are even
4 dealing with something other than the congressional
5 districts, that we're even talking about something
6 other than black representation. But we're here.
7 So I'm going to say this body has a process, and the
8 process is not being adhered to. We serve on
9 committees to help our communities come before us to
10 give their input. But when the process is not
11 convenient to us, then we find ourselves adding
12 things to an agenda that shouldn't be there.

13 So, again, there's a process in place.
14 Thank you, Representative, for bringing this
15 amendment forth. I encourage you all to stop
16 playing the games that we are playing. There is a
17 process for this in place. Please vote for this
18 amendment.

19 MR. SPEAKER: Time having expired for
20 debate, Representative Eskamani, you're recognized
21 in closing your amendment.

22 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you so
23 much, Mr. Speaker.

24 I just want to provide clarity for the
25 record that "notwithstanding" in that context means

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 167

1 no matter what any other law says. And I thank bill
2 drafting for their assistance, and I trust bill
3 drafting to help us when we have these amendments,
4 even when they're under such intense pressure.

5 With that said, I have many reasons that I
6 could also be angry or be mean, Mr. Speaker, but I
7 choose joy as my response. And I offer this
8 amendment full of joy, because I agree there are
9 some dynamics with special districts that don't make
10 sense, and you can quote me on that. And so what
11 we're doing is -- I pulled this from comments made
12 by the bill sponsor. I pulled this from comments
13 made by Governor Ron DeSantis, that it's not
14 appropriate for these type of powers to be granted
15 to special districts, no matter who is the special
16 district's beneficiary, right.

17 And so with that, I encourage folks to put
18 politics aside for a hot minute. Don't be petty,
19 and support this good amendment that is trying to
20 address the concerns that we've heard consistently
21 as legitimate concerns we've heard instead of being
22 punitive because you don't like something a company
23 said.

24 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Members, Representative

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 168

1 Eskamani having closed the bill, all in favor of
2 adoption of the amendment say, yea.

3 (Multiple yeas)

4 MR. SPEAKER: All oppose, no.

5 (Multiple nos)

6 MR. SPEAKER: Show the amendment fails.

7 Read the next amendment.

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

9 MR. SPEAKER: Read the next bill.

10 THE CLERK: By Representative Andrade,
11 House Bill 5C, a bill to be entitled "An act
12 relating to social media platforms."

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade,
14 you're recognized to explain your bill.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 And by deleting four lines in Florida
18 Statute House Bill 5C, removes from Florida law the
19 exemption from consumer protections on social media
20 platforms for companies that happen to own theme
21 parks in Florida.

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Willhite,
23 questions.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
25 Mr. Speaker, as you recognize Representative

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 169

1 Learned.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned, you're
3 recognized.

4 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
5 Mr. Speaker.

6 And thank you, Representative, for the
7 bill. I know yesterday we talked a little bit about
8 this. I just wanted to follow-up. Can you tell me
9 the reason this carve-out was placed in the bill in
10 the first place?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Representative Learned, the short answer is
15 no.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker.

19 In testimony on the House floor last year
20 when we were debating this, it was said it was to
21 protect children, specifically children on the
22 Disney Plus platform from predators and pedophiles
23 and comments, and so they can moderate their space.

24 So my question is: by removing this carve-
25 out, are we in any way putting kids in danger?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 170

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker.

4 Representative Learned, I don't recall that
5 comment being made on the floor. I might be
6 incorrect after reviewing the discussion on the
7 floor about the amendment. But not to sound like a
8 broken record on this, had you just read the
9 underlying bill, you'd see the two carve-outs and
10 exceptions to say, "Any restrictions on censorship
11 do not apply when a social media platform censors
12 based on obscenity, as defined by Florida Statute,
13 which is in line with the Communications Decency
14 Act, Section 230".

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

16 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 And thank you, Representative. Again, you
19 know, we're sitting here debating a carve-out from a
20 bill that is not enforceable because it's been found
21 unconstitutional by federal court. Can you help me
22 understand how -- what this amendment does if the
23 underlying bill doesn't seem to exist?

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

25 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 171

1 Mr. Speaker.

2 And, Representative Learned, we went over
3 this yesterday, and I was a little bit confused just
4 because Judge Hinkle's order, the title is not a
5 final order determination of constitutionality. The
6 title of his order is Preliminary Injunction. And I
7 know we discussed this yesterday, but preliminary
8 injunction is not a final decision at all. And if
9 you go to the Governor's special call, the call for
10 this special session, it lays out specifically why
11 this carve-out needed to be pulled out prior to oral
12 arguments on April 28th, regarding the underlying
13 bill, which is designed to protect Florida consumers
14 against unfair censorship by social media platforms.

15 MR SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

16 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 And thank you. I have no idea what any of
19 that means because I didn't go to law school. And
20 preliminary injunction, I don't fully understand.
21 So is the law enforceable?

22 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

23 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Speaker.

25 Representative Learned, the law currently,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 172

1 is not enforceable because it is currently
2 preliminarily enjoined. But if you have read Judge
3 Hinkle's preliminary injunction order, it said,
4 "This is simply a preliminary injunction, because
5 the ultimate facts have not been considered. And
6 with further analysis, my analysis might change."
7 And so even the judge who issued this order
8 acknowledged that with more facts and with a further
9 vetting of this case, his analysis might change
10 about exactly what would occur if he had to review
11 the statute for full constitutionality before being
12 enforced.

13 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
15 Mr. Speaker.

16 And I want to go back to a line of
17 questions I had on the last bill about the Local
18 Business Protection Act. So would that apply -- so
19 in that act that we passed a couple weeks ago, we
20 said that if a business had more than a 15 percent
21 reduction to their business revenue, that that
22 business is liable -- is able to sue. So if Disney
23 Plus, because of this dangerous behavior that can
24 now happen on their platform, because we repeal this
25 law, if they have a 15 percent reduction, can they

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 173

1 sue the State of Florida for their money?

2 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

3 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
4 Mr. Speaker.

5 And, Representative Learned, forgive my
6 incredulity, but the line of questions about some
7 conspiracy that suddenly pedophiles can run rampant
8 online is just apparently ridiculous. We have
9 Section 230. The Communications Decency Act already
10 prohibits obscenity, and Florida's Statue 847.001
11 also defines obscenity, and includes, child
12 pornography, and predatory behavior.

13 And the statue without the carve-out -- the
14 bill without the carve-out, applies to every other
15 social media platform. And so when this bill
16 passed, every other social media platform was
17 already relieved of any responsibility regarding the
18 prohibitions on censorship, if they were doing it to
19 sensor obscene comments and behavior.

20 So this carve-out was absolutely not
21 necessary for that purpose. And again, I'll also
22 cite on the Business Protection Act question portion
23 of your comment, part of the concern that Judge
24 Hinkle had, there were two causes findings out of
25 five related to this carve-out.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 174

1 And one was related to a violation of what
2 he called the "dormant commerce clause," which is
3 blatantly protectionist behavior, benefiting, you
4 know, home companies in your state. States are not
5 allowed to impermissibly do this. That's the
6 premise of the dormant commerce clause. It's like
7 the reverse of commerce clause. By doing this and
8 putting every single social media platform on the
9 exact same playing field, the bill becomes more
10 constitutional and absolutely does not affect any
11 kind of business protection act, issue or concern.

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 And thank you, Representative. You know,
16 it's funny, I was reading a lot. I was doing some
17 research for this, and I saw a lot of tweets from
18 colleagues of yours from the other side of the
19 aisle, trying to repeal Section 230. But now you
20 seem to be saying that Section 230 is the saving
21 grace here and it's going to protect us from
22 ourselves. So my question is: can Florida have a
23 law that protects kids online so that we have extra
24 protection, in case you guys have it your way and
25 you repeal Section 230?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 175

1 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
3 Mr. Speaker.

4 Representative Learned, I hate to sound
5 like a broken record, but Florida Statue 847.001
6 already prohibits obscenity and the underlying bill,
7 772, which says social media platforms can unfairly
8 censor, says you can absolutely censor in the event
9 of obscenity. So the level of kind of -- at this
10 point, it's become like a QAnon level of conspiracy
11 about like pedophile assets because of this type of
12 law. And it's getting a little bit frustrating to
13 keep trying to address and just ask you to read the
14 underlying bill. And I'll cite line 540 and 555
15 over the underlying bill. If you read it, address
16 your concerns completely.

17 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Learned.

18 REPRESENTATIVE LEARNED: Yeah, Mr. Speaker.
19 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

20 And, you know, it's a little frustrating,
21 because, you know, as the firestorm around us has
22 erupted around us in the last 48 hours, I have
23 personally been called a groomer on Twitter by
24 dozens and hundreds of people. So I'm sitting here
25 trying to protect kids in the State of Florida from

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 176

1 predatory behavior online, and it's from the other
2 side where I'm told we can't do more, right. So why
3 can't we do more to protect these kids? Why are we
4 even removing a layer of protection that exist to
5 keep kids safe? I understand your point. I get it.
6 Like, I hear you saying like we don't need it. But
7 it doesn't mean that it's bad, right. It doesn't
8 mean that having that protection isn't helpful.

9 So I guess the final question here is, is
10 this bill in anyway -- does this carve-out in any
11 way hurt kids? Can we just leave it in place and
12 then let the constitution of this law be debated in
13 the courts?

14 MR. SPEAKER: I think that's how you
15 started out this category of questions.

16 If you have something to additional to add,
17 Representative Andrade, you're recognized.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 Representative Learned, unless you are
21 saying that the Disney Cooperation does not
22 understand the definition of obscenity like Facebook
23 and Twitter and YouTube we assume already do.
24 You're treating them differently for no apparent
25 reason, and actually, for an unconstitutional

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 177

1 reason.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Additional question?

3 Representative Willhite.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Do you recognize
5 Representative Woodson?

6 MR. SPEAKER: Represent Woodson, you're
7 recognized in questions?

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

10 Rep Andrade, I know we have heard several
11 discussions about other bills, but I need some
12 clarification on this bill. Is it a follow-up to
13 Senate Bill 90? Not 90. 7072. I'm sorry, I
14 apologize. Is it a follow-up to Senate Bill 7072?

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Speaker.

18 And, Representative Woodson, thank you for
19 that question. I wouldn't say it's necessarily a
20 follow-up. The amendment, this carve-out that says
21 the social media platform that happens to own a
22 theme park in the State of Florida is suddenly
23 exempt from the censorship restrictions that we're
24 trying to provide to Florida residence, it was a
25 carve-out that I didn't like at that time. So I

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 178

1 wouldn't say that this is somehow a follow-up. I
2 would say that this just an improvement to the bill
3 and a correction to a portion of the bill that I
4 didn't like in the first place.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 Thank you, Rep Andrade. I know you didn't
9 like it, but we did pass that bill here. Now,
10 what's the status? Do you know the status of that
11 litigation on that bill?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 And, Representative Woodson, thank you for
16 that question as well. Because if you go the
17 Governor's special -- the Governor's amended call
18 explaining why this bill was needed now, there was a
19 preliminary injunction, which, again, is not a
20 finding of constitutionality or a final order. The
21 preliminary injunction was issued last summer. That
22 means that now, it's on an appeal in the federal
23 court. It is on appeal in Alabama, and it's coming
24 up oral argument on April 28th. So in eight days.
25 So if we don't correct this issue today, we

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 179

1 will conflate the concerns that we have about big
2 tech censorship with this kind of 14th Amendment
3 equal protection dormant commerce clause questions
4 that are far less important. They're not protecting
5 Florida residence from the big tech unfair
6 censorship.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
9 Mr. speaker.

10 And thank you for your response as well.
11 So based on what you're saying, we're trying to
12 correct part of it, right, that is unconstitutional
13 right; is that correct?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 I would challenge the premise slightly. I
18 don't believe that what we did, as far as protecting
19 consumers who were using social media platform, is
20 unconstitutional. And I look forward to that oral
21 argument, and I look forward to the decision being
22 made. Because I do believe that the underlying bill
23 related to big tech censorship and the way that we
24 approached it is constitutional.

25 The one concern that I had was the putting

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 180

1 different companies on a different playing field
2 like a carve-out. We all understand what a carve-
3 out here is on this floor. The one concern that I
4 had was treating companies in the same circumstances
5 differently, simply by virtue of the fact that they
6 owned a theme park within our jurisdiction.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

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

10 And based on your response, if we are
11 trying to correct part of it, basically, based on
12 what you just sent us, how about the other part?
13 Why don't we correct the whole thing?

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 And, Representative Woodson, I might have
18 not been clear. What I'm saying is the other part
19 doesn't need correcting. This is a consumer
20 protection bill. It protects Florida consumers and
21 the residence from unfair trade -- the Florida
22 Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act is already
23 a Florida law and protects Florida residence.
24 Applying FDUTPA, which I like to often call it, in
25 this circumstance, I think it's a valid pursuit.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 181

1 And also making sure that big tech social media
2 platforms are not unfairly discriminating based on
3 viewpoint, it's also a critical concern for me and I
4 believe for many residents in the State of Florida.

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Woodson.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 And I'm just trying to get clarification on
9 a lot of these things and the bill. Do you agree
10 with the federal court that this bill implicate the
11 First Amendment right of the social media companies?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Representative Woodson, yes, absolutely.
16 The whole point of this bill today is to eliminate
17 all the distracting components so we can have that
18 First Amendment argument in front of the appellate
19 panel on April 28.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Additional questions?

21 Representative Willhite.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker. Rep Smith is next on our list.

24 MR. SPEAKER: Representative C. Smith,
25 you're recognized.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 182

1 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 Representative Andrade, are you saying that
4 the reason you're removing this carve-out has
5 nothing to do with Disney's opposition to don't say
6 gay?

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade?

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

10 Representative Smith, I would have to cite
11 to the Governor's amended call for this special
12 session and the explicit reasons why this is
13 necessary right now prior to our April 28 oral
14 arguments regarding the underlying bill.

15 MR. SPEAKER: Representative C. Smith.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you. So what
17 you're saying is this has nothing to do with the
18 fact that this was a carve-out requested by Walt
19 Disney World itself?

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 Representative Smith, again, I was not -- I
24 did not participate in the drafting or filing of the
25 amendment last year, so I cannot tell you exactly

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 183

1 who brought it in the first place because I didn't
2 have any firsthand experience or knowledge about it.
3 What I can tell you is in eight days, there should
4 be an oral argument, and this one distracting carve-
5 out portion of it should not distract from the far
6 more important attempts that we did last year to
7 protect Florida residents from unfair and deceptive
8 and biased censorship by big tech platforms.

9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

10 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 And thank you. And I had concerns about
13 this carve-out as well when we saw it on the floor
14 in the previous session. Can you tell us what was
15 the legislative intent of the carve-out so that we
16 can fully evaluate whether or not it makes sense for
17 us to repeal it?

18 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith, I
19 believe he just answered that. You have an
20 additional question?

21 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 So for clarification, the bill that
24 Representative Andrade is carrying that repeals a
25 law we passed or part of the law, you have no idea

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 184

1 why it was placed there in the first place? Is that
2 is that your position?

3 MR. SPEAKER: Didn't he just answer that
4 question, Representative Smith? You're recognized.

5 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
6 Mr. Speaker.

7 Okay. So I guess that's a no. You have no
8 idea. So have you reviewed any other carve-outs
9 that are existing in any other law, or is it just
10 this one?

11 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Representative Smith, I have a very
15 consistent and healthy aversion and dislike for
16 carve-outs in general. I've been very consistent in
17 that position. What I will say is that this is the
18 only carve out that's going to be the subject of an
19 oral argument in federal court in eight days.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

21 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 Now, who wrote this bill that is in front
24 of us today that you're presenting?

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade?

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 185

1 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 Representative Smith, I enjoy that question
4 because I don't know on a definitional level if we
5 can say that striking out four lines and adding none
6 would meet the definition of "wrote."

7 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Smith.

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

10 Thank you, Representative Andrade. You've
11 just spoken to the easy magic that is lawmaking.

12 I suppose no further questions,
13 Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

14 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Gottlieb.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GOTTLIB: From Willhite --
16 there we go.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WILLHITE: Thank you,
18 Mr. Speaker. I yield the floor to Representative
19 Eskamani.

20 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani,
21 questions.

22 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you so
23 much, Mr. Speaker.

24 Representative, I heard that you were
25 inspired by your colleagues yesterday, including me,

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 186

1 from -- I guess it was two sessions ago. So I'm just
2 curious, why were you not inspired last regular
3 session because this has been in the books for a
4 while? So what is the new inspiration?

5 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

6 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
7 Mr. Speaker.

8 Representative Eskamani, yes. You
9 absolutely inspired me. I agree with you. This was
10 a laughable carve-out, and I appreciated how heavily
11 you opposed it as did Representative Learned on the
12 floor when it was presented initially.

13 What I would say is I had seven bills that
14 were priorities of mine. Unfortunately, only one of
15 them passed. I hope to improve that record next
16 year. But when opportunities present themselves,
17 like when the Governor amends his special call and
18 says this is a present need because in eight days we
19 have an oral argument and the underlying bill is
20 more important, I will jump at that opportunity when
21 that opportunity presents itself to go correct an
22 issue with a bill that while I overarchingly
23 wholeheartedly supported, gave me slight heartburn
24 about this one carve-out.

25 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 187

1 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker.

3 I remember a year ago and having the back
4 and forth with the bill sponsor, I believe one of
5 his responses to me of why the carve-out was
6 necessary was that the platforms like Disney Plus --
7 and I gave a long list of potential other dynamics,
8 would not be in a position to deplatform someone.
9 Has that changed for you? Can you explain this
10 operationally because that was the answer given to
11 me before? What's different now?

12 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Andrade.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
14 Mr. Speaker.

15 Representative Eskamani, no. There's no
16 technical change to how any platform individually
17 works, right. And I believe the other example you
18 provided, I think, was like maybe Hulu or Peacock on
19 the House floor. And it was, fun fact, 11 months
20 and 22 days ago, that we had this discussion on the
21 floor. So on the anniversary actually, the day
22 after the anniversary of this amendment being put on
23 this bill, the oral arguments will occur.

24 What I would say is no. At the end of the
25 day, this was an unfair carve-out, impermissible

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 188

1 under the analysis of a far more important bill,
2 that I'm happy that we're pulling out because I have
3 a healthy aversion for carve-outs in general.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Eskamani.

5 REPRESENTATIVE ESKAMANI: Thank you so
6 much, Mr. Speaker, the time that I have left.

7 I'm curious. Have you spoken to the
8 original bill sponsor? And does he -- has he
9 changed his perspective on his original defense of
10 the carve-out?

11 REPRESENTATIVE ANDRADE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Speaker.

13 Representative Eskamani, the original bill
14 sponsor on the House side was not the drafter of the
15 amendment. It came over from the Senate. So while
16 I enjoy speaking with him, I didn't believe he was
17 going to provide any argument to change my mind
18 about my dislike for this carve-out and the pressing
19 need to have the oral argument specific topics
20 clarified prior to April 28.

21 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Members, time
22 having been expired for questions, are there
23 amendments?

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

25 MR. SPEAKER: Read the next bill.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 189

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

2 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Members, we're
3 going get a set up with a procedural motion. We've
4 got the bills over from the Senate to set us up for
5 third reading tomorrow. Hopefully, by late
6 afternoon, early evening at the latest, we're able
7 to conclude our business tomorrow to get you all
8 home.

9 Representative Renner, you're recognized
10 for a motion.

11 REPRESENTATIVE RENNER: Mr. Speaker, I move
12 that the rules be waived to read the messages for SB
13 2C, 4C, and 6C, to read the bills twice by title and
14 to substitute them for their identical House
15 companion bills.

16 MR. SPEAKER: Members, Representative
17 Renner moves that the rules be waived that read
18 messages for Senate Bills 2C, 4C, 6C to be read the
19 bills twice by title and to substitute them for
20 their identical House companion bills. All in favor
21 say aye.

22 (Multiple yeas)

23 MR. SPEAKER: All opposed, no.

24 (Multiple nos)

25 MR. SPEAKER: Show the motion is adopted.

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 190

1 Read the Senate bills for Senate Bills 2C,
2 4C, and 6C and the bills twice by title and show
3 them substituted for their identical House companion
4 bills.

5 THE CLERK: The Honorable Chris Sprowls.
6 Speaker, I'm directed to inform the House of
7 Representatives that the Senate has passed SB 2C as
8 amended and request the concurrence of the House.
9 Debbie Brown, Secretary. By Senator Rodriguez,
10 Senate Bill 2C, a bill to be entitled, "An act
11 establishing the congressional districts of the
12 state." By Senator Rodriguez, Senate Bill 2C, a
13 bill be entitled, "An act establishing the
14 congressional districts of the state."

15 The Honorable Chris Sprowls, Speaker. I'm
16 directed to inform the House of Representatives that
17 the Senate has passed SB 4C and request the
18 concurrence of the House. Debbie brown, Secretary.
19 By Senator Bradley, Senate Bill 4C, a bill to be
20 entitled, "An act relating to independent special
21 districts." By Senator Bradley, Senate Bill 4C, a
22 bill to be entitled, "An act relating to independent
23 special districts."

24 The Honorable Chris Sprowls, Speaker, I'm
25 directed inform the House of Representatives that

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 191

1 the Senate has passed SB 6C and request the
2 concurrence of the House. Debbie Brown, Secretary.
3 By Senator Bradley, Senate Bill 6C, a bill to be
4 entitled, "An act relating to social media
5 platforms." By Senator Bradley, Senate Bill 6C, a
6 bill to be entitled, "An act relating to social
7 media platforms."

8 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Show Senate Bills
9 2C, 4c, and 6C rollover for third reading.

10 Are there resolutions on the desk?

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

12 MR. SPEAKER: All right. Members, we're
13 going see you back here tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

14 Representative Randy, you're recognized for
15 a motion.

16 REPRESENTATIVE RANDY: Mr. Speaker, I move
17 that the House, after receiving reports adjourn to
18 reconvene Thursday, April 21, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. or
19 upon the call of the chair.

20 MR. SPEAKER: All in favor, say Aye.

21 (Multiple ayes)

22 MR. SPEAKER: All opposed, no.

23 (No audible response)

24 MR. SPEAKER: Show the motion is adopted.
25 The House is adjourned. (END OF VIDEO RECORDING)

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 192

1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

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3 accurate transcript of the digital recording provided
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5 I do further certify that I am neither a
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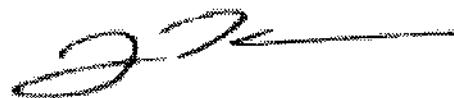
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Julie Thompson, CET-1036

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 1

A	accountability	Adam 25:1	adjusted 42:17	Alabama 178:23
a.m 1:13 191:13	153:25	adapted 32:10	adjustments	Alex 23:14 66:24
191:18	accountable	add 85:1 151:23	31:10	Alexander 52:19
abdication 79:22	98:20	155:11 157:4	adopt 92:13,24	52:20,22 53:11
abdication 80:3	accurate 54:10	159:2 165:12	adopted 5:9 7:19	53:12,20,21
abide 123:7	192:3	176:16	189:25 191:24	54:11,12 55:2,3
ability 36:11	achieve 91:22	added 139:5	adoption 4:25	55:22,23 56:17
41:21 84:6	achieved 19:13	adding 64:2 98:7	5:4 12:10 94:19	56:18 57:20,21
119:6 131:24	acknowledge	166:11 185:5	101:24 168:2	58:6,7,19,20
132:3,12	24:4 43:23	addition 6:19	adopts 86:14	59:5,6,14,15
133:24 142:3	132:21 151:19	73:11 88:7 90:5	advancing 25:10	60:6,7,15,16
142:17 143:3	acknowledged	additional 11:7,8	advantage 32:16	61:3,4,15,16
154:24 155:1	172:8	12:8,9 16:6	advisory 45:2,4	alignment 36:25
162:20	acknowledging	20:25 28:19	52:25 53:23	allegiance 3:22
able 12:2 16:8	102:14	45:14 52:15	advocates 124:24	alleviate 158:21
29:6 31:22	ACLU 79:25	67:13 73:11,20	125:6	160:2
122:3 125:2,4	act 13:1 48:20	73:21 84:25	affect 11:23	alliance 36:25
146:15 155:3	49:7 60:20,25	85:3 90:18,19	127:17 161:17	allocated 142:11
157:14 165:15	60:25 64:4	90:19 92:25	162:20 174:10	allocation 4:24
172:22 189:6	65:10,22 90:10	93:1 96:17	afford 144:7	51:3
abolished 158:23	91:12 92:16	97:18 98:25	afternoon 138:15	allotted 100:16
abolishing 156:8	99:8 102:9	99:1 117:14	18:7	allow 11:2 49:8
158:17,18	140:20,22	121:16 128:22	afraid 133:4	49:17 61:1
abrupt 93:25	141:5 146:9	137:11 141:15	African 54:21	91:20 95:18,25
94:2	152:9,11,22	148:3,14 158:9	55:8 56:2 64:7	106:10 115:3
absolute 90:17	153:7,7,8 155:5	165:6,7 176:16	African- 86:21	122:19 124:2
93:22	168:11 170:14	177:2 181:20	African-Ameri...	160:10 166:2
absolutely	172:18,19	183:20	88:10 89:12	allowed 16:5 17:2
173:20 174:10	173:9,22	Additionally	afternoon 138:15	122:20,22
175:8 181:15	174:11 180:22	21:10	189:6	127:18 174:5
186:9	190:10,13,20	address 45:12	agency 132:21	allows 13:22
accept 44:20	190:22 191:4,6	47:16 49:9	agenda 166:12	20:10
75:10,14 100:9	action 95:11	108:14 113:16	ago 29:9,23 63:24	alter 6:17
161:9	98:13 106:5,6	129:9 140:10	106:20 111:11	Amazon 124:6
acceptable 82:13	108:7,11	158:6 164:17	111:15 120:13	Amen 3:7,8
accepting 36:22	110:19 113:3	167:20 175:13	146:8 172:19	amended 104:9
43:6,16	118:24 150:5	175:15	186:1 187:3,20	178:17 182:11
access 57:7,8	192:7,8	addressed 10:1	agree 11:15 44:8	190:8
59:21 60:3	actions 47:10,19	45:11 96:11	47:4 49:1 92:7	amending 98:6,6
68:25 85:17	66:10 108:5	105:12 129:10	161:7 167:8	amendment
accessible 8:6	113:4 146:11	adds 30:16	181:9 186:9	21:18,22 49:7
accomplish	147:7	adequate 126:6	agreed 62:22	61:1 63:11 86:4
163:19	active 134:21	adhered 166:8	Ah 115:22	86:6,6,8,10,13
accomplishes	152:7	adherence 16:3	ahead 94:14	87:4,6 88:6
162:11,16	acts 152:12	adjourn 191:17	air 143:18	90:8,21 91:5,6
163:17	actual 54:2	adjourned	aisle 174:19	91:8,10,16,19
account 70:7	ad 154:9	191:25	al 1:2	91:23 92:13,18

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 2

92:24 93:6 94:5 94:9,18,19,23 94:24 95:1,1,3 95:5,17 96:6,14 96:18,20,22,23 97:2,6,12,16 98:19,24 99:3 100:3,4,5,13,20 100:20,24 101:4,12,15,21 101:24,25 102:4,5 153:14 153:16,17,18 153:20 155:24 156:1,6,10 158:6,20 160:5 160:12,22,24 161:4,9,14,17 161:24 162:9 163:6,17,19 164:5,14,24 165:3 166:15 166:18,21 167:8,19 168:2 168:6,7 170:7 170:22 177:20 179:2 181:11 181:18 182:25 187:22 188:15 amendments 86:1,2 90:20 153:12,12 154:1 155:25 161:24 162:2 167:3 188:23 amends 186:17 America 3:23 43:8 86:22 92:19 American 54:21 55:9 56:3 64:7 amount 17:23 126:3 analogies 107:8 analogy 106:18 129:4,5 analysis 32:22	34:12,18,22 35:3 45:8 46:11 68:14,18 70:3 71:14,22,23,25 72:5 157:15 172:6,6,9 188:1 analyzing 40:20 and/or 40:2 Andrade 168:10 168:13,15 169:11,12 170:1,2,24,25 171:22,23 173:2,3 175:1,2 176:17,18 177:10,15,16 178:8,12,13 179:14,15 180:14,15 181:12,13 182:3,7,8,20,21 183:24 184:11 184:12,25 185:1,10 186:5 186:6 187:12 187:13 188:11 anew 154:19 angle 16:24 angry 166:3 167:6 anniversary 187:21,22 answer 22:20 28:14 43:19 44:12 46:12 47:3 52:12 53:9 54:25 55:17 73:2,18 76:8 78:5 81:25 105:16,17,19 106:16 107:19 109:17 115:9 115:17 116:25 120:24 121:24 121:25 122:4 128:21 129:25 131:19 140:17	147:17 148:6 148:17 152:25 156:25 169:14 184:3 187:10 answered 22:23 52:14 67:11 84:23 135:23 137:10 139:8 139:18 141:24 148:2 183:19 answers 39:15 62:7 79:13 109:13 119:25 131:1 149:4 anticipate 130:18 143:9 anticipated 51:18 91:8 anticipating 2:12 anticipation 92:2 Antonio 19:7 anybody 45:20 92:20 anymore 111:16 anyone's 164:8 anyway 176:10 anyways 76:22 apex 93:23 apologize 9:10 177:14 Apopka 18:4,13 apparent 33:14 85:16 176:24 apparently 26:25 173:8 appeal 178:22,23 appears 11:19 62:24 64:6 appellate 181:18 applied 63:23 148:13 applies 152:19 173:14 apply 152:21 157:24 170:11 172:18 Applying 180:24	appreciate 22:16 61:8 105:16 144:4 appreciated 186:10 approach 2:7 49:24 155:6 approached 179:24 appropriate 14:2 22:24 43:9 56:21 95:18,19 96:5 167:14 appropriated 91:7 appropriately 118:3,5 125:11 appropriates 21:10 appropriation 6:14,20 10:19 appropriations 5:20 6:12,13,15 8:13 10:21 11:24 52:8 approved 4:3 87:16 approximately 20:12,20 April 1:12 2:1 4:18 5:1 171:12 178:24 181:19 182:13 188:20 191:18 area 18:16 19:14 19:23 27:1 30:15 31:25 88:11 124:15 125:9 133:9 areas 77:11 80:21,22 81:5,6 115:20 160:9 argue 122:25 134:6 argument 75:12 81:17 134:10 178:24 179:21	181:18 183:4 184:19 186:19 188:17,19 arguments 85:14 171:12 182:14 187:23 arisen 29:15 arose 107:3 109:23 110:1 Arrington 134:16,17,19 135:4,5,20,21 136:9,10 137:2 137:3,9,12 aside 77:3 93:24 94:7 112:18 148:18 167:18 asked 8:10 42:3 44:16 52:14 67:22 73:10,16 104:10 108:24 113:19 115:4 117:9 148:10 161:4 asking 25:25 42:20 43:1,17 44:4,6 54:1 73:17,22 78:4,5 113:14 aspect 55:25 56:20 aspects 28:6 aspersions 88:18 assets 116:7 131:22 137:22 141:1 142:7 175:11 assigned 10:20 assistance 167:2 assume 56:12 132:1,2 150:2 176:23 assuming 144:14 150:4,12 assumption 7:19 8:2 41:20 assumptions
--	--	---	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 3

71:12	131:23 154:17	173:12,19	biased 183:8	168:18 169:7,9
assurances 72:19	156:16 165:21	174:3 176:1	big 124:25 125:1	170:9,20,23
73:11	172:16 187:3	belabor 14:18	146:12,13	171:13 172:17
attached 51:3	191:13	belated 97:21	179:1,5,23	173:14,15
attaches 10:19	bad 176:7	belief 145:15	181:1 183:8	174:9 175:6,14
attack 163:23	balance 21:1,5	believe 7:1,5 8:14	bigger 133:25	175:15 176:10
164:12	Barcode 86:7	10:16 11:22	bill 5:17,25 6:14	177:12,13,14
attacks 99:21	95:2 153:17	25:1 26:17	6:16,16 7:3,4,7	178:2,3,9,11,18
attempt 45:12	Bartleman 131:5	33:18 37:14	8:12 12:24 13:1	179:22 180:20
attempts 183:6	131:6,8 132:6,7	48:19 54:7,15	13:1 21:10,13	181:9,10,16
attention 42:1	132:24,25	55:18,21 56:21	22:2,5,7,7 26:1	182:14 183:23
attorney 152:4,6	142:2	58:23 61:7 66:4	47:8 51:14 77:3	184:23 186:19
192:6	based 21:16 22:4	67:11,21,24	77:5 95:8 96:8	186:22 187:4
attorneys 99:16	39:4 41:19 49:7	70:14 80:18	96:10 98:15	187:23 188:1,8
audible 191:23	49:12 51:23	86:25 89:25	99:5,6 102:7,9	188:13,25
AUDIO 1:10	54:2,14 55:6,9	90:15,15,16	102:9,12,19,19	190:10,10,12
audit 155:15,15	56:5 57:5 58:10	93:17 95:24	102:23 103:8	190:13,19,19
audited 165:20	61:6 80:19,21	109:1 117:24	103:10 104:11	190:21,22
auditing 165:13	100:2 140:19	117:25 119:18	106:13 107:16	191:3,3,5,6
auspices 121:10	140:19 141:2	124:21,24	108:2 109:19	billable 51:23
authored 126:17	150:5 164:21	126:5 133:6	110:20 111:8,8	billion 131:11,19
authorities	164:22 170:12	135:23 144:17	111:19,20,22	132:2 142:1,11
157:21	179:11 180:10	148:25 164:25	111:24,24	149:13,24,25
authority 114:16	180:11 181:2	179:18,22	112:2,3,5,16,23	billions 107:1
115:18 121:4	basically 100:10	181:4 183:19	113:2,20	149:6
122:1 135:16	146:12 180:11	187:4,17	119:22 120:3	bills 8:21 12:18
150:13 154:25	basis 49:5,10	188:16	124:17 126:17	12:21 98:6,7
authorship 93:8	50:9 51:6,24	believed 103:21	126:21 127:5,8	108:12 109:25
available 78:22	61:2 63:15	believes 93:17	127:10,16	145:11 177:11
121:3	Bay 19:17 26:13	belongs 8:8	130:3,7,16,18	186:13 189:4
aversion 184:15	27:1 29:4,10	101:22	130:22,23	189:13,15,18
188:3	30:16 31:11	benchmark	135:8 136:23	189:19,20
aware 14:4 49:11	62:25 63:3	13:19,23 32:17	137:15 140:19	190:1,1,2,4
50:8 74:4,12	75:24 76:1	59:13 87:2	140:21,22	191:8
161:14,16	116:18 138:4	beneficiary	141:3,4,7,8	bipartisan 87:16
awry 166:3	Beach 89:13	167:16	144:13 145:2,4	88:2 90:6
aye 189:21	bear 106:2 107:6	benefit 124:10,25	145:6,13	birthday 13:5,6
191:20	118:23	125:8	146:10,22	97:21,22
eyes 191:21	beat 97:24	benefiting 174:3	147:6 148:10	102:15
	bee's 106:4 107:6	benefits 125:7	152:10,13	bit 17:13 29:5
B	began 109:24	best 25:15 30:6	153:9 156:23	42:3 48:11 82:7
back 31:17 45:7	beginning 7:20	54:7 64:13 75:2	157:15 160:3	103:9 105:23
59:19 78:21	63:12 105:17	115:14 125:4,5	160:21 161:3	106:7 169:7
84:16 85:7	begins 76:7	135:16 144:19	164:5,9,11	171:3 175:12
105:10 113:22	130:15	144:20	165:19 167:1,2	biting 119:23
114:8,17	behalf 163:23	better 30:6 35:11	167:12 168:1,9	black 34:4 39:20
119:19 125:10	behavior 172:23	62:8 91:6 93:18	168:11,11,14	57:1,18,22

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 4

64:3 65:9,20 78:17 99:25 100:8,9,16,21 101:3,7 166:6 blatantly 174:3 bless 92:20 blessing 2:17 3:3 block 138:22 blocks 41:15 bluntly 73:16 body 14:14 79:15 101:16 140:20 140:21 151:23 157:12 165:14 165:24 166:7 bond 132:11,20 132:22 bonds 132:20,22 books 186:3 border 16:17 127:25 borders 18:15 boundaries 15:11 18:6,8,17 19:3 19:17,19 21:3,5 27:24 36:15,17 45:17 76:10,12 154:23 155:3,4 boundary 15:4 15:10 16:3 18:12 19:5 162:25 Bradley 190:19 190:21 191:3,5 brainstorm 139:3 break 129:24 Breaking 15:25 Brevard 15:21 17:18 bridges 120:18 brief 152:24 briefing 37:19 73:6,7,10 bring 70:17 98:16 116:1 123:18	bringing 71:4 97:11 155:17 166:14 brings 17:17 broaden 129:14 161:13 broke 139:24 broken 170:8 175:5 brought 48:1,6 48:18,22 95:14 98:13 108:12 112:2 165:19 183:1 Broward 89:13 brown 33:2,3 190:9,18 191:2 budget 103:23 Buena 116:19 138:5 build 72:19 120:17 133:9 134:8 155:2 building 159:23 159:24 bully 158:7 business 123:1 146:9,14,15,16 172:18,20,21 172:22 173:22 174:11 189:7 buy 163:1 Byrd 1:6 C C 156:2 163:11 181:24 182:15 cabinet 2:19 calculated 51:6 calendar 4:23 5:4 5:9 12:22 call 50:18 104:6,9 105:18 108:12 139:5 140:10 171:9,9 178:17 180:24 182:11 186:17 191:19	called 100:6 174:2 175:23 calling 136:20 Campbell 66:18 66:19,21 67:5,6 67:10,14,25 68:1,9,10,22,23 69:7,8,14,15 candidate 39:20 84:7 candidates 34:4 41:21 56:15 candidly 157:6 car 94:13,13 care 73:21 101:5 118:24 careful 60:2 carrying 183:24 carve 47:24 184:18 carve- 169:24 180:2 183:4 carve-out 169:9 170:19 171:11 173:13,14,20 173:25 176:10 177:20,25 180:2 182:4,18 183:13,15 186:10,24 187:5,25 188:10,18 carve-outs 170:9 184:8,16 188:3 case 15:23 29:22 29:24 31:9 32:21 47:21 70:2 90:17 95:20 96:12 100:6,11 108:25 110:5,7 111:18 116:9 120:15 133:20 134:6 138:4,25 142:10 148:25 149:17 172:9 174:24	cases 71:9 cash 107:2 cast 93:23 casting 88:18 Castle 122:17 123:17 casualty 128:17 category 176:15 caucus 93:17 caught 114:6 128:16 Cause 1:2 causes 173:24 CD 17:11,12 29:12,15 31:9,9 31:10,10,24 32:10 34:18 35:2,20,20 42:3 42:6,14 43:10 45:7,10,19 53:4 53:25 54:3,16 69:25 70:8 71:11,14 81:17 82:11,12,13,24 82:25 83:4,7 84:12 85:15 86:22,24,25 88:19 CDPs 50:18 celebrated 123:17 censor 175:8,8 censors 170:11 ensorship 170:10 171:14 173:18 177:23 179:2,6,23 183:8 census 68:2,7 central 15:17 43:8 123:19 124:16 141:4 162:19 certain 55:20 70:23 72:15,17 89:13 143:16 certainly 66:3	82:24 104:8 111:16 126:6 CERTIFICATE 192:1 certify 192:2,5 CET-1036 192:24 chair 22:17,18 23:2 25:22 29:3 37:17 38:5 40:19 76:25 78:2,15 79:4 80:14 84:2 85:13 127:3 128:15 129:20 130:10 134:21 135:7 136:12 137:14 138:18 140:18 141:24 145:1 156:7 157:9 191:19 Chairman 23:3 28:14 52:24 53:22 55:25 59:20 62:5 71:10 73:7 84:22 challenge 21:14 21:24 49:6 56:24 68:21 70:16 71:4 77:23 92:3,7,21 179:17 challenged 77:6 77:9,20 78:3 challenges 21:16 22:3 48:18 77:21 challenging 47:10 95:12 Chamber 26:25 chambers 88:17 change 12:6 27:1 27:6 31:20 39:12 92:22 93:25 94:1,1,2 155:4 162:15
--	--	--	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 5

162:24 172:6,9 187:16 188:17 changed 31:18 187:9 188:9 changes 15:17 16:21 17:6,9 26:12 37:21 104:23 changing 31:20 CHANNEL 1:11 character 164:8 characteristics 86:16 charge 65:1 128:5 charged 36:10 65:2,3 Charlotte 20:16 charter 116:1 140:3 162:18 165:22,23 charters 105:8 128:10 162:13 chase 156:11,15 check 135:24 139:24 child 173:11 children 169:21 169:21 choice 8:15 34:4 41:21 55:12 56:5 84:7 choose 11:19 48:8 95:18 108:11 119:9 121:4 149:14 167:7 choosing 38:7 64:15 chopping 138:22 chose 30:23 46:3 76:2 104:21 108:22 109:4 152:3 Chris 4:15 190:5 190:15,24 Cinderella's	122:17 123:16 Circuit 21:25 circular 16:25 circumstance 180:25 circumstances 180:4 cite 173:22 175:14 182:10 cities 13:22 18:2 18:4,8 21:6 30:15 116:17 116:22 121:11 123:8 142:12 citizens 55:11 56:10,14 80:2 100:10 132:13 Citrus 15:18 16:8 18:23 city 15:6,9 18:3 18:16 19:7 20:10 30:16 87:2 116:18,18 138:6 civil 60:19 claim 70:17 71:4 93:8,8 133:3 163:7 claims 21:25 22:1 49:3 99:10,11 clarification 54:1 58:10 61:7 142:1 177:12 181:8 183:23 clarified 188:20 clarify 83:18 137:5 147:16 164:7 clarity 34:22 166:24 class 147:22 149:24 163:8 clause 48:7,17 96:13 99:12 101:2 174:2,6,7 179:3 Clay 15:13	clear 19:18 20:8 21:22 33:12 92:14 131:1 151:1 159:14 180:18 clearly 41:17 46:23 clerk 3:10,14,16 4:5,7,10,13,15 12:17,20,23,25 86:3,5 90:22,24 94:25 96:24 97:3 102:6,8 153:13,15 168:8,10 188:24 189:1 190:5 191:11 clicked 133:3 cliff 94:15 close 93:3 99:3 closed 8:19,23 9:3 94:18 101:24 168:1 closely 17:10 99:10 closer 21:3 89:6 closing 127:4 166:21 club 161:16 coast 15:18 coasts 18:20 code 159:24 cohesion 44:5 70:1,5,9 cohesive 44:18 cohesiveness 71:16 collateral 139:16 colleagues 2:18 12:4 87:25 154:14 163:23 174:18 185:25 collected 154:10 collectively 63:4 collector 157:16 colleges 129:9 Collier 20:21	45:15 combination 17:1 combined 157:9 come 2:3,11 11:16 20:9 31:18 47:20 77:4 103:20 105:6,10,12 107:7 111:19 112:3 119:10 125:6 145:6,24 165:15 166:9 comes 68:20 106:16 153:24 165:13 coming 41:25 43:7 52:8 165:18 178:23 comment 42:20 94:1 119:18 170:5 173:23 comments 10:3 119:23 147:12 156:21 162:9 167:11,12 169:23 173:19 commerce 174:2 174:6,7 179:3 committee 4:17 5:10,19,20 6:1 6:15 7:9,12 8:2 8:13,14 10:18 10:21 12:1 14:22 15:20 17:8 18:22 22:21 23:14 25:18 29:5 36:23 37:9 42:4 42:4 45:11 50:2 50:2,6,7 52:8 78:23 127:3,16 151:16 154:3 155:15,20 165:12,17,25 committees 4:12 7:9 8:3,9 166:9	Common 1:2 commonly 60:4 communications 4:6 170:13 173:9 communities 50:17,21 125:3 144:6,7,19 166:9 community 45:15 135:15 155:9 156:13 165:18,19 compact 15:2 16:2,22 18:1 19:22 40:3 82:8 82:25 compactness 13:24 16:11,19 18:25 27:24 35:7,11,23 36:4 39:4,13,15 87:3 89:14 compacts 38:22 companies 122:8 122:21 123:9 127:17,20 134:7 168:20 174:4 180:1,4 181:11 companies' 133:13 companion 189:15,20 190:3 company 112:18 113:6 122:19 124:2,9 125:1 127:5 133:14 133:24 134:3 134:12 167:22 company's 113:3 compared 86:19 87:1 compel 85:18 compelling 79:1 91:21
--	--	---	---	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 6

competitive 134:3	132:9 158:16	118:24	109:5 119:19	117:13,14
competitors 123:2,11 124:10 134:5	concerns 53:3 97:13,14 154:4 154:13 155:19 156:14 157:21	conservation 120:17	174:10 179:24	136:13
complaining 99:23,24	157:23 158:5	consider 10:25 157:25	constitutionality 171:5 172:11 178:20	convex 14:1
complaints 31:8	158:22 160:2,3 167:20,21	consideration 39:19,24 91:20	constraints 6:24	cool 159:17
completely 8:3 175:16	175:16 179:1 183:12	considerations 16:6	construct 154:24	Cooperation 176:21
compliance 45:22 49:25 65:4,22 72:18 116:1	conclude 26:6 101:10 189:7	considered 51:5 141:3 172:5	constructed 105:9	copies 14:5
compliant 27:8 30:19 31:1 46:6 46:10 63:12 64:4,9,19,19,20 64:21 65:2,3,10 76:11 78:25	concluded 45:20	considering 16:1 45:18 49:4 96:1	construction 134:22	Cord 1:6
complicated 95:23	conclusion 44:5 44:14 65:23	consist 14:10	consult 67:8	core 57:4 113:10
complies 91:8	conclusions 65:14 66:14	consistency 145:24	consultants 24:5	corollary 84:12
comply 90:8 92:4 92:6,13,22	concurrency 190:8,18 191:2	consistent 8:11 14:24 104:22 108:17 111:12 140:3 153:4 184:15,16	consultation 25:7	corporate 153:25
component 96:17	condemn 93:25	consistently 43:24,24 157:23 167:20	consulted 23:17 24:4	corporation 124:3,5 130:11 130:15 148:19 163:20 165:4
components 181:17	conduct 113:8	conspiracy 173:7 175:10	consumer 168:19 180:19	correct 44:21 53:3,14 54:15 58:1,13,24 60:9 62:12 66:25 87:22 123:21 142:4,17 147:6 148:21 150:21 163:16 178:25 179:12,13 180:11,13 186:21
comport 10:4	confident 156:20	constantly 27:23 125:6	contain 82:1	corrected 115:6
composed 20:18	configuration 15:2 17:17 36:3 74:22 86:23 88:8,25	constituent 159:7	contained 4:25	correcting 180:19
compounding 132:9	conflate 179:1	constituents 159:11	content 14:14 120:2	correction 161:6 161:8 178:3
compromise 33:5 33:7,19 93:12	conflicts 99:7	constitute 55:19	context 166:25	corrections 4:1
compromises 33:8	confused 171:3	constitution 21:19 60:9,13 60:14 90:8 91:9 91:12 92:1 95:13 101:2 102:21 104:19 104:23 105:3 108:18 111:13 116:2 117:25 140:3 145:24 176:12	continue 54:17 89:10 97:23 122:1,2 124:22 137:1 143:24	correctly 44:22 63:1 150:6
compromising 33:6	congress 89:12	constitutional 9:14 25:8 26:24 26:25 36:12,12 49:10 67:23	continued 88:9 149:5	cost 51:15 120:19 121:6,16,17
concede 99:12	congressional 5:18 6:21 10:2 13:2,18 14:7,11 15:7 17:25 18:23 21:12,15 43:10 47:10 48:10 50:6,7 55:19 64:2 74:2 84:5 86:17 88:10 95:12 96:1,4 103:15 166:4 190:11 190:14		Continuing 41:19	costs 51:19
concept 154:18			contract 159:3	counsel 44:15,15 51:21,22 68:12 81:15
concepts 17:9,10 157:12			contractor 159:10	count 89:25 101:7
concern 100:1 131:10 173:23 174:11 179:25 180:3 181:3			contrary 160:23 162:12,15	counted 101:3
concerned 75:7	consequences		control 99:12 120:16,17 121:9 125:2 139:14	counterbalance 80:19
			convened 94:3	counties 13:21 15:22 16:4,9,13
			convenient 166:11	
			conversation	

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 7

18:24 20:12,17 21:9 32:9,12 54:20 115:18 115:19,19 117:2,4,11 121:11 123:8 131:13 132:11 142:12 157:14 160:9 162:22 counties' 132:10 country 91:13 county 13:20 15:13,14,19,19 15:25 16:5,8,14 16:15 17:2,3,4 17:13,15,16,18 17:19,22,23 18:8,9,16 19:2 19:2,10,10,12 19:25 20:2,9,13 20:15,19,22,24 21:7,15 30:5,7 30:10 32:6,7,7 32:13 45:16 54:20 55:7,9,18 56:2,10 62:9 75:23,23 89:2 89:13 95:10 116:14,15,16 116:17,20 137:16,24,25 138:1,2,3 147:23 149:8,9 149:24 150:2 154:6 159:15 County's 20:7 couple 95:9 100:12 138:16 146:8 172:19 course 25:22 61:1 75:3 79:20 court 21:14,17,17 21:20,24,25 29:11 44:16,19 45:3 48:1,6,19 48:19,20,22 49:2,12,12 53:1	70:6,21,22 71:3 71:5 75:3 77:22 77:22 84:21 85:23 91:15 92:17 95:14 96:11 98:9,10 98:13,16 99:19 99:21 100:6 102:2,4,6,8 107:11 153:13 153:15 170:21 178:23 181:10 184:19 Court's 55:17 courts 21:14 22:3 47:11 48:8,9 49:9 85:17,18 91:20 92:22 99:7,13,17,17 101:21 176:13 COVID 103:20 craft 130:16 crafted 87:25 130:6 164:16 create 16:21 121:5 123:6 124:8 142:21 149:14 150:13 160:3,7,8 created 102:20 104:18 105:3 111:14 151:5 152:8,22 creates 14:23 15:24 30:16 creating 16:2 20:15 creators 78:15 Creek 108:23,25 111:22 114:22 115:7,10,25 116:9,12 120:15,25 121:2,17 122:10 124:1 125:24 127:8 128:7 134:23	137:17 142:11 142:23 143:19 148:20 151:2,3 154:6,10 156:8 158:15,18,20 159:3,7,12,13 159:16,22,25 Creek's 149:6 criteria 36:13 37:1 46:4,4,24 critical 103:24 181:3 cross 62:24 63:3 crowded 159:20 crux 95:20 99:23 Cuba 43:7 curious 29:4 84:17 186:2 188:7 current 45:19 59:3 88:7 149:15 currently 58:11 58:22 125:19 134:22 171:25 172:1 customs 7:13 cut 10:2 cutesy 107:13 cuts 45:15 82:13 cutting 83:7 156:11,15 cycle 103:19 D D.C 1:24 Dade 19:7 Daley 138:10,11 138:13 139:7 139:11 140:14 140:15 141:10 damage 139:16 danger 169:25 dangerous 98:5 172:23 data 13:15 68:8 69:1,5,6 75:10	75:12,14 database 45:17 Davis 33:23,24 34:1,9,10,19,20 35:4,5,17,18 36:6,7 37:3,4 165:8,9 day 79:21 146:10 154:2 187:21 187:25 days 178:24 183:3 184:19 186:18 187:20 de-preempting 121:9 deal 77:3 103:20 119:7,19 156:15 dealing 106:24 109:8 113:10 166:4 deals 145:13 165:25 dealt 103:22 dear 4:16 165:24 debatable 6:1,4,5 debate 4:24 5:3 5:21 6:9 7:18 7:24 9:6,11,17 10:3,10,12 11:7 11:8,12 12:8,9 28:5 77:1 90:25 91:1 92:25 93:1 97:5,6,18 98:25 99:1 113:16 119:22 130:19 141:14 147:12 147:12,16 157:13 159:5 161:13 162:4,5 163:12,15,22 163:24 165:6,7 166:20 debated 176:12 debating 63:25 169:20 170:19 Debbie 190:9,18	191:2 debt 109:2 131:11,12,19 132:5,10,10 133:13 142:2 142:24 149:7,7 149:18,25,25 154:7 debts 147:20 150:15 decade 13:22 29:9 Decency 170:13 173:9 deceptive 180:22 183:7 decide 26:12 112:1 113:8 115:18 138:3 155:16 decided 50:19 63:4 81:5 152:4 deciding 22:3 decision 20:14 40:1 50:5 95:24 114:14 115:12 115:24 116:21 171:8 179:21 decisions 48:23 115:25 138:7 144:20 deck's 134:8 declare 70:17 declared 127:11 130:7 declined 44:20 45:3 decrease 58:13 decreasing 17:22 100:2 deemed 26:24,25 77:11 default 150:3 defaulting 147:10 defend 71:17 165:3
---	--	--	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 8

defense 188:9	desk 3:21 4:5,7	180:1,1 187:11	109:24 112:17	55:20 60:3
deficiencies	4:10,13 12:17	differently 44:7	112:18 115:5	62:23,24 63:1
45:13 46:21	12:20,23 86:3	176:24 180:5	122:10,20	63:13 64:2,4,5
deficient 46:23	90:22,24 96:24	difficult 2:24	123:2,4 124:15	64:7,9 65:16
47:4	97:3 102:6	28:14 93:14	125:25 127:5	71:17 83:20
defined 18:7,16	153:13 161:25	157:17	128:18 129:22	84:5,12 86:18
19:4,18 170:12	162:3 168:8	digital 1:23 192:3	133:2,14	89:1,15 111:23
defines 173:11	188:24 189:1	diminish 55:11	148:19 149:8,9	112:1 114:10
definition 112:21	191:10,11	diminishment	149:17 151:1	115:8,11 118:5
176:22 185:6	despite 20:11	44:18 55:16	156:17 158:15	121:10 123:6
definitional	154:11	directed 190:6,16	159:6 164:6,12	124:1,4,5
185:4	detail 77:8 106:8	190:25	169:22 172:22	125:24 126:1
degree 123:9	details 29:6	direction 31:6	176:21 182:19	127:8,25 128:3
delegation 74:2	determinant 44:8	139:13	187:6	128:6 131:11
111:25	determination	directly 7:7	Disney's 125:17	131:21,25
deleting 168:17	171:5	disacknowledg...	146:17 147:23	135:17 137:22
deliver 159:19	determine 68:14	128:15	148:7 182:5	139:14,19,20
delivered 161:3	determined	disagree 85:17	disparate 48:23	139:22 142:8
delusion 99:24	29:11 92:21	disappear 57:15	disprove 84:21	143:20 148:20
democracy 2:22	detritus 93:24	154:10	dispute 57:13	151:21 152:8
democracy's	develop 68:7	disappeared 57:3	dissolution	153:6 154:6,8,9
93:24	development	discovered 107:3	137:21 151:17	154:15,23
Democrat 43:25	68:2 69:1 123:1	110:3	152:20 154:5	155:3,4 156:8
101:18	155:9	discretion 7:6	157:19	157:24 158:18
Democratic 74:3	deviation 14:3	discriminate	dissolve 151:20	158:19,23
democrats 29:13	deviations 89:14	61:2	152:7 153:6	159:4,7,13,17
denial 42:13	Diamond 69:18	discriminating	dissolved 111:4	161:15,21
denies 41:20	69:19,21 70:18	181:2	131:21 142:9	162:17,25
denigrate 83:4	70:19 71:6,7	discuss 104:2	distinct 41:15	163:1,3 165:22
department	72:2,3,11,12	discussed 47:24	98:3	165:23
21:11 47:21	73:4,5,23,24	104:8 107:23	distinction 81:4	district's 90:9
126:3	74:10,11,17,18	137:8 171:7	distract 183:5	131:14 167:16
departure 7:13	75:16,17	discussing 93:22	distracting	districts 5:18
dependent 154:9	Diamond's 84:24	discussion	181:17 183:4	13:2 14:4,5,7,9
depending 95:19	dictates 92:14	110:25 116:3	district 15:7,16	14:11,13,16,17
150:1	difference 35:22	119:6 145:17	16:10,16,22,23	14:18,20,21,23
deplatform 187:8	39:6,7 74:21	146:25 170:6	17:5,6,12,14,17	15:1,2,5,11,11
DeSantis 167:13	82:7 88:17,18	187:20	17:24 18:3,5,9	16:2,19 17:1,19
describe 77:18	different 11:17	discussions	18:12,15,18,19	18:2,6,13,21
described 14:22	16:1 27:9 39:3	136:23 177:11	18:23 19:1,3,6	19:4,11,22,24
15:19 17:7	39:13,15 42:9	disenfranchising	19:8,9,16,18,21	20:6,9 28:1
18:21 121:18	43:22 48:23	65:7	19:25 20:5,7,11	31:22 33:17
describing	55:5 63:13,14	disincentive	20:12,15,18,19	35:9 38:22 40:4
146:23	75:20 82:22	122:10	20:21,23 21:1,2	47:10 48:10
designed 91:25	99:17 115:18	dislike 184:15	21:7 34:3 36:4	56:25 57:1,15
171:13	120:25 133:6	188:18	39:3,13,14 42:6	57:17,19,23,25
desire 161:5	144:16 147:8	Disney 102:16	42:23 43:10	58:12 59:4,22

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 9

65:10,12,13,21 71:11 81:11,16 81:19 82:1,2,7 82:8,10 86:17 86:22,25 90:16 94:4,8 95:12 102:10,20 104:18,20,25 105:8,10 107:22,24 108:1,15,16,20 109:4,23 110:2 110:21,22,24 111:3,9 112:8 113:21 114:15 118:3 119:9 120:14 123:20 127:23 128:16 129:3 132:2 136:25 138:19 138:20 140:2 142:10 144:15 145:18 151:18 152:20 155:8,9 155:15 161:17 162:14,16 163:8,9 164:15 164:17 165:1 166:5 167:9,15 190:11,14,21 190:23 districts' 108:4 divided 62:9,11 divider 19:12 20:8 divides 15:9 62:10 86:16 dividing 75:22,23 76:1 division 62:16 doing 10:11 64:10 96:16 98:17 129:15 135:19 140:11 142:23 143:3 150:5 156:7 163:7,25	164:20 167:11 173:18 174:7 174:16 dollar 6:14 dollars 11:25 51:6,11,14 91:7 107:1 149:7,25 151:2,3,4 domain 154:22 162:21 Dora 18:18 dormant 174:2,6 179:3 dozens 175:24 draft 161:4 drafted 31:23 drafter 72:4,6,13 74:12 76:1,7,9 76:10 188:14 drafters 72:19 drafting 72:15 161:4 167:2,3 182:24 draw 9:14 33:13 36:11 41:19 42:1 71:11 79:24 84:11 87:21 drawbacks 45:8 45:9,21 drawer 14:23 15:20 17:8 18:22 30:23 46:2 drawer's 29:21 66:5 drawers 64:14 drawing 23:17 24:6 25:8 42:6 49:5 65:23 67:9 drawn 25:2,9 45:10 63:1,16 84:18 87:11 Dred 100:6 drew 23:2,14,21 33:13,14 37:6,7 63:2 66:24	79:14 80:2 84:17 Driskell 28:23,24 29:1,25 30:1,12 30:13 31:2,3 32:2,3 97:19,20 drive 122:17 driven 33:16 84:19 drum 97:23 due 10:5 20:14 94:2 98:21 113:1 130:6 159:22 dug 104:24 106:23 Duran 103:2,3,5 105:13,14 106:9 107:11 107:12,17 109:9,10 110:10,11 112:10,11,22 112:25 113:14 113:22 139:10 duties 2:16 11:4 duty 9:14 87:21 Duval 86:23 88:8 Duvall 32:11 35:10 dynamics 167:9 187:7 E earlier 56:11 62:7 72:5 73:5 94:3 95:15 102:15 121:19 159:5 early 189:6 east 19:11 20:3 20:24 21:4 Eastern 17:14 eastward 19:16 82:12 easy 122:16 185:11	echoed 60:5 effect 15:23 16:5 74:23 effectively 65:6 99:22 106:21 121:9 124:2 effort 155:18 efforts 72:17 eight 162:13 178:24 183:3 184:19 186:18 either 18:2 34:3 75:15 elaborate 106:7 110:23 elect 41:21 56:4 84:7 elected 135:19 136:21,25 137:6 144:18 electing 55:11 election 77:10 78:3,11 88:9 89:11 electoral 6:17 103:19 eliminate 81:17 96:6 110:18 181:16 eliminated 108:1 110:22 eliminates 160:5 eliminating 39:19 107:24 134:1 elimination 114:10 eloquently 113:16 embedded 3:20 emergency 105:21 108:5 120:16 159:19 eminent 154:22 162:21 emphasis 83:13 emphasizing	28:10 employed 137:7 employee 192:6 employees 115:10,12 126:1 158:20 159:8 employer 124:7 124:16 employers 124:4 encourage 161:8 166:15 167:17 energy 154:20 enforceable 170:20 171:21 172:1 enforced 172:12 enjoined 172:2 enjoy 123:3 185:3 188:16 enjoys 134:13 enlightening 62:6 ensure 84:3,6 97:13 100:21 118:3 entire 23:24 32:1 94:6 entirely 18:18,19 19:4,6,7 25:16 153:4 entirety 20:18 entities 51:21 entitled 13:1 102:9 168:11 190:10,13,20 190:22 191:4,6 environments 159:20 equal 18:11 19:13 46:23 81:15,18 82:23 83:14 84:3 91:25 100:22 100:25 179:3 equalizes 20:21 equally 15:9 30:25 46:6,10
--	--	--	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 10

64:21 157:24 erupted 175:22 escape 74:8 Eskamani 85:10 85:11 97:7,9 153:15,19,21 156:5,24 157:1 158:14,24,25 160:25 161:1 161:18,19 165:13 166:20 166:22 168:1 185:19,20,22 186:8,25 187:1 187:15 188:4,5 188:13 Eskamani's 164:14,24 165:2 especially 82:12 93:19 155:14 160:4 espouse 50:8 espoused 49:6 essence 57:4 65:11 113:10 essentially 15:25 16:14,22 17:20 20:2 86:13 156:10 establish 67:17 71:8 established 57:8 72:13,15 102:22 establishes 86:21 86:24 establishing 5:18 13:1 70:1 190:11,13 estimate 51:15 51:20,24 54:10 estimation 90:6 et 1:2 ethnicity 41:17 Eustis 18:17 evaluate 183:16	evasive 109:22 evening 189:6 event 175:8 everybody 13:7 140:23 163:4 evidence 1:23 25:16 66:9 74:20 75:6 exact 7:17 14:5 36:3 121:6 123:12 135:2 145:22 174:9 exactly 15:12 33:17 121:7 172:10 182:25 examine 155:8 example 16:6 18:9 36:15 97:12 111:21 118:4 123:2,4 123:19 124:1 155:13 187:17 exceptions 170:10 excess 107:2 excited 135:25 exclusive 154:25 excuse 71:5 execute 11:4 exempt 177:23 exemption 168:19 exercise 158:3,7 exercised 100:16 exist 122:2 123:8 128:9 170:23 176:4 existed 123:17 existing 53:25 54:16 88:25 132:10 134:5 184:9 exists 92:5 101:2 105:9 123:11 exit 94:14 expands 54:16 expect 106:24	113:15 expecting 2:14 expenses 21:11 experience 183:2 expire 102:20 expired 86:1 101:9 153:11 160:15 166:19 188:22 explain 9:23 29:15 30:18 77:1 78:16 82:6 82:11 83:5,5 95:5 102:12 112:19 153:20 160:20,23 168:14 187:9 explained 25:2 37:16 96:19 explaining 110:16 112:16 129:20 178:18 explanation 14:18 109:12 112:14 140:20 explicit 22:2 28:2 145:13 182:12 explore 105:23 expressed 97:14 extend 21:2 82:12 extended 123:10 extends 16:16 20:23 extensive 105:16 extensively 14:19 138:17 extent 21:25 50:4 50:10 96:9 extra 174:23 - F face 91:10 Facebook 176:22 faceless 125:1 facetious 52:10 fact 25:11 49:4	63:3,13 75:4,9 122:24 138:21 145:1 154:8 164:13 180:5 182:18 187:19 facts 29:21 172:5 172:8 failed 108:16 fails 12:15 94:23 102:4 168:6 fair 31:16,23 90:8 94:4,8 106:11 130:13 145:4 faithful 2:16 falling 100:17 false 79:23 familiar 40:23 41:5 100:3,7 101:1 146:22 148:12 families 2:20 fan 105:4 far 9:23 10:23 71:9 75:7 179:4 179:18 183:5 188:1 Father 2:11,16 3:2 faulty 41:20 favor 5:3 12:10 94:18 101:24 168:1 189:20 191:20 favorable 8:16 94:12 101:20 favors 75:5 165:2 favour 28:11 FDOT 155:1 FDUTPA 180:24 Feather 19:14 February 53:1 federal 21:17,20 22:1,3,4 47:10 47:25 48:1,5,6 48:9,9 49:8,9,9 49:12 60:18	91:9 92:2,15 95:22 96:1,4,10 96:11 98:10,13 98:16 99:7,9,10 99:13,13,17,21 101:21 170:21 178:22 181:10 184:19 feedback 136:13 feel 63:22 97:15 154:17 157:22 feelings 129:24 felt 78:24 fewer 32:11 65:9 65:9,20,21 field 123:12 174:9 180:1 fight 147:24 figure 119:14 125:17 140:12 figured 126:4 file 11:18 111:22 161:9 filed 21:15,17 104:12 111:20 140:22 153:25 filing 182:24 fill 73:1 filled 73:18 111:20 final 112:13 115:17 118:22 119:17 122:7 171:5,8 176:9 178:20 finally 3:2 22:1 finances 155:16 financial 131:18 financially 192:7 financing 109:2 find 2:24 90:17 133:15 140:9 166:11 finding 20:19 178:20 findings 173:24 finds 41:14
--	--	---	--	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 11

fine 13:6,8 102:8 102:11,13 104:3,4 106:11 106:14,15 108:9,10 109:17,20,21 111:5,6 114:8 114:11,12,24 114:25 115:21 115:22 117:5,6 117:19,20 118:7,8 119:1,2 120:12,21,22 121:15,20,21 122:12,13 123:16,22,23 124:18,19 125:15,20,21 126:16,18,19 127:3,12,13 128:15,23,24 129:20 130:1 130:10 131:15 131:16 132:14 132:15 133:17 133:18 134:21 134:24,25 135:7,10,11 136:3,4,12,15 136:16 137:14 137:18,19 138:15 139:8 139:12,17,20 139:21 140:18 141:24 142:5,6 142:18,19 143:8,11,12 144:5,10,11 145:1,8,9 146:19,20 148:2,22,23 149:10,11 150:7,8,22,23 151:25 152:1 152:24 153:1 156:7 160:14 160:18 161:12	162:6,7 Fine's 13:5 fire 126:3 159:22 firefighters 114:22 159:12 159:14,15,16 159:17 firestorm 175:21 first 7:20 10:18 12:24 44:13 47:18 50:15 51:11 59:22 62:7 70:3 82:20 86:4 115:24 153:14 160:20 160:21 169:10 178:4 181:11 181:18 183:1 184:1 firsthand 183:2 fission 154:17 five 127:23,24 139:25 141:10 173:25 fix 110:8 flag 3:23 flagrantly 27:25 flavor 73:21 flesh 48:11 flexibility 16:1 95:25 flippant 122:15 flood 120:15 floor 94:11 169:19 170:5,7 180:3 183:13 185:18 186:12 187:19,21 Florida 1:11 11:2 13:17 14:21,24 15:18 31:8 40:21 41:16,16 41:19 43:25 44:16 54:20 55:8 56:3 57:9 58:1,23 60:13 61:10 70:5,6	71:3 74:2 75:21 78:16 82:14,15 90:8 91:9,11 92:9 98:1,22 102:21 104:18 106:21 110:8 113:6 116:6,18 116:19 122:9 122:11 123:19 124:17 127:18 133:4,5,25 134:9,13 138:4 138:5 141:4 142:7 144:22 151:17,24 154:21 159:25 162:19 168:17 168:18,21 170:12 171:13 173:1 174:22 175:5,25 177:22,24 179:5 180:20 180:21,23,23 181:4 183:7 Florida's 173:10 Floridaredistri... 69:13 Floridians 2:23 11:23 105:21 121:17 164:21 fly 91:10 focus 14:15 45:7 focused 50:4 64:5 folks 33:13 52:4 97:14 99:24 100:23 103:21 113:18 115:25 137:6 160:13 164:13 167:17 follow 11:16,20 12:5 17:10 36:16 69:23 119:15 follow-up 87:18 149:19 152:15 158:11 161:11	169:8 177:12 177:14,20 178:1 followed 151:22 following 31:6 32:6,7,13 45:16 86:6,16 95:1 151:24 152:9 152:19 153:16 follows 29:8 Foltz 25:1 food 144:8 fore 106:17 foregoing 192:2 forget 2:13 43:5 forgive 173:5 forgot 13:4 24:18 form 73:2,12,16 73:18,21 formula 52:3 forth 59:19 97:11 113:21 132:12 156:16 166:15 187:4 forward 93:11 145:20 155:18 156:11 179:20 179:21 found 17:6,9 105:11 110:6 129:3,10 140:9 170:20 four 58:11,24 86:21 116:12 121:25 123:4 125:10 132:2 136:6,19 137:23 138:19 138:21 149:13 168:17 185:5 frankly 111:11 free 92:7 100:14 freshman 11:18 front 13:16 69:5 89:10 93:19 108:3 181:18 184:23	Fruitland 18:18 frustrating 175:12,20 fulfill 2:16 full 5:19 6:12 7:8 7:11,15 8:2,3,9 8:12 11:21 12:1 22:21 101:5 167:8 172:11 fully 9:25 11:4,5 171:20 183:16 fun 187:19 functional 34:18 35:2 71:23 functions 122:2 124:22 fund 121:18 fundamental 68:8 funding 129:9 funds 77:3 122:2 funny 174:16 further 21:2 69:25 82:7 131:2 172:6,8 185:12 192:5 G Gadsden 55:9,18 56:10 86:23 88:8 gain 132:3 gallery 2:4 3:19 game 106:11 games 166:16 Garden 18:4 gauge 52:11 gay 182:6 Geller 5:11,12,15 5:24 6:6,8,10 7:22 8:1,19 9:1 22:11,12,14,22 22:25 23:7,9,15 23:16 24:1,2,10 24:11,16,17 25:4,5,19,20 26:8,9,20,21
--	--	---	---	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 12

27:10,11,21,22 28:3,4,8,15,17 88:3,4,15,21,22 89:7,8,18,19 90:2,3,14 91:2 91:3 Geller's 12:11 general 104:13 127:10 128:20 132:23 145:19 153:8 184:16 188:3 generally 23:22 generate 142:23 generated 143:18 generating 149:16 geographic 36:15 45:17 geographical 16:3 geography 41:17 53:2,25 gerrymander 29:11,14 gerrymandering 32:8,14 getting 7:23 28:4 63:21 140:11 144:20 175:12 Gingle 68:15 Gingles 68:13,20 70:14,16,20 give 36:21 45:4 98:8 101:9 103:9,25 106:17 113:11 122:8 145:5 157:15 158:10 160:15 166:10 given 2:5 6:25 14:13 31:5 56:14 70:5 131:23 157:8 187:10 gives 15:25 giving 10:7,8	125:9 140:12 glad 109:8 global 146:17 147:23 148:7 globally 47:17,18 glorious 116:20 go 11:24,25 38:7 42:8 52:7 77:22 82:22 110:8 111:24 112:4,6 115:22 132:12 134:7 137:1 139:13 140:7 152:4 166:3 171:9,19 172:16 178:16 185:16 186:21 goal 163:19 God 3:25 92:19 92:20 164:15 goes 17:14 64:17 132:17 140:18 140:21 163:8 going 7:8 11:20 11:23 13:9 20:11 22:20 26:18 28:1,13 35:10,21 45:7 49:3 51:12 53:15 54:17 55:17 58:9 61:24 71:10 76:8 82:21 95:11 102:16 106:10 109:17 110:17 113:15 115:2,3 120:24 130:12,19 134:8,22 138:25 140:6 142:25 145:20 145:22 146:17 149:23 150:3,4 153:5 166:7 174:21 184:18 188:17 189:3 191:13	good 29:3 49:2 62:22 69:23 86:12 88:6 97:11,12,15 100:14 104:13 111:14 122:25 123:10 138:15 139:3 151:23 155:13 158:2 162:24 164:21 164:25 167:19 gosh 104:9 140:7 Gottlieb 79:7,8 79:10 126:11 126:12,14 185:14,15 govern 115:20 122:20 123:7 123:20 124:5 125:2,10 130:13 governed 125:5 government 51:21 97:13 120:14,19 124:23 125:16 141:2 142:3 146:12,13,13 147:8,10,19,21 147:21 148:8 148:13 155:13 158:2 160:10 government's 147:7 governments 25:3 105:5,6 114:15 115:13 116:8,13 119:8 121:3,25 131:23 135:24 137:6 142:9 151:5 governor 2:19 31:7,21 32:15 37:6 53:14 54:8 63:2 79:23,24 80:15,18 82:8	99:25 105:18 108:13 110:8 110:20 112:6,7 116:6 140:10 147:25 155:19 156:16 167:13 186:17 Governor's 14:10,22,25 15:20 17:8 18:22 23:5,24 29:20 30:23 31:6,15,24 33:12,14,18 35:8,19 36:11 36:14 37:6,16 41:5 42:5,16 45:1,12 46:16 49:5,23 50:16 50:21 52:25 57:17 58:12,18 66:4,10 71:25 72:6,25 73:8 79:14,20 81:14 81:24 84:16 85:15 111:1 171:9 178:17 178:17 182:11 governs 151:17 grace 174:21 graciousness 59:19 granted 157:22 167:14 grateful 2:21 great 111:7 119:25 126:5 134:7 135:14 138:6 142:25 146:25 Greater 17:7 groomer 175:23 grounds 21:20 95:13 group 1:23 45:22 groups 44:17 grow 86:19	grown 154:20 guard 114:7 guess 48:7 51:19 71:7 74:18 75:9 105:18 110:17 128:17 138:22 139:14 141:11 146:8 148:17 149:22 176:9 184:7 186:1 guest 112:17,19 112:21 guidance 129:23 guide 2:25 guided 94:6 guidelines 93:23 Gulf 16:4 guys 32:23 174:24 H half 45:16 136:23 145:13 hall 87:25 handle 119:11 142:24 handled 103:22 happen 13:9 41:4 77:19 114:16 114:23 116:4 135:8 137:21 168:20 172:24 happened 26:7 106:25 107:5,8 122:23 138:24 happening 102:17 122:24 165:17 happens 77:5,8 98:4 110:4 115:11 116:3 131:20,22 134:2 146:18 177:21 happy 13:6 14:16 97:21 115:23 116:11 188:2
---	--	--	---	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 13

Harah's 130:14	helps 16:18 18:24	190:5,15,24	hundreds 80:1	187:25
hard 74:8	Hendry 20:19	hook 133:13	175:24	impermissibly
harm's 3:6	heretofore 8:8	hope 12:4 39:15	hurt 129:24	174:5
Harris 124:3,5	herewith 4:17	101:16 160:13	176:11	impetus 48:12
130:11	Hernando 18:24	186:15	hurts 146:14	implicate 181:10
hate 175:4	hey 68:1 163:3	Hopefully 189:5	hypothetical	important 27:15
HB 104:1	hierarchy 36:13	hoping 82:6	43:18 121:23	36:16 61:8
head 85:2	36:24	hornet's 104:14	121:24	92:15 104:1
heading 20:3	highly 9:12	104:16 106:3	hypothetically	132:13 155:8
healthy 184:15	Highway 16:17	107:2,5 108:20	36:2 133:2	163:16 164:7
188:3	highways 36:17	109:7,14		179:4 183:6
hear 2:14 27:23	Hillsborough	110:15 118:23	I	186:20 188:1
74:19 83:21	20:13	128:18 129:12	idea 36:13 47:18	impossibility
101:12 105:19	Hinkle 173:24	129:13 130:14	65:8 104:13	133:22
105:22 141:13	Hinkle's 171:4	133:3 139:2,15	110:25 112:18	impossible 93:15
144:17 148:5	172:3	140:5 165:5	136:23,24	improve 186:15
155:18 165:16	Hinson 114:2,3,5	hot 167:18	139:4 171:18	improved 16:10
176:6	114:19,20	hour 155:12	183:25 184:8	improvement
heard 6:15,21	115:15,16	hours 51:23	ideas 141:11	13:18 16:7 30:8
7:12,18 8:7	116:23,24	103:12 175:22	identical 33:17	32:1 111:23
30:4,5 33:5	117:15,16,23	House 1:11 2:2	189:14,20	115:7,11 123:6
54:8 68:12 74:7	117:24 118:12	2:18 4:16 5:17	190:3	124:1,5 125:24
91:17 95:15	118:13,17,20	5:17 6:16 7:6	identified 45:9	143:20 159:4
98:9,10 112:14	119:16,17	8:10,15 12:25	46:21 107:10	159:13,16
118:21 149:4	Hispanic 42:7	17:9 36:25	identify 24:11,21	178:2
155:19,20	43:23 45:22	44:15,20 45:2	106:17 108:7	improves 13:20
157:20 158:15	57:18 70:4	45:10 58:17	ignore 92:1,8	13:23 87:1,3
159:4 160:1	86:24	81:18 88:20	ignoring 27:25	improving 18:25
161:15 167:20	history 61:7	96:3 99:5 102:9	28:11	impugn 99:19
167:21 177:10	62:16	102:18 112:6	illegally 27:8	164:8
185:24	hold 30:17 98:19	168:11,18	immediately	in-touch-with-t...
hearing 4:3 7:2,3	141:11 147:9	169:19 187:19	119:5	135:14
50:1 81:24	holding 147:7	188:14 189:14	Immokalee 45:15	inappropriate
154:13 157:18	holds 165:24	189:20 190:3,6	immune 21:19	63:15 154:16
157:23	holistically 15:21	190:8,16,18,25	immunities	incentives 122:8
heart 82:13	holy 3:6	191:2,17,25	100:22	include 114:22
heart's 120:2	home 105:4	huge 105:4 125:8	immunity 21:21	included 6:14
heartburn	114:16 115:13	hugely 11:23	21:23	19:6
186:23	116:20 121:4,8	hull 14:1	impact 6:23	includes 18:23
heavily 186:10	122:1 124:24	Hulu 187:18	10:23 17:22	21:13 173:11
held 39:20 100:7	125:7 135:15	humility 3:1	42:15 111:2	including 16:11
help 3:4 158:21	138:2,7 143:1	Humphrey 76:16	113:7 132:11	16:13 19:23
166:9 167:3	143:21 150:13	76:17,19 77:24	157:15	162:18 185:25
170:21	174:4 189:8	77:25 78:12,13	impacting 105:21	inconsistency
helped 16:21	honest 13:8	79:2,3	impacts 113:20	83:6
110:14	honor 2:13	hundred 3:16	164:14	inconsistent
helpful 176:8	Honorable 4:15	104:19	impermissible	98:14 152:13

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 14

incorrect 170:6	178:21	involves 89:1	158:18 159:6	129:22
incorrectly 115:4	innumerable	inward 109:18	John's 15:14	K
increase 141:4	27:7	irrelevant 156:22	75:22	keep 7:24 9:17
151:6	input 155:10	issue 47:16,25	Johns 15:5	16:8 19:21 20:6
increasing 17:18	156:13 166:10	48:5 49:10 70:1	join 2:10	45:22 84:18,20
65:11	insert 86:8 95:3	70:6 85:24	joined 45:3	100:4 101:21
incredulity 173:6	153:18	97:16 99:6	joint 12:18	106:12 109:13
incumbent 25:10	inside 137:16	101:18 104:2	155:14	110:16 138:23
independent	insight 103:9	104:25 105:22	Joseph 8:22,24	150:19 175:13
102:10 118:2	inspiration 186:4	106:16,24	9:4,5,7,9,16,19	176:5
125:25 151:18	inspired 185:25	107:3,8,10	9:21 10:9,15	keeping 13:20
152:8 154:8	186:2,9	109:22 110:1,4	40:14,15,17	15:21 18:1,7
190:20,22	instance 31:21	113:16 127:21	41:3,4,11,12,22	20:15 85:16
independently	71:11 75:21	127:22,22	41:24 42:19,24	88:7
122:20	103:15 146:24	129:6,14	43:20,21 44:10	Kelly 23:14,17,20
indicated 37:14	institution 158:3	139:22 140:4,7	44:11 45:5,6	23:25 25:18
37:18 120:12	intense 167:4	174:11 178:25	46:7,8,18,19	37:18 66:24
indication 36:21	intent 65:19 66:3	186:22	47:5,6 48:2,3	Kelly's 67:12
Indiscernible	66:5,10 74:20	issued 172:7	48:25 49:1,19	kept 18:3,4 20:5
8:24 9:4	75:6 84:19	178:21	49:20 50:24,25	20:10 30:17
individual 87:15	183:15	issues 8:4 95:22	51:16,17 52:5,6	56:24,25
individually	interest 50:18,22	103:14,21,23	52:13 94:25	kick 104:14
187:16	85:16,19 91:21	103:24 104:7	95:4,6 98:18	108:19 109:7
indivisible 3:25	118:4,6	104:15,16	99:2,4 101:8,11	128:18 130:14
induction 4:4	interested 109:1	109:7 110:4	101:23 151:12	139:15 140:8
indulgence 144:3	116:10 192:8	129:3,10	151:13,14	kicked 104:17
industry 133:4	interesting 76:21	130:20 154:2	152:14,16	106:3,4 107:2,5
infinitely 93:18	interestingly	157:8	Joseph's 69:24	107:6 109:14
infirmities 45:18	100:18 108:24	it'd 122:16	journal 4:2,3	118:22,23
infirmity 26:11	interests 25:10	item 51:4	joy 167:7,8	129:13 139:2
inform 190:6,16	interjecting 9:10	J	judge 171:4	140:5 165:5
190:25	internally 98:14	Jacksonville 15:6	172:2,7 173:23	kids 169:25
information	interpretation	Jenne 86:5,9,11	judges 48:23	174:23 175:25
10:22 25:6	153:10	87:12,13,14,23	Julie 192:24	176:3,5,11
42:16 43:19	interpreted	87:24 88:12,13	jump 84:16	kind 50:5 64:5
54:14 84:25	91:20 92:5	88:24 89:4,5,16	186:20	101:12 103:8
113:12	interpreting	89:17,23,24	June 102:22	103:25 110:14
informed 33:15	92:18	90:7,11,12 93:2	110:19 111:10	112:16,20
infrastructure	intro 30:4	93:4 94:17	119:5,13	120:19 121:18
155:2	introduce 96:17	job 114:21	140:13 145:14	129:23 156:14
initially 50:20	introducing	158:17,22	Jurassic 123:6	174:11 175:9
186:12	103:8	160:8	jurisdiction 7:11	179:2
Initiative 40:20	invalid 77:11	job-killing	22:1 49:11	kinds 73:2
42:13	127:11	124:17	95:23 99:7,9,14	knee-jerk 119:11
injunction 171:6	investing 133:9	jobs 9:25 114:9	155:1 180:6	119:18
171:8,20 172:3	invitation 44:20	115:5 135:8,19	justice 3:25	know 6:5 15:6
172:4 178:19	involve 95:21		justification 53:2	

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 15

22:20 23:16,22 23:23 24:15 25:6 27:5 29:22 30:23 31:17 32:22 41:5 42:10 47:18 49:25 50:4 51:20 54:9,25 56:15 61:14 62:16,22 63:21 63:24 64:14 72:4,13,17 73:18 74:11,20 75:5,7,11,14,24 77:18,20 78:5,6 80:1,21 85:14 87:15 89:21 99:15,22 103:10 114:23 116:3,10 122:16 125:3 130:11 132:18 134:21 135:2,2 135:7,14 137:14 138:16 138:16,18,23 138:24 140:17 140:18 141:24 146:7 147:16 147:22 148:17 151:22 152:12 153:23 154:19 156:17 157:6 157:11 159:5,8 159:18,19 164:21 165:17 169:7 170:19 171:7 174:4,15 175:20,21 177:10 178:8 178:10 185:4 knowing 42:11 43:3 49:8 55:20 knowledge 183:2 known 86:23 knows 138:18	L Lady 18:17 lake 15:19 16:13 18:16,17 20:17 116:18,18 138:4,5 Lakeland 30:17 land 128:1,7 landowners 162:22 landscape 6:17 language 21:13 28:2 49:17 83:20 84:6 91:19 large 20:1 104:23 124:7 largely 18:13 19:11 20:14 149:17 larger 5:25 15:7 50:7 124:4 largest 124:16 148:19 Lastly 68:25 late 189:5 latest 189:6 Latino 40:19,21 41:15,18,20 42:11,12,13 43:4,6 70:9 71:13,15 Latinos 70:8 laughable 186:10 law 21:16,20,25 22:1,4 60:3 70:2,21 71:3 75:8 82:19 84:21 91:13 92:2,4,22 95:13 95:21 96:9 98:3 99:10,12,13 100:22 108:21 116:6 127:10 128:20 129:24 139:24 151:19 151:19,24	152:6,12,19,21 153:3,10 160:22 162:12 167:1 168:18 171:19,21,25 172:25 174:23 175:12 176:12 180:23 183:25 183:25 184:9 lawmaking 185:11 laws 60:18 123:7 162:14 lawyer's 44:20 layer 176:4 lays 171:10 lead 25:6 29:14 Leader 86:9 87:12,23 88:7 88:12,24 89:4 90:6,11 93:2 leading 156:25 League 79:25 learn 152:4 learned 61:25 62:1,3,18,19 63:11,18,19 64:23,24 65:18 66:6,7,12 106:25 146:2,3 146:5 147:3,4 147:11,14 148:1,4,16 149:1,2,20 150:16,17 169:1,2,4,14,16 169:17 170:4 170:15,16 171:2,15,16,25 172:13,14 173:5 174:12 174:13 175:4 175:17,18 176:20 186:11 leave 42:17 48:12 133:11 176:11 leaves 96:9	leaving 133:7 led 26:12 100:11 100:18 Leek 12:25 13:4 13:10,12 22:17 23:3,5,12,13,18 23:19 24:7,8,13 24:14,23,24 25:12,13,22 26:3,4,14,15 27:2,3,17,18 28:14 29:3,17 29:18 30:9,10 30:20,21 31:12 31:13 32:18,19 33:9,10 34:5,6 34:14,15,24,25 35:12,13,24,25 36:18,19 37:11 37:12 38:5,9,10 38:16,17,24,25 39:9,10,21,22 40:5,6,19,24,25 41:7,8 42:20 43:12,13 44:1,2 44:23,24 45:24 45:25 46:13,14 46:25 47:1,14 47:15 48:14,15 49:14,15 50:12 50:13 51:8,9,25 52:1,24 53:5,6 53:16,17,22 54:4,5,22,23 55:13,14 56:1,6 56:7 57:10,11 58:2,3,14,15,25 59:1,10,11,20 59:24,25 60:10 60:11,21,22 61:11,12,21 62:5,13,14 63:6 63:7 64:11,12 65:17,25 66:1 66:23 67:1,2,12 67:18,19 68:4,5 68:16,17 69:2,3	69:10,11 70:11 70:12,25 71:1 71:19,20 72:7,8 72:21,22 73:13 73:14 74:5,6,13 74:14,24,25 76:3,4,25 77:15 77:16 78:2,7,8 78:15,18,19 79:12,17,18 80:14,16,17,24 81:8,9,21,22 82:16,17 83:9 83:10,22 84:2,8 84:9,22 85:1,2 85:13,20,21 Leesburg 18:19 left 188:6 legal 44:4,14 77:4 97:15 127:9 legally 63:12 64:19,19 76:11 legislation 11:20 12:3,7 98:6 108:3 136:14 164:23 legislations 11:17 legislative 16:24 112:4 155:14 165:14 183:15 legislatively 15:23 legislators 145:18 Legislature 2:17 9:13 14:6 15:3 15:12 31:5 87:21 98:5 110:1 111:21 112:2 116:5 122:19 135:18 143:2 145:19 151:21 152:7 Legislature's 14:17 Legislatures' 49:24
--	---	---	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 16

legitimate 127:22 167:21	109:12	longer 105:9 123:11	98:25 99:4	62:8 63:2,5,13
Leo 19:7	literarily 162:11	look 10:22 70:23	magic 185:11	63:14,16 64:14
Leon 21:15 95:10	litigants 95:18	82:11 90:15	main 133:10	65:5 66:4 68:8
let's 12:4,6 13:8	litigation 21:12	101:6 104:11	maintain 19:20	70:7,24 72:24
14:20 23:22	51:13,15,18	107:9 110:3	42:7 45:21	73:9 74:1,12,23
45:7 56:21	91:8 178:11	111:14 128:10	maintains 86:23	75:4,19 77:6,8
77:13 97:13	little 29:5 42:3	140:6 155:16	Maitland 18:3	78:15 79:25
107:15 158:6,6	48:11 63:9 82:6	157:19 179:20	major 18:10	84:17 86:15,20
letter 4:25 82:19	103:9 105:23	179:21	19:19 36:16	87:11,15,20
level 107:20	106:7 114:6	looked 31:17	majority 6:2 8:21	88:8,24 89:2,10
147:2 175:9,10	169:7 171:3	35:7 63:13	14:15 19:1	89:10,21 90:7
185:4	175:12,20	looking 15:20	54:21 55:8 56:2	91:5 92:10
liabilities 116:7	live 127:24 128:2	26:11 29:12	126:2	93:15,18
131:23 141:1	128:5	30:6 35:19	making 2:22 9:23	maps 9:15 10:2
142:8	living 2:21	42:14 44:12,13	31:10 66:13	14:24 15:23
liable 146:17	lobbyist 136:18	45:13 62:10	71:12 89:13	26:12,19 27:7
147:19,23	local 45:16 105:5	80:2 89:2	97:25 98:20	29:10 31:17
172:22	105:5 111:19	112:20 129:2	156:21 181:1	32:17,21 33:15
liberty 3:25	111:20,24	150:1 157:9	man 76:25 100:8	33:18 34:17,23
lies 47:3	112:2,3,5	looks 29:7,12	100:8	36:12,14 37:7,7
life 159:21	114:14 115:12	46:23 63:14	manage 49:2	37:15,17,20
light 51:18 145:1	115:18 116:8	Lord 2:21	120:15 135:16	42:2 45:10 49:5
limit 7:3	116:12 119:8	losing 158:16	management	51:4 56:24
limitation 47:12	120:14,19	loss 159:21 160:8	7:20	62:21 66:24
limited 10:3,4	121:3,25	losses 114:21	Manatee 20:6	67:9,17 68:3,7
limiting 8:4	124:23 125:2,3	146:16,18	map 13:14,15,18	68:21 69:1 71:5
limits 29:7 47:9	125:16 131:23	147:19,23	13:19,20,23	72:15,25 76:12
line 17:18 18:10	135:15,19,24	148:8	14:2,5,23 15:20	77:10,19 78:2
31:20 35:10,21	136:24 137:6	lost 114:9	17:8 18:22 21:7	79:14 80:2,2,3
75:22,23 76:1	140:22 141:2	lot 32:5 65:14	21:12,15 23:2	80:14,20 93:10
93:16 100:17	142:9 143:1,21	91:5 94:10	23:14,17,21	93:22 97:15
116:14,15,16	144:18,19	96:15 99:23	24:6 25:9,17	99:14,25 101:6
137:24 138:1	146:9,25 147:8	125:9 132:22	26:11,17,18,23	103:15,17
160:20 170:13	147:10,18,21	154:4 157:7,8,8	27:8,9 28:7,16	119:19
172:16 173:6	147:21 148:8	160:1,4 174:16	29:8,16,20,24	Marion 17:2
175:14	148:13 150:10	174:17 181:9	30:16,23 31:25	market 134:4
lines 15:4,13 16:4	150:12 151:5	lots 156:13	32:1,10,12,15	marketplace
19:5 31:20 32:6	172:17	louder 66:11	33:13,14,15	134:3
32:8,13 41:19	located 124:16	lump 43:3,9	34:23 35:19	math 151:7
47:8,9 86:7	lock 3:14	-	37:15,20 41:23	mathematical
95:2 96:8	logic 63:22 64:1	M	42:17 45:12,14	13:24 16:11
153:17 168:17	logical 65:22	M 1:24	45:19 46:2,5,6	mathematically
185:5	logistics 149:12	machine 3:10,14	46:16 50:21,22	19:22
linkage 19:22	long 105:8,16	Madam 96:18,19	53:15,24 54:18	matter 48:6
list 181:23 187:7	111:11 125:15	96:24 97:1,3,5	55:6,10 56:5,23	99:15 138:21
listened 79:13	139:1 145:11	97:10,17,18,20	57:6,17 58:12	153:9 167:1,15
	145:12 187:7		58:18 59:13	192:4

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 17

mattered 27:24	members 2:2,3,4	54:16 127:25	12:11,15 22:16	nation 3:24
matters 4:4	2:10,17,19 3:11	128:5	189:3,10,25	natural 75:22
12:16 77:4	3:12,13,16,18	million 6:18	191:15,24	nature 95:20
maximize 65:21	5:23 6:25 8:18	10:19 11:25	motions 5:9	103:14,24
mean 11:15	8:20 10:25 11:3	21:11 51:6,11	motivated 130:8	108:6
63:14 65:19	11:9 12:9 13:14	51:14 52:9 91:7	Mount 18:18	nearly 15:9
70:20,22 71:8	22:6 85:25	106:22 121:1	mounted 99:22	necessarily 22:19
72:13 73:16	86:13 90:19,25	129:7,13 151:2	move 4:25 5:17	44:7 82:21
85:17 106:5	91:4 92:10,12	151:3,4	5:24 56:22	177:19
109:22 115:19	93:6,12 94:7,10	million- 6:13	120:14 122:9	necessary 18:11
121:23 122:15	94:13,17 96:15	million-dollar	122:11 140:23	26:13 45:21
124:21 128:1	97:23 99:1	6:19 51:3	163:2 189:11	71:16 118:2
136:20 154:5	102:24 109:16	mind 57:3 136:12	191:16	142:24 173:21
160:23 167:6	119:21 153:23	136:18 188:17	moved 5:24	182:13 187:6
176:7,8	155:20 156:21	mine 186:14	movement	necessity 103:10
meaning 75:11	159:14 162:4	minimize 32:7	117:18	103:16 112:16
means 17:15	167:25 188:21	minorities 83:20	moves 19:16	need 8:7 57:25
91:22 94:9,10	189:2,16	84:7	189:17	79:1 82:8 96:16
112:20 154:9	191:12	minority 28:1	moving 18:20	98:8,21 101:19
158:18 160:21	memo 81:15	44:17 56:25	20:18	108:7 111:16
163:24 166:25	memory 146:24	57:7,8 59:21	MSTU 121:5	128:10 139:4
171:19 178:22	mention 13:4	60:2 65:11	142:22 143:15	176:6 177:11
meant 33:19 94:4	mentioned 73:6	81:16,19 85:16	143:24 149:14	180:19 186:18
94:5,5 163:18	75:20 110:5	minus 14:3 82:21	150:13 151:4	188:19
measure 53:9	112:17 130:11	minute 167:18	multiple 5:5,7	needed 103:22
91:24	142:2,16	minutes 109:18	12:12,14 94:20	171:11 178:18
measures 13:24	151:16 156:5	113:17 120:13	94:22 102:1,3	needs 2:23 111:2
53:8 158:8	160:6 163:17	misappropriati...	109:1,3 168:3,5	negative 17:21
mechanics	mentioning	129:6	189:22,24	neither 192:5
113:20 130:23	129:21 138:23	misinformation	191:21	nest 104:14,16
media 60:4	156:21	154:11	municipal 19:5	106:3,4 107:2,5
109:23 112:15	mere 75:4	misstated 115:3	142:21	107:6 108:20
113:5 168:12	messages 4:8	moderate 169:23	municipalities	109:7,14
168:19 170:11	189:12,18	modernize 140:2	125:10 136:7	110:15 118:23
171:14 173:15	met 2:23 68:15	moment 101:9	137:23 149:14	128:19 129:12
173:16 174:8	78:25	money 121:1	municipality	129:13 130:14
175:7 177:21	methodology	173:1	20:4	133:3 139:2,15
179:19 181:1	57:5	monies 143:17	N	140:5 165:5
181:11 191:4,7	methods 67:16	months 7:16	name 3:7 24:22	neutral 15:1
meet 185:6	metrics 13:19	93:21 146:8	25:1 91:24	80:14,19,20
meeting 70:24	87:1	187:19	126:21 127:7	81:6,7,12 94:13
72:17 98:20	mic 160:16	morning 2:12	141:11	never 62:11
103:12 117:3	microphones 9:2	3:20 22:17 29:3	Naples 21:4	100:9 159:21
117:11,12	middle 82:10	69:23 157:16	narrative 79:21	new 14:13,23
member 9:25	147:22 149:23	motion 5:13,22	narrowly 79:1	30:16 47:19
11:18 25:24	mileage 54:2	6:2,7 8:17,19	91:22	89:2 100:15
111:21 155:14	miles 53:4 54:2,8	8:23 9:3 10:25		134:5 149:25

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 18

149:25 186:4 newly 14:10 20:17 news 74:8 nice 13:7 night 158:21 Normally 102:15 north 19:14 20:24 82:14 116:14,16 138:1 northeast 14:21 14:24 31:8,25 75:21 northern 19:24 northward 19:17 northwest 16:17 northwestern 16:4 nos 5:7 12:14 94:22 102:3 168:5 189:24 note 119:13 133:23 notice 161:5 noticed 32:5 noticing 98:4 notion 140:8 145:13 notwithstanding 160:22 162:12 166:25 novel 96:16 nuanced 125:23 nuclear 154:16 number 17:19 22:18 27:7,14 30:7 52:11 54:9 99:18 135:2 139:9 NW 1:24 O obligation 142:25 obscene 173:19 obscenity 170:12 173:10,11	175:6,9 176:22 observed 25:11 obstacle 70:17 obvious 108:23 obviously 110:7 113:15 occur 172:10 187:23 occurred 29:23 occurs 15:14 odd 128:8 offensive 101:14 offer 167:7 offered 86:5 94:25 153:16 office 14:10,25 23:6 33:13,14 33:19 36:11 37:7,16 41:5 42:5,16 49:23 50:16 72:6 73:8 79:14 81:25 84:17 85:15 111:1 officials 135:19 136:21,25 137:6 143:1 144:18 Oftentimes 103:13 oh 123:10 140:7 164:15 okay 40:10 98:2 103:1 107:16 184:7 once 20:22 70:15 104:8 105:11 one's 111:15 one-third 21:9 ones 111:23 134:5 ongoing 145:16 online 157:18 173:8 174:23 176:1 open 8:6 opening 134:4	operate 113:7 133:4,25 134:3 operating 103:11 113:6 121:1 152:8 operationally 187:10 operations 120:20 125:18 opinion 12:2 45:2 45:4 52:25 53:23 85:23 opinions 136:2 opportunities 109:3 113:18 186:16 opportunity 9:11 10:7 11:3,4 56:4 79:24 81:15,19 98:9 117:3 120:1 130:19 136:22 160:16 186:20 186:21 oppose 168:4 opposed 5:6 12:13 13:21,23 48:8 49:12 50:18 89:2 94:21 102:2 135:16 164:22 186:11 189:23 191:22 opposition 182:5 option 57:14 options 16:2 121:2 oral 171:11 178:24 179:20 182:13 183:4 184:19 186:19 187:23 188:19 Orange 17:19,22 18:9 116:14,15 116:16,17,19 138:2 147:22 149:8,9,24	150:2 154:6 157:14 160:8 order 2:3,15 4:18 4:23 5:1,4,8 7:8 12:22 17:21 21:5 44:18 65:21 71:17 105:6 108:17 126:6 133:24 145:6 151:20 152:7 154:1 155:11 160:2 171:4,5,6 172:3 172:7 178:20 original 188:8,9 188:13 Orlando 17:7 88:11 Osceola 15:22 16:13,15,17 116:13,15,16 137:25 154:6 157:14 160:9 Osceola-Orange 137:24 138:1 out-of-state 24:5 outcome 77:10 outright 93:15 outside 7:23 51:22 123:9 127:25 154:23 155:2 outstanding 135:18 overall 15:1 overarchingly 186:22 overreaches 146:12 overstating 82:19 overturn 44:16 44:21 overwhelming 90:5 126:2 overwhelmingly 88:2 owned 180:6	owners 127:24 P P000C0109 13:15 14:23 pack 65:8,20 133:6,15 packed 29:13 65:15 packet 13:16 69:5,6 packing 64:6,7 pages 6:18 Palm 89:13 panel 181:19 panic 160:8 park 18:19 123:6 133:10,10 134:7,9 177:22 180:6 parking 120:17 parks 123:4 159:18 168:21 Parkway 16:18 20:1,3 part 2:22 9:24 19:10 28:16 42:5 70:9 80:5 87:21 104:24 105:2 113:2 114:21 124:23 173:23 179:12 180:11,12,18 183:25 participate 10:8 11:3 182:24 particular 12:3,7 42:6 46:3,4 51:4,23 86:15 87:11 88:16 113:3 139:19 139:20 152:21 154:7 165:4 particularly 70:8 138:19 parties 192:7 partisan 29:11
--	---	--	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 19

29:14 32:8,14 32:24 74:20,22 74:23 75:6 84:19 partly 106:25 parts 43:8 75:20 party 25:11 75:5 Pasco 19:2,2,25 pass 6:2,2 137:15 153:8 178:9 passage 100:11 passed 14:6 15:3 15:23 17:25 62:22 89:22 91:24 92:10 103:17,18 104:19 109:25 112:5 131:12 146:9,11 148:11 172:19 173:16 183:25 186:15 190:7 190:17 191:1 passes 135:9 140:21 passing 103:23 153:3,8 path 137:1 145:19 patterns 40:21 pay 51:12 128:3 143:24 150:15 paying 132:4 143:14,17,19 144:16 149:9 151:1,3,4 payments 149:6 Payne 2:6,7,9 3:9 157:10 Peacock 187:18 pedophile 175:11 pedophiles 169:22 173:7 people 6:18 10:8 11:1 15:8 24:12 24:21 44:6 64:6 86:18,19 97:13	98:1,8,22 100:3 100:9,16,21 101:3,7,7 110:2 119:12 123:18 128:4 144:6 149:5 156:22 157:22 158:19 164:23 175:24 perceive 122:9 percent 92:8 101:14 108:15 127:17,20 146:15,17 172:20,25 perfect 93:15 125:18 perform 34:4 35:3 71:23 performance 32:22,25 75:10 75:12,14 performed 34:23 70:15 71:24 72:5 period 61:9 157:25 periods 6:25 permissible 80:6 permission 5:20 162:21 permit 159:24 permits 21:24 person 14:4 66:24 76:22 82:21 101:4,5 personally 94:8 175:23 perspective 57:6 123:1 188:9 pertained 64:1 pest 120:17 Pete 19:15 30:17 62:10,17 63:16 Petersburg 62:11 62:21 petty 167:18 philosophy 93:25	94:2 phonetic 37:17 phrase 60:3 pick 11:19 31:22 142:3 143:9 153:14 picked 142:4 picking 16:12 piece 12:3,7 16:14 163:2 pieces 11:17,20 161:6 Pinellas 19:9,12 75:23 89:1 place 59:22 86:15 93:16 96:9 165:24 166:13 166:17 169:10 176:11 178:4 183:1 184:1 placed 169:9 184:1 places 82:22 plainly 79:23 plaintiff's 70:16 plaintiffs 71:4 plan 14:23 17:9 17:15,24,24 20:20 86:14,15 86:16,25 87:2 88:1 91:6 93:7 93:7 119:10 plant 20:10 154:17 platform 169:22 170:11 172:24 173:15,16 174:8 177:21 179:19 187:16 platforms 168:12 168:20 171:14 175:7 181:2 183:8 187:6 191:5,7 play 2:22 27:13 68:20 playing 123:12	166:16,16 174:9 180:1 plays 140:25 please 2:3,4,10 3:19 11:10 92:24 118:14 137:13 166:17 pleased 102:18 pledge 3:19,20,22 plus 14:3 82:20 159:10 169:22 172:23 187:6 Poinciana 16:12 point 28:15 43:4 52:7 56:11 68:19 77:21 96:12 101:15 101:17 108:21 141:25 157:17 160:12 161:13 163:24 164:9 164:12 175:10 176:5 181:16 pointed 154:14 points 69:1 poke 105:25 106:1 poked 107:6 policy 40:19 42:12 50:5 140:24 164:20 164:22 political 16:3 25:11 27:24 130:8 156:17 politically 44:17 politicians 125:3 135:15 143:21 147:1 150:11 150:12 politics 40:19 42:12 132:19 140:24 167:18 Polk 15:22,25 16:5,7,12,14 20:9 21:7,9 Polsby-Popper	14:1 poof 57:2 popped 52:11 popular 154:18 populated 20:13 population 14:3 16:23 17:14,21 18:12 19:13 20:21 21:1,6 42:9 54:21 55:9 55:19 65:12 71:15,17 82:20 82:23,23 83:14 84:4 86:18 populations 71:13 pornography 173:12 portal 72:25 73:1 portion 19:24 20:1 99:5 116:13,14,15 173:22 178:3 183:5 portions 16:12 20:17 position 81:18 152:18,21 184:2,17 187:8 possibility 111:17 possible 91:22 125:5 133:2 post 109:5 posted 13:16 potential 187:7 potentially 108:1 110:21 113:7 134:5 power 105:5 125:10 154:17 163:5 powers 79:16 80:5 105:1 115:13 116:20 138:2 143:1,21 154:15,22
---	---	---	--	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 20

158:3 161:22 162:15 167:14 practical 99:15 practically 101:14 practice 7:13 8:6 8:11 10:20 Practices 180:22 praise 2:13 prayer 2:5,5,10 3:3 pre 127:22 pre-1968 105:8 pre-constitution 128:9 pre-existing 86:19 precedent 44:21 99:11 precisely 49:17 76:9 85:24 preclude 98:12 precludes 22:3 predators 169:22 predatory 173:12 176:1 predicate 53:23 predominantly 19:23 80:19 preempted 135:18 143:22 preempting 143:3 preemption 144:21 preference 50:10 50:11,15 preferred 49:24 preliminarily 172:2 preliminary 171:6,7,20 172:3,4 178:19 178:21 premise 31:16,24 36:22 43:6,15 53:24 56:23	57:13 59:21 60:5 75:7,15 100:11 118:10 129:1 149:4,23 150:2 174:6 179:17 preparation 111:3 preparing 7:16 prerogative 47:21,22 presence 3:11,12 3:13,14 present 3:17 16:24 26:2 102:18 186:16 186:18 presentation 14:15 30:4 75:19 156:6 presented 26:1,4 26:5 32:15 37:8 55:7 186:12 presenter 49:22 presenting 13:14 184:24 presents 186:21 preserve 88:24 presets 95:10 president 2:19 pressing 188:18 pressure 167:4 presume 145:17 153:5 pretext 32:8,14 pretty 32:9 54:17 138:17 prevented 143:2 preview 37:15 previous 16:24 24:19 26:12 88:25 104:21 183:14 previously 14:25 15:3,13 37:2 51:5 67:11 131:25 132:4	148:11 primary 49:10 principle 7:10 prior 26:19 32:21 33:15,17 34:17 37:8,9 45:10 63:14 76:12 98:15 117:10 117:12 145:14 171:11 182:13 188:20 priorities 186:14 prioritization 50:3 private 73:7,10 133:12 privilege 123:10 privileges 100:21 123:3 134:2,12 164:18 probably 22:24 56:13 107:7 154:18 problem 105:12 105:19,20 106:25 107:4 129:8 140:9,10 problematic 98:2 155:17 problems 2:24 106:17 110:6 134:1 procedural 10:5 98:7,21 166:1 189:3 procedure 8:11 97:24,25 98:2 proceed 11:9 process 7:18 9:13 10:5 11:16,21 12:5,5 23:24,25 29:21 31:16 50:19 63:23,23 72:14,20 80:5 93:13 94:6 96:18 98:21 110:23 111:13	111:25 112:4,7 145:6 148:12 160:7 165:14 165:15,24 166:1,7,8,10,13 166:17 processes 72:16 proclamation 118:1 produces 75:4 producing 70:24 product 33:6 production 154:20 prohibited 82:14 prohibitions 173:18 prohibits 91:17 173:10 175:6 projects 132:12 134:22 135:8 135:25 155:2 promoted 113:4 proper 93:16 property 127:24 163:2 proposal 58:23 propose 113:4 proposed 14:10 14:25 15:12 17:15 53:4,24 54:3,18 55:6,10 56:5,22 57:6 58:12 86:15 99:25 100:19 100:20 proposing 53:14 90:7 108:2 110:18 152:10 153:7 propriety 6:6,11 7:23,24 8:25 9:17 10:10,12 11:12 protect 3:5 83:19 91:25 169:21 171:13 174:21	175:25 176:3 183:7 protected 44:18 56:25 57:1,15 57:17,19,22 58:11 59:4 78:17 80:21,22 81:11 82:1 84:12 86:21,24 88:19 89:14,15 protecting 25:10 28:1 179:4,18 protection 91:25 100:22 146:9 172:18 173:22 174:11,24 176:4,8 179:3 180:20 protectionist 174:3 protections 168:19 protects 174:23 180:20,23 proud 159:20 prove 34:12 84:18,20 provide 18:24 73:11 88:9 89:11 166:24 177:24 188:17 provided 10:23 54:15 187:18 192:3 provides 99:9 119:8 provision 21:21 21:23 90:9 98:11,15,15 provisions 124:11 public 6:25 10:4 10:7 11:2 68:25 118:4,6 120:18 155:10 publicly 8:6 pulled 167:11,12
---	---	---	---	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 21

171:11 pulling 188:2 pulpit 158:7 punish 130:16 punishes 146:14 punishing 163:20 punishment 160:11 punitive 146:11 158:3,7 167:22 purely 121:5 purpose 7:10 9:24 83:7,14,18 84:3,5 95:16 100:24 162:10 173:21 purposes 25:9 pursuant 5:15,16 152:9 153:6 pursuit 180:25 put 51:13 93:11 94:15 122:16 144:8 167:17 187:22 Putnam 15:13 putting 83:13 147:20 156:11 169:25 174:8 179:25	79:12 83:24 85:10,13 88:16 106:10 107:15 108:23 109:18 110:13 111:7 112:13,23 113:15 115:9 118:10,22 119:17 120:24 121:24 122:7 126:16 127:7 129:1 130:3,10 130:22 131:20 139:9,18 140:18 141:6,7 141:9 144:5,25 146:16 147:13 148:2,3,10,14 150:17 151:9 156:25 160:17 169:24 173:22 174:22 176:9 177:2,19 178:16 183:20 184:4 185:3 questioning 95:15 questions 4:24 5:2,3 7:17 10:3 14:16 22:7,7,18 24:19 28:19 29:4 61:20 62:6 67:13 69:24 72:18 73:3,10 73:17,19,20 77:2 84:24 85:4 86:1 87:5,6 90:18,19,20 95:21 96:11,20 96:21,22 102:24 106:12 113:17,19 117:13 119:23 119:24,25 120:3 126:13 130:21 131:2 136:20 137:11	141:15,25 155:23,24 156:2,20 157:4 158:9 168:23 172:17 173:6 176:15 177:7 179:3 181:20 185:12,21 188:22 quick 56:22 85:13 140:18 145:2 quickly 103:22 quorum 3:15,17 quote 51:22 167:10 quoting 146:10 R race 15:1 44:7 56:12 61:2 80:14,18,20,20 80:22 81:5,6,12 race-based 91:17 racial 59:21 83:19 84:6 radars 157:7 raise 21:24 92:7 92:20 130:20 130:20 131:24 142:17 raised 143:8 raising 121:1 150:21 ram 139:4 rampant 173:7 Randy 191:14,16 rating 132:11,20 rationale 42:6 47:12 48:17,21 49:13 57:24 59:17 64:17 95:16 re- 9:23 re-chartering 136:24 re-referenced	10:17 reached 117:12 136:7 137:7 reaction 119:11 119:18 read 4:14 12:24 42:22 43:17 94:24 95:11 102:5,7 145:12 153:4 168:7,9 170:8 172:2 175:13,15 188:25 189:12 189:13,17,18 190:1 reading 4:19 12:19 174:16 189:5 191:9 reaffirms 21:21 Reagan 16:18 real 56:22 124:25 reality 164:4 realized 104:17 106:20 really 12:2 22:19 29:6 31:8 32:13 52:10 63:21 65:8 78:5 96:7 98:8,19 100:23 111:15 113:11 122:16 125:4 136:19 144:3 145:3,4 156:12 157:17 164:16 reason 64:14 66:4 98:10 99:20 100:5 107:22 110:16 127:15,15 130:12 140:23 140:25 152:18 166:2 169:9 176:25 177:1 182:4 reasonable 10:7 11:2 reasons 10:16,24	91:5 167:5 182:12 reauthorization 145:14 recall 7:6 34:17 72:24 73:19 78:21 81:24 170:4 recalled 148:13 receiving 191:17 recognizable 15:10 19:18 recognize 10:13 22:10 28:22 33:23 37:24 40:13 52:18 55:25 66:17 69:18 76:15 79:7 80:9 103:2 114:2 120:6 126:10,24 129:14 131:4 134:15 138:10 141:19 146:1 151:11 168:25 177:4 recognized 4:21 5:11,14 6:8 9:6 9:8,20 10:14 11:11 13:11 22:8,13,24 23:4 23:8 28:7,25 33:2,25 38:2 40:16 41:23 42:23 52:21 62:2 66:15,20 69:20 76:18 79:9 80:11 85:10 86:10 91:1 93:3 95:5 97:8 99:2 102:12 103:4 106:14 112:24 113:21,25 114:4 120:9 126:13 128:23 129:7 130:3,24
--	--	---	--	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 22

131:7 134:18 138:12 139:10 141:21 146:4 147:13 148:15 152:15 153:20 156:25 158:11 160:17 162:5 164:1 166:20 168:14 169:3 176:17 177:7 181:25 184:4 189:9 191:14 recognizes 101:16 recognizing 22:15 76:23 recollection 78:24 recommendation 77:13 reconfigured 35:22 reconsideration 12:16 reconstitute 111:22 112:8 reconstruction 61:9 reconvene 191:18 record 3:11 11:14 59:8 163:16 166:25 170:8 175:5 186:15 recorded 3:12,13 recording 1:10 191:25 192:3 records 72:16 84:18,20 recoup 132:3 146:15 recruit 133:24 rectangular 19:20 redistricting 5:19 5:25 6:1,12,22	7:11,16 8:13 9:14 10:2 12:1 17:25 40:22 50:6,7 93:13 99:6 103:16 redistricting.gov 13:17 redo 121:7 redrawing 39:2 reduce 87:2 reduction 172:21 172:25 Reedy 108:22,25 111:22 114:22 115:7,10,25 116:9,11 120:15,25 121:2,17 122:10 123:25 125:24 127:8 128:7 134:22 137:16 142:11 142:23 143:19 148:20 149:6 151:2,3 154:6 154:10 156:8 158:15,17,20 159:3,7,11,13 159:16,21,24 refer 5:17 8:12 reference 4:4 6:6 6:11 7:23,25 9:1,18,24 10:11 10:13 11:12 49:23 54:18 77:4 references 5:10 referencing 28:16 referendum 117:18 referring 7:12 60:24 reflect 161:5 reflected 13:15 reforming 138:18	reforms 156:12 regard 13:19 69:25 71:15 73:8 regarding 40:22 142:1 171:12 173:17 182:14 regardless 51:13 regards 17:11 42:3 54:1 55:6 77:2 region 15:18,21 16:20 17:7 regions 3:4 regular 14:6 72:14 103:12 103:12 119:14 186:2 reinstated 119:10 reject 118:10 129:1 rejected 164:7 relate 146:23 related 21:12 40:8 99:10 173:25 174:1 179:23 relates 28:6 45:19 138:19 relating 5:9 21:13 70:4 102:10 168:12 190:20,22 191:4,6 relative 192:6 released 40:20 relevant 111:7 relied 50:21 relieved 173:17 reluctance 150:10 rely 50:23 relying 46:11 remain 3:19 13:22 89:15 remaining 14:9 remarks 127:4	remedial 91:24 remember 36:3 50:1 71:22 82:20 139:25 146:10 187:3 remembering 91:23 remind 152:3 reminder 119:21 remove 86:7 95:2 153:17 161:6 removed 110:21 removes 96:8 168:18 removing 169:24 176:4 182:4 renaming 141:4 141:7 renew 116:5,6 renewed 144:15 Renner 4:20,22 189:9,11,17 REOC 13:25 Rep 79:12 98:18 126:16 142:2 143:8 144:1,5 164:14 177:10 178:8 181:23 repeal 172:24 174:19,25 183:17 repeals 183:24 repeat 83:24 118:13 repeatedly 130:8 rephrase 35:16 replicate 121:6 142:22 150:14 150:20 report 4:14,19,21 4:23 5:1 40:20 40:23 41:6,14 42:11,21 43:2,5 43:5,16 reported 74:1 reporting 157:9 reports 4:11 74:4	74:9,12,19 191:17 REPRESENTAT... 8:1 9:7 represent 61:11 68:9 124:15 177:6 representation 60:19 89:1 100:2 101:13 166:6 representative 2:6,7,9 3:9,21 3:22 4:16,20,22 5:11,12,15,24 6:5,8,10 7:22 8:19,22,24 9:1 9:4,5,9,16,19 9:21 10:9,15 11:11,13 12:11 12:25 13:4,5,6 13:8,10,12 22:8 22:9,10,12,14 22:22,25 23:5,7 23:9,12,13,15 23:16,18,19 24:1,2,7,8,10 24:11,13,14,16 24:17,23,24 25:4,5,12,13,19 25:20 26:3,4,8 26:9,14,15,20 26:21 27:2,3,10 27:11,17,18,21 27:22 28:3,4,8 28:15,17,20,21 28:22,24 29:1 29:17,18,25 30:1,9,10,12,13 30:20,21 31:2,3 31:12,13 32:2,3 32:18,19 33:1,2 33:3,9,10,20,21 33:23,24 34:1,3 34:5,6,9,10,14 34:15,19,20,24 34:25 35:4,5,12
---	---	---	--	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 23

35:13,17,18,24	65:17,18,25	94:17,25 95:4,6	130:4,17,25	165:2,8,9,13
35:25 36:6,7,18	66:1,6,7,12,15	97:7,9,11,19,20	131:3,4,5,6,8	166:14,20,22
36:19 37:3,4,11	66:16,17,19,21	99:2,4 101:8,11	131:15,16	167:25 168:10
37:12,22,23,24	66:23 67:1,2,5	101:23 102:8	132:6,7,14,15	168:13,15,22
38:1,3,9,10,13	67:6,8,10,12,14	102:11,13,25	132:24,25	168:24,25
38:14,16,17,20	67:18,19,25	103:1,2,3,5,7	133:17,18	169:2,4,6,11,12
38:21,24,25	68:1,4,5,10,16	104:3,4 105:13	134:14,15,16	169:14,16,17
39:5,6,9,10,17	68:17,22,23	105:14 106:9	134:17,19,24	170:1,2,4,15,16
39:18,21,22,25	69:2,3,7,8,10	106:10,14,15	134:25 135:4,5	170:18,24,25
40:1,5,6,9,11	69:11,14,15,16	107:11,12,17	135:10,11,20	171:2,15,16,22
40:12,13,15,17	69:17,18,19,21	108:9,10 109:9	135:21 136:3,4	171:23,25
40:24,25 41:3,4	69:24 70:11,12	109:10,17,20	136:9,10,15,16	172:13,14
41:7,8,11,12,22	70:18,19,25	109:21 110:10	137:2,3,9,12,18	173:2,3,5
41:24 42:19,20	71:1,6,7,19,20	110:11 111:5,6	137:19 138:8,9	174:12,13,15
42:24 43:12,13	72:2,3,7,8,11	112:10,11,22	138:10,11,13	175:1,2,4,17,18
43:20,21 44:1,2	72:12,21,22	112:25 113:14	138:15 139:7,8	176:17,18,20
44:10,11,23,24	73:4,5,13,14,23	113:22,23,24	139:10,11,17	177:3,4,5,8,15
45:5,6,24,25	73:24 74:5,6,10	114:1,2,3,5,8	139:20,21	177:16,18
46:7,8,13,14,18	74:11,13,14,17	114:11,12,19	140:14,15	178:5,6,12,13
46:19,25 47:1,5	74:18,24,25	114:20,24,25	141:10,16,17	178:15 179:7,8
47:6,14,15 48:2	75:16,17 76:3,4	115:15,16,21	141:19,20,22	179:14,15
48:3,14,15,25	76:13,14,16,17	115:22 116:23	142:5,6,13,14	180:7,8,14,15
49:1,14,15,19	76:19 77:15,16	116:24 117:5,6	142:18,19	180:17 181:5,6
49:20 50:12,13	77:24,25 78:7,8	117:11,15,16	143:5,6,11,12	181:12,13,15
50:24,25 51:8,9	78:12,13,18,19	117:19,20,23	144:2,10,11,23	181:21,22,24
51:16,17,25	79:2,3,5,6,7,8	117:24 118:7,8	144:24 145:8,9	182:1,3,7,8,10
52:1,5,6,13,16	79:10,17,18	118:12,13,17	145:25 146:1,2	182:15,16,20
52:17,18,20,22	80:7,8,9,10,12	118:20 119:1,2	146:3,5,7,19,20	182:21,23
53:5,6,11,12,16	80:16,17,23,24	119:16,17	147:3,4,11,14	183:9,10,18,21
53:17,20,21	81:1,2,8,9,13	120:4,5,6,8,10	148:1,2,4,16,22	183:24 184:4,5
54:4,5,11,12,22	81:14,21,22	120:12,21,22	149:1,2,10,11	184:11,12,14
54:23 55:2,3,12	82:3,4,16,17	121:12,13,15	149:20 150:7,8	184:20,21,25
55:13,14,22,23	83:1,2,9,10,12	121:20,21	150:16,17,22	185:1,3,7,8,10
56:4,6,7,17,18	83:15,16,22,23	122:5,6,12,13	150:23 151:8	185:14,15,17
57:10,11,20,21	83:25 84:8,9,13	123:13,14,16	151:10,11,13	185:18,20,22
58:2,3,6,7,14	84:14,23 85:1,2	123:22,23	151:14,25	185:24 186:5,6
58:15,19,20,25	85:4,5,6,8,9,11	124:12,13,18	152:1,14,16,24	186:8,11,25
59:1,5,6,10,11	85:20,21 86:5	124:19 125:12	153:1,15,19,21	187:1,12,13,15
59:14,15,24,25	86:11 87:7,8,10	125:13,15,20	156:2,3,5,19,24	188:4,5,11,13
60:6,7,10,11,15	87:12,14,18,19	125:21 126:7,8	157:1,3 158:10	189:9,11,16
60:16,21,22	87:20,24 88:3,4	126:9,10,12,14	158:12,14,24	191:14,16
61:3,4,12,15,16	88:10,13,15,21	126:18,19,22	158:25 160:14	representatives
61:21,22,23,25	88:22 89:5,7,8	126:23,24,25	160:18,25	61:10 190:7,16
62:1,3,13,14,18	89:12,16,17,18	127:1,12,13	161:1,12,18,19	190:25
62:19 63:6,7,10	89:19,23,24	128:12,13,23	162:5,7 163:11	represents 16:14
63:18,19 64:11	90:2,3,12,14	128:24 129:17	163:13,21,22	32:1
64:12,23,24	91:2,3 93:4	129:18 130:1,2	164:1,2,24	REPRESNTA...

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 24

148:23 Republic 3:24 Republican 32:16 43:24 74:3 101:16,18 154:14 Republicans 100:18,20 101:17,17 request 45:2 52:25 84:20 93:7 190:8,17 191:1 requested 80:15 182:18 require 73:12 91:6 117:18 144:14,15 required 20:18 27:1,5 71:23 108:21 requirement 27:25 44:17 requirements 151:20 requires 21:14 21:16 73:2 133:23 research 174:17 researched 156:12 reshaping 17:1 residence 177:24 179:5 180:21 180:23 residents 19:3 20:13,20,25 21:8 181:4 183:7 resisting 100:15 resolutions 12:19 191:10 resolve 140:13 respect 3:1 59:20 113:1 130:6 respective 13:25 response 51:2	84:23 167:7 179:10 180:10 191:23 responses 119:23 119:24 187:5 responsibilities 120:13 131:14 responsibility 79:22 80:4 147:20 173:17 responsible 125:19 responsive 128:22 restate 164:4 restriction 47:12 48:13 103:21 restrictions 170:10 177:23 result 36:4 39:3 39:13,14 74:2 91:23 156:12 resulted 29:9 results 32:15 retaliation 130:9 retention 72:16 retribution 130:9 133:5 164:22 retrogression 70:3 return 17:9 revenue 132:19 142:22 172:21 revenues 131:24 132:4 133:11 142:17,24 143:8,9,15 149:16 150:14 150:20 reverse 174:7 reversed 92:4 reverted 142:9 review 14:14 46:5,16 64:21 118:2 172:10 reviewed 14:19 93:10 131:18	184:8 reviewing 170:6 rid 144:20 ride 94:15 ridiculous 173:8 right 5:23 8:18 9:13 42:1 44:6 47:19 52:6,16 57:16 61:21 64:5 65:1,6 70:21 82:20 85:9,25 91:14 92:19 94:16 95:10 100:8 104:21 105:21 107:12,23 108:7 109:8,13 109:16 110:13 117:2 127:24 142:3,23 143:23 144:8 145:19 150:4 150:11 161:23 162:25 167:16 176:2,7 179:12 179:13 181:11 182:13 187:17 188:21 189:2 191:8,12 rights 42:14 49:7 60:20,25,25 64:4 65:10,22 90:9 91:12 92:16 99:8 100:15 rise 2:4 5:13,15 5:16 10:24 109:8 rises 110:5 risk 132:23 river 15:5,9 30:24,24 75:22 road 18:14 20:2,8 20:23,24,25 30:23,24 45:16 64:15,15 140:9 roads 19:5 36:16	120:18 137:15 137:16,23,25 137:25 138:3,4 138:5,6 154:24 roadways 18:10 19:19,23 21:4 120:16 Robinson 11:11 11:13 87:7,8,18 87:19,20 Rodriguez 190:9 190:12 role 79:20,23 rollover 191:9 Ron 167:13 Ronald 16:17 room 37:9 78:23 99:16 rough 51:14,19 rows 114:17 rule 5:17 7:5,19 8:5,20 105:4 114:16 115:13 116:20 121:4,9 122:1 124:24 125:7 135:16 138:2,7 143:1 143:21 150:13 rules 4:17 7:7 189:12,17 ruling 77:22 rumors 157:18 run 125:25 143:1 173:7 rural 21:9 S saddle 149:23 safe 176:5 Saint 62:10,11,17 62:21 63:16 75:22 San 19:7 Sarasota 16:8 20:7,15,16 satisfies 14:2 save 147:12	saving 174:20 saw 27:9 174:17 183:13 saying 11:15 22:23 49:18 84:4 98:16 109:14 128:10 147:18 150:19 150:20,21,25 163:25 174:20 176:6,21 179:11 180:18 182:3,17 says 47:25 91:24 111:8 118:1,11 118:16,19 145:22 146:13 152:6 153:5 161:14 162:11 167:1 175:7,8 177:20 186:18 SB 189:12 190:7 190:17 191:1 scalpel 155:6,21 156:9 161:16 scenarios 133:8 school 152:12 171:19 score 36:5 39:4 39:14,15 scores 13:25 Scott 100:6 screen 14:9,12 scrutiny 68:13 seat 39:19 88:19 seats 2:3 57:7,8 74:3,3 78:16,17 78:25 96:2,3,3 96:4 second 43:5 44:12,13 93:13 seconds 7:1 85:7 Secretary 161:25 162:3 190:9,18 191:2 section 47:8 95:8 96:6 170:14
--	--	---	---	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 25

173:9 174:19 174:20,25 sections 6:19 see 9:2 14:8 32:14 33:16 36:3 37:20 45:9 45:14 46:22 76:21 86:12 90:19 122:23 170:9 191:13 seeing 11:9 12:10 32:12 37:16 82:24 93:2 96:22 99:21 155:25 seek 115:25 116:5 seeking 145:14 seen 7:4 14:12 104:15 segregation 81:17,20 selects 95:9 self-govern 122:22 124:2 127:18 133:24 self-governing 124:8 seminal 18:9 senate 2:18,18 4:9 17:10 23:23 37:18 86:14 87:16 88:1,19 89:22 92:10 93:7 96:3 112:6 177:13,14 188:15 189:4 189:18 190:1,1 190:7,10,12,17 190:19,21 191:1,3,5,8 Senate's 37:1 Senator 190:9,12 190:19,21 191:3,5 send 8:21 sense 167:10	183:16 sensor 173:19 sent 180:12 separate 41:14 41:15 125:24 separation 79:16 80:4 series 62:6 serious 131:10 158:4 seriously 160:13 Seroy 37:17 73:7 serve 51:20 146:24 165:12 166:8 service 107:3 149:18 services 120:16 121:18 124:21 142:4 159:19 servicing 149:6 serving 118:4,6 session 1:11 14:6 72:14 103:11 103:13 104:2,7 104:8 107:21 110:9 119:14 139:5,6 148:11 155:11 171:10 182:12 183:14 186:3 sessions 103:13 186:1 set 49:6 77:3 112:18 143:23 189:3,4 sets 4:23 53:23 seven 104:20 107:7 162:13 186:13 Shakes 85:2 shape 16:24,25 18:25 19:20 39:12 shared 154:4 157:20 sharing 136:12	136:18 shifts 16:23 shining 154:19 short 6:25 157:25 161:5 169:14 show 4:3 5:8 12:15 94:23 102:4 168:6 189:25 190:2 191:8,24 shows 17:6 41:17 46:5 side 174:18 176:2 188:14 sides 165:16 sign 112:7 signal 94:16 significant 6:16 32:16 signs 110:20 similar 17:24 29:8 54:17 106:19 Similarly 19:25 simple 93:6 96:7 100:23 102:19 103:8 151:7 simply 27:9 39:2 80:5 139:2 153:9,10 172:4 180:5 single 14:3 63:12 93:16 124:9 164:19 174:8 sir 24:22 85:8 89:5,17,24 118:17 161:1 sit 78:16 154:3 sitting 107:1 170:19 175:24 situation 54:19 108:6 109:15 110:15 124:9 127:21 133:20 situations 105:22 six 3:16 21:9 104:24,24,25	105:10 107:7 107:25 108:14 108:20 109:18 110:20 111:9 116:11 128:9 128:16 145:18 160:21 162:13 162:16 size 54:2 slashed 101:13 Slaves 100:14 sledgehammer 155:7,21 156:7 sleep 158:21 slide 17:5 slides 15:17 slight 186:23 slightly 16:16 179:17 Smith 80:9,10,12 80:23 81:1,2,13 81:14 82:3,4 83:1,2,12,15,16 83:23,25 84:13 84:14 85:4,5 126:24,25 127:1 128:12 128:13 129:17 129:18 130:2,4 130:17,25 156:2,3,19 157:3 158:10 158:12 163:11 163:13,21,22 164:1,2 181:23 181:24 182:1 182:10,15,16 182:23 183:9 183:10,18,21 184:4,5,14,20 184:21 185:3,7 185:8 smoothing 16:10 social 112:15 113:5 168:12 168:19 170:11 171:14 173:15	173:16 174:8 175:7 177:21 179:19 181:1 181:11 191:4,6 solution 110:9 solutions 2:24 solve 163:6 somebody 56:11 92:16 106:6 someplace 122:11 somewhat 106:19 soon 3:5 sorry 39:7 61:24 61:25 63:9 76:15 77:1 118:17 147:15 148:4,5,9 150:19 177:13 sort 71:16 73:11 105:22,25 121:23 125:23 133:21 sorts 105:1 110:3 sound 19:14 170:7 175:4 sounds 28:5 south 20:3 40:21 41:16,19 43:8 70:5 78:16 82:14 116:13 137:24 southern 15:11 17:13 space 169:23 spat 118:21 speak 2:25 23:23 23:24 29:20 30:22 32:24 33:7 56:9 59:17 59:22 60:18 64:14,16 68:18 75:25 113:8 165:16 speaker 2:2,9,18 3:8,17,18 4:1,5 4:6,7,8,10,11
---	---	---	---	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 26

4:13,14,16,16	46:9,13,15,18	77:24 78:1,7,9	120:6,8,11,21	151:25 152:2
4:19,20,22 5:2	46:20,25 47:2,5	78:12,14,18,20	120:23 121:12	152:14,17,24
5:6,8,13,14,16	47:7,14,16 48:2	79:2,4,5,8,11	121:14,20,22	153:2,11,13,14
5:21,23 6:11	48:4,14,16,25	79:17,19 80:7,8	122:5,7,12,14	153:19,22
7:22 8:1,18,25	49:14,16,19,21	80:10,13,16,23	123:13,15,22	155:22,23
9:8,10,16,20,22	50:12,14,24	81:1,3,8,10,13	123:24 124:12	156:4,19 157:2
10:9,16 11:7,14	51:1,8,10,16,25	81:21,23 82:3,5	124:14,18,20	158:9,13,24
12:8,13,15,17	52:2,5,13,18,20	82:16,18 83:1,3	125:12,14,20	159:1 160:14
12:18,20,21,23	52:23 53:5,7,11	83:9,11,15,17	125:22 126:7	160:19,25
12:24 13:3,10	53:13,16,18,20	83:21,23 84:1,8	126:10,12,15	161:2,11,18,19
13:13 22:5,6,10	53:21 54:4,6,11	84:10,13,15,22	126:18,20,22	161:23,25
22:12,15,22	54:13,22,24	85:3,6,9,12,20	126:25 127:2	162:1,3,4,8
23:1,3,7,10,12	55:2,4,13,15,22	85:22,25 86:3,4	127:12,14	163:11,14,21
23:15,18 24:1,3	55:24 56:6,8,17	86:9,12 87:4,5	128:12,14,21	164:3 165:6,10
24:7,9,10,13,15	56:19 57:10,12	87:9,12,19,23	128:25 129:17	166:19,23
24:18,19,23,25	57:20,22 58:2,4	88:3,5,12,14,21	129:19,25	167:6,24,25
25:4,12,14,19	58:6,8,14,16,19	88:23 89:4,7,9	130:5,17 131:1	168:4,6,8,9,13
25:21 26:3,8,10	58:21,25 59:2,5	89:16,18,20,23	131:3,6,9,15,17	168:16,22,25
26:14,16,20,22	59:7,10,12,14	90:2,4,11,13,18	132:6,8,14,16	169:2,5,11,13
27:2,4,10,12,17	59:16,18,24	90:22,23,24,25	132:24 133:1	169:16,18
27:19,21 28:3,9	60:1,6,7,10,12	91:4 92:25 93:4	133:17,19	170:1,3,15,17
28:13,18,19,22	60:15,17,21,23	94:17,21,23	134:14,17,20	170:24 171:1
28:24 29:2,17	61:3,5,11,13,15	95:4,7 96:18,19	134:24 135:1,4	171:15,17,22
29:19,25 30:2,9	61:17,22,24	96:25 97:1,4,5	135:6,10,12,20	171:24 172:13
30:12,14,20,22	62:1,4,13,15,18	97:10,17,18,21	135:22 136:3,5	172:15 173:2,4
31:2,4,12,14	62:20 63:6,8,18	98:25 99:5	136:9,11,15,17	174:12,14
32:2,4,18,20	63:20 64:11,23	101:8,11,23	137:2,4,9,13,18	175:1,3,17,18
33:1,4,9,11,20	64:25 65:14,18	102:6,7,11,14	137:20 138:8	175:19 176:14
33:22,24 34:2,5	65:25 66:2,6,8	102:24 103:3,6	138:11,14	176:19 177:2,6
34:7,9,11,14,16	66:12,17,19,22	104:3,5 105:13	139:7,11,17	177:9,15,17
34:19,21,24	67:1,3,5,7,10	105:15 106:9	140:14,16	178:5,7,12,14
35:1,4,6,12,14	67:15,18,20,25	107:15,18	141:6,11,13,18	179:7,9,14,16
35:17,24 36:1,6	68:1,4,6,9,11	108:9 109:9,11	141:20,23	180:7,9,14,16
36:8,18,20 37:3	68:16,22,24	109:16 110:10	142:5,13,15,18	181:5,7,12,14
37:5,11,13,22	69:2,4,7,8,10	110:12 111:5	142:20 143:5,7	181:20,23,24
37:24 38:1,4,9	69:12,14,16,17	112:10,12,22	143:11,13	182:2,7,9,15,20
38:11,13,16,18	69:19,22 70:11	112:25 113:13	144:1,3,10,12	182:22 183:9
38:20,24 39:1,5	70:13,18,25	113:24 114:1,3	144:23,25	183:11,18,22
39:9,11,17,21	71:2,6,19,21	114:6,11,13,19	145:7,8,10,25	184:3,6,11,13
39:23,25 40:5,7	72:2,3,7,9,11	114:24 115:1	146:3,6,19,21	184:20,22,25
40:9,13,15,18	72:21,23 73:4	115:15,21	147:3,5,11,15	185:2,7,9,13,14
40:24 41:1,3,7	73:13,15,23,25	116:23 117:5,7	148:1,5,9,17,22	185:18,20,23
41:9,11,13,22	74:5,7,10,13,15	117:15,17,19	148:24 149:1,3	186:5,7,25
41:25 42:19,25	74:17,24 75:1	117:21,23	149:10,19,21	187:2,12,14
43:12,14,20,21	75:16,18 76:3,5	118:7,9,12,15	150:7,9,16,18	188:4,6,12,21
44:1,3,10,23,25	76:13,15,17,20	118:18 119:1,3	150:22,24	188:24,25
45:5,24 46:1,7	76:24 77:13,17	119:15,20,21	151:8,11,13,15	189:1,2,11,16

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 27

189:23,25	162:14,16,17	spoken 117:9,10	21:13,14,16,17	173:13 175:5
190:6,15,24	162:25 163:1,3	136:1,8 185:11	21:19,20,22,24	status 178:10,10
191:8,11,12,16	163:8,9 164:14	188:7	21:25 25:2	statute 118:11,16
191:20,22,24	164:17,18	sponsor 96:20	43:25 46:11	118:19,21
speakers 6:22	165:1,1,22,23	155:24 163:16	47:11,20,22,23	151:17 168:18
speaking 31:15	167:9,15,15	165:18 167:12	48:8,20,21,22	170:12 172:11
53:22 66:10	171:9,10	187:4 188:8,14	48:24 49:12	stay 122:10
109:24 121:15	178:17 182:11	sponsored 96:10	51:12 55:8 56:3	step 70:3
154:5 157:19	186:17 190:20	146:10	56:24 57:9,25	steps 77:8
188:16	190:23	spread 116:12	58:22 61:10	Stevens 100:19
speaks 136:23	specific 28:6,15	Sprows 4:15	70:10 74:22	sticks 16:15
154:16	42:23 48:13	190:5,15,24	75:20 79:1 81:5	stolen 106:22
special 3:2 4:17	57:16 65:16	square 19:20	81:6 85:16,18	stop 133:8
4:23 5:1,4,8 7:8	87:14 105:20	squared 18:25	86:17 91:21	166:15
12:22 77:10	106:6 107:24	20:1	92:2 95:13,13	store 2:12
78:3,10 102:10	116:9 131:19	squeezed 8:14	95:14,22 96:3,3	straight 35:10,21
102:20 103:11	139:18 188:19	St 15:5,14 19:7	98:1 99:10,12	straightforward
103:13 104:2,6	specifically 23:11	19:14 30:17	99:16 106:21	96:7
104:17,20,25	40:22 42:2 48:8	stable 132:20	110:8 112:17	strapping 133:12
105:8 107:21	49:4 50:1 53:1	stack 35:9	112:19 113:6	strategy 29:8
107:22,24,25	53:25 69:24	stacked 35:20	127:18 129:8	stream 132:19
108:4,14,16	70:4 130:7	134:8	134:12 137:16	street 1:24 75:25
109:2,4,23	139:9 154:14	staff 35:2 45:11	144:21 147:1,7	76:2
110:2,21 111:3	159:8 169:21	46:17 50:4 73:8	159:25 173:1	streets 45:16
111:9,25	171:10	stakeholders	174:4 175:25	strength 83:19
113:21 118:2,5	specificity 107:20	156:13 165:15	177:22 181:4	159:23
119:9 120:13	specifics 47:17	standard 55:10	190:12,14	stretches 53:4
121:10 123:3	157:17 158:5	57:2 147:8	state's 21:21	strict 68:13
123:10 127:23	specifies 47:23	standards 25:8	95:12	strike 154:21,22
127:25 128:2,6	speeding 94:14	27:15,16,23	state-issued	154:24 155:1
128:16 129:2	spending 102:15	28:11,12 50:19	129:23	striking 185:5
131:11,13,21	spent 7:16 93:21	50:20,23 60:5,8	stated 81:15 84:2	stronger 159:25
131:25 133:23	120:25	67:22,23	142:2 163:19	struck 29:10
134:2,11	spill 82:9	standing 3:19	statement 92:12	structure 121:6
135:17 136:25	spirit 93:11	4:12 97:15	127:16 164:10	142:22
137:22 138:18	split 15:8,14 17:2	130:15	statements	structured
139:5,6 140:1	20:22 21:7	stands 3:24 15:9	131:18 164:10	143:15
142:8,10	30:11,16 32:11	29:24	states 3:23 21:19	studied 7:17 71:9
144:14 145:18	45:14 116:21	start 140:6	24:6 60:14	stuff 160:6
148:20 151:18	splits 13:20 17:3	started 107:9	67:23 70:22	sub-committee
151:21 152:8,9	17:3,15,23 30:5	110:2 176:15	99:13 100:10	10:1
152:11,12,20	30:8 32:7,9	Starting 19:10	100:13,15	subcommittee
152:22 153:6,6	87:3	starts 19:16	174:4	5:10 6:22 7:7
153:7,8 154:15	splitting 16:5,7	state 5:19 6:17,23	statistical 16:18	8:3 18:1 25:24
155:5,8,11,15	spoke 38:5,21	13:2 15:6,24	statistics 90:16	subcommittees
157:24 161:15	53:1,24 157:16	16:5 19:5 20:7	statue 131:20	4:12
161:17,21	164:23	20:23,24 21:11	142:7 173:10	subject 109:24

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 28

184:18	10:24 87:17	77:14 86:4	149:15 151:6	test 39:4 68:13,20
subjective 164:10	88:2 90:6 91:4	91:14 92:3,16	157:16	70:15,16,21,24
submits 4:17	94:12 96:15	93:7 101:5	taxes 128:4	71:18 72:1
submitted 72:25	101:20 120:19	104:11 108:7	143:17,19,25	testified 42:5
subscribe 140:8	132:19 136:14	108:11 110:19	150:21 154:2	68:19
substance 98:3	167:19	125:16 135:25	154:10	testify 6:23
106:12 109:19	supported	145:4,12 150:4	taxpayer 121:16	testimony 25:18
111:8 112:23	186:23	160:13 163:3,5	144:16 148:20	25:23 26:5,5
113:2 120:3	suppose 130:13	taken 39:18,24	taxpayers 121:7	67:4,13,24
130:18,21,23	185:12	128:10	121:17 133:12	78:21 169:19
140:19 141:3,7	supposed 8:5	takes 20:2 73:21	143:10,14,16	tests 68:15
141:8 156:22	10:6 65:23	99:11	143:18,24	Thaddeus 100:19
160:24 161:7	supremacy 48:7	talk 23:22 32:6	144:7 145:5	thank 2:9 3:8
substantial 74:21	96:13 99:11	116:11 117:4	147:22 149:15	5:12,16 6:10
135:3	Supreme 44:16	talked 29:5 50:2	149:16,24	9:9,9,21 10:15
substantive 10:5	44:19 45:3	67:12 96:10	teach 152:11	11:5,13 13:12
substitute 97:1	52:25 70:6,21	103:15 117:1	153:5	22:9,14,15,25
162:1 189:14	70:22 71:3,5	169:7	team 37:8 159:23	23:9,19 24:2,8
189:19	75:3 100:6	talking 45:1	tech 179:2,5,23	24:17,18,19,24
substituted 190:3	sure 2:22 9:23	50:17 56:25	181:1 183:8	25:13,20 26:9
substitutes 90:23	25:16 35:15	57:1,2 58:22	technical 187:16	26:15,21 27:3
sudden 139:3	46:22 62:25	62:8 63:10,25	tell 23:21,25	27:11,18 28:8
suddenly 173:7	63:15 75:14	70:14 71:25	29:21 30:6,25	28:18,21 29:1
177:22	87:15 97:25	75:10 96:2,2,4	36:22 38:7,23	29:18 30:1,13
sue 146:15	98:20 100:25	109:15 110:15	46:2,5,11 47:11	30:21 31:3,13
172:22 173:1	103:17 109:21	125:7 126:1	51:5 52:4 56:14	32:3,19 33:3,10
sued 47:22	119:25 125:4	133:21 134:11	56:16 59:8 74:9	33:21 34:1,6,10
suffering 3:3,5	141:13 142:21	149:12 166:5	76:8,10 93:14	34:15,20,25
sufficient 55:19	181:1	talks 98:12	108:19 126:17	35:5,13,25 36:7
suggest 54:18	surface 107:9	Tallahassee	127:24 128:6	36:19 37:4,12
63:17 94:15	110:5	47:20	157:13 169:8	37:23 38:3,10
suggested 57:23	surprised 114:6	Tampa 19:17	182:25 183:3	38:17,25 39:10
suggesting 26:7	164:13	26:13 27:1 29:4	183:14	39:22 40:6,12
suit 21:19	surrounding	29:10 30:15	Temple 20:4,4	40:17,25 41:8
Suite 1:24	160:9 162:22	31:11 62:25	ten 31:22 127:19	41:12,24 42:24
sum 159:8	susceptibility	63:3 75:24 76:1	tending 109:22	43:13 44:2,11
summer 178:21	99:18	Tant 3:21,22	tendril 83:6,8,19	44:24 45:6,25
Suncoast 20:1,3	suspect 47:3	tantamount	84:3,5	46:8,14,19 47:1
sunset 102:20		81:16,20	tendrils 82:9,11	47:6,15 48:3,15
sunsetted 111:9	T	target 127:5,9	tension 109:24	49:15,20 50:13
119:4,5 145:21	table 144:8	163:9 164:18	term 7:21 80:18	50:25 51:2,9,17
Sunshine 139:14	tackled 107:4	targeted 165:4	terms 30:15 35:7	52:1,17,22,24
supersede 154:25	110:7 129:15	targeting 108:14	44:14 72:12,16	53:6,12,17 54:5
supplemental	tailored 79:1	108:15 128:19	93:19 97:24	54:12,23 55:3
49:11 95:23	91:22	164:6	99:18	55:14,23 56:7
99:9	tainted 75:13	Tavares 18:19	Terrace 20:4,4	56:18 57:11,21
support 8:16	take 2:3 14:16	tax 141:4 149:5	territory 143:2	58:3,7,15,20

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 29

59:1,6,11,15,18	126:9,14,19	181:13,22	82:23 84:11,22	three 13:24 15:24
59:25 60:11,16	127:1,13	182:1,8,16,21	93:17 95:17	17:3,16 20:11
60:22 61:4,12	128:13,24	183:10,12,21	96:5 101:18	57:18 58:17
61:16,23 62:3,5	129:18,20	184:5,12,21	102:16 104:14	59:3,9 61:19
62:14,19 63:7	130:4,25 131:8	185:1,8,10,13	105:17 106:1,2	63:24 86:24
63:19 64:12,24	131:16 132:7	185:17,22	106:3,11	115:19 123:5
66:1,7,16,21	132:15,25	186:6 187:1,13	107:19 109:22	146:8
67:2,6,14,19	133:18 134:19	188:5,11	110:1,4,14,22	three-fifth 101:3
68:5,10,17,23	134:25 135:5	Thanks 139:11	112:14,15	Three-fifths
69:3,11,21	135:11,21	theatre 156:18	113:1,5,15	101:2
70:12 71:1,20	136:4,10,16	theft 129:12	114:20 115:14	Thursday 191:18
72:8,22 73:14	137:3,12,19	theme 123:4	117:9 118:15	tied 100:4
73:24 74:6,14	138:13 139:21	134:7,9 159:18	122:16,18,24	Tier 13:19 16:7
74:25 75:17	140:15,17	168:20 177:22	122:25 124:25	20:14 27:14,15
76:4,19,23	141:17,22	180:6	125:8 127:21	27:23 28:10,12
77:16,25 78:8	142:6,14,19	theory 27:13	128:21 133:20	30:18,25 37:1
78:13,19 79:3,4	143:6,12 144:2	132:5	133:25 134:9	38:6,6,7,8,14
79:10,18 80:12	144:11,24	thing 7:17 10:6	137:10 138:16	38:15 40:2,2
80:17 81:2,9,22	145:7,9 146:5,7	33:12 41:25	139:22 155:7	45:8,13,20,21
82:4,17 83:2,10	146:20 147:4	82:20 101:4	155:13 157:5	46:3,4,6,10,24
83:16,25 84:9	147:14 148:16	104:21 127:4	157:11 158:2	46:24 49:24
84:14 85:11,21	148:23 149:2	129:15 143:23	161:21 163:15	50:3,3,4,10,10
86:11 87:8 88:4	149:11,20	144:9 145:23	163:18 164:7	50:16,16,18,20
88:6,13,15,22	150:8,23	150:11 180:13	164:24 165:18	50:23 55:10
89:8,19 90:3,12	151:10,14	things 3:6 32:23	176:14 180:25	57:2,13 60:5,8
91:3 92:24 93:4	152:1,16 153:1	40:8 77:19 92:3	187:18	63:25 64:1,8,20
94:16 95:6 97:9	153:21 155:22	94:8 95:9 96:15	thinking 46:3	64:22 65:2,3,4
97:10,17,20	156:3 157:1	98:3 99:19,20	70:20 97:24	67:22,22 72:18
98:18,23 99:4	158:12,14,25	100:12 105:11	132:21	76:10,11 78:25
101:22 102:13	160:18 161:1	109:3 115:2	thinks 91:11,16	78:25 87:1
102:14 103:5,7	161:12,20	117:10 119:14	91:18	92:14,15 93:20
104:4 105:14	162:7 163:13	125:4 126:3	third 12:19 77:12	93:21,22 94:5,9
106:15 107:17	164:2 165:5,9	128:8 135:16	189:5 191:9	Tiers 38:5
108:10 109:10	166:14,22	152:9 162:13	Thompson 120:7	time 5:21 6:24
110:11 111:6	167:1,24	162:23 166:12	120:8,10	7:1,14,20,20
112:11 114:5,7	168:15,24	181:9	121:12,13	8:4 9:12 29:7
114:12,25	169:4,6,12,17	think 6:5 22:23	122:5,6 123:13	61:8 62:23
115:16 116:24	170:2,16,18,25	24:15,18 28:13	123:14 124:12	76:22 77:14
116:25 117:6	171:16,18,23	31:16,23,25	124:13 125:12	85:25 93:13
117:16,20	172:14 173:3	36:8 37:18	125:13 192:24	97:14 100:19
118:8 119:2,20	174:13,15	42:20 43:15,17	thought 30:5	101:9 111:11
120:5,10,22	175:2,19	45:1,11 50:20	64:18,20	119:10 140:12
121:13,21	176:18 177:8	52:14 53:23	100:13 111:15	144:5,9,17
122:6,13	177:16,18	54:14,15 56:11	114:17 143:22	145:3,5,5 151:9
123:14,23	178:6,8,13,15	56:13 60:4,24	157:8	151:18 153:11
124:13,19	179:8,10,15	67:11 75:8,8	thoughtful	155:16 157:25
125:13,21	180:8,15 181:6	77:20 78:22	156:11 157:5	160:14 166:19

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 30

177:25 188:6 188:21 time-sensitive 103:14,24 108:6 times 4:24 17:16 27:6 49:3 109:2 112:9 122:8 137:10 139:9 title 86:6 95:1 153:16 171:4,6 189:13,19 190:2 today 2:5,11,13 5:1 13:4,8,14 14:15 26:18 29:16 32:13 37:9,16,20 46:12 50:9 73:9 89:3 91:17 93:19 94:11 98:24 102:16 105:2 106:2,12 108:8,11 113:17 114:9 115:2 118:25 119:12 120:2 121:8 122:3 130:21 143:15 143:17,20 150:5 152:10 152:13 153:8 154:20 178:25 181:16 184:24 told 36:23 75:3 92:23 176:2 Toledo 138:18 tomorrow 28:5 53:15 77:1 113:16 119:22 120:1 130:19 147:12 189:5,7 191:13 tool 160:10 top 35:9,20 126:21 topics 188:19	torn 3:4 tossed 94:7 totally 113:13 touched 78:17 toys 133:6,16 trade 180:21,22 tradition 8:12 trained 159:18 159:19 trans-kids 130:15 transcript 192:3 TRANSCRIPT... 1:10 TRANSCRIPT... 192:1 transfer 116:8 154:7 transferred 137:22 141:2 149:8,13 154:11 transferring 148:7 transparent 8:6 transportation 120:18 treated 7:4 88:19 treating 176:24 180:4 treatment 133:23 trend 98:5 trouble 63:9 truck 122:17 true 31:19 56:13 145:16 147:9 192:2 truly 11:15 12:3 12:4 126:4 trust 142:25 144:18 150:10 167:2 try 30:3 43:15,22 55:5 58:9 115:9 120:24 trying 9:22 19:19 32:6 52:10,10	56:1 57:3 61:6 64:8 71:8 78:21 83:4,5 98:19 101:6 107:13 107:13,19,20 113:9,11 147:15,16 167:19 174:19 175:13,25 177:24 179:11 180:11 181:8 turn 74:8 94:15 turning 16:22 17:20 turns 152:5 tweets 174:17 twenty 104:20 twice 17:16 27:14 27:15 189:13 189:19 190:2 Twitter 147:24 175:23 176:23 two 14:23 15:1,4 15:10 17:3 27:14 32:11 57:18,22 58:13 58:18 62:23 78:16 88:17 98:3 115:19 116:17,22 117:11 121:11 121:11 131:12 142:12,12 162:9 170:9 173:24 186:1 two-thirds 20:12 21:8 type 57:25 60:19 167:14 175:11 types 32:23 154:19 U UCF 110:6 129:5 129:7,10,21 UCLA 40:20 42:13	Ukraine 3:4 ultimate 172:5 ultimately 55:17 unaccountable... 135:17 uncertainty 160:4,7 unconstitutional 65:6 91:14 170:21 176:25 179:12,20 uncovered 140:4 underlying 57:24 87:2 100:1 164:9 170:9,23 171:12 175:6 175:14,15 179:22 182:14 186:19 underpinning 68:8 understand 7:2 9:19,22 22:19 25:16 30:3 35:15 39:8 44:22 56:22 57:4 62:25 65:5 66:9,23 69:25 70:20 71:8 98:11,17 107:13 110:14 113:13 128:2 150:6,10 152:6 157:13 170:22 171:20 176:5 176:22 180:2 understanding 44:15,19 53:3 56:1 62:9 65:4 70:2 112:21 125:16 149:22 152:23 158:17 understood 31:7 unfair 171:14 179:5 180:21 180:22 183:7 187:25	unfairly 175:7 181:2 unfortunately 154:1 164:5 186:14 uniformity 83:13 unincorporated 19:14 20:17 21:3 116:17 unique 29:22,23 36:4 38:22 54:19 124:9 uniqueness 40:3 unit 124:8 United 3:23 21:18 60:14 67:23 70:22 100:10,13 Universal 123:4 123:5,5 124:7 universe 77:19 122:21 universities 107:1 129:8 university 106:21 unknown 77:21 unlock 3:10 unusual 9:12 95:21 update 104:22 108:17 109:5 updated 105:11 upheld 77:23 upset 158:4 urge 91:4 urgency 139:1,1 US-19 75:25 USC 99:8 use 37:1 39:4 40:2 50:17,19 68:14 75:21 76:1,2 91:21 97:24 103:13 129:4,5 135:15 143:1 150:13 150:14 uses 18:9 20:1,7
--	---	--	--	--

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 31

132:19 usually 39:20 utilities 120:16 utility 158:19 159:9 utilize 19:12 utilized 20:8 utilizes 18:10 utilizing 16:17 18:8 21:4 utmost 59:20	visitors 2:4 3:18 Vista 116:19 138:5 visual 16:11,19 18:25 visualized 15:17 visually 16:21 19:21 vocal 153:24 voice 2:14 12:2 voiced 136:1 156:14 voices 101:13 153:24 void 127:10 Volusia 17:13,16 17:18,23 vote 6:3 8:20,21 11:5,10 41:18 43:9,24 44:6,8 56:10,12 73:9 88:1 89:21 105:2 108:11 112:3 128:4 163:10 165:2 166:17 voter 70:1 voters 41:18,20 42:8,13 43:4,7 43:24 64:3,7 65:7,9,20 70:9 80:1 81:16,19 92:8,23 117:9 votes 99:25 voting 3:17 11:1 40:21 41:15 42:14 45:22 49:6 53:15 60:24,25 64:3 65:10,21 70:5,9 71:13,15,17 90:9 91:12 92:15 99:8 VRA 94:4,8	160:6 wait 115:17 waiting 9:12 waive 21:23 waived 189:12,17 walk 108:3 133:7 133:16 wall 2:8 15:24,25 76:21 Walt 159:6 164:6 182:18 want 14:18 33:12 36:21 42:1 48:21 60:2 63:4 69:25 70:19 84:16 97:10 100:4 105:23 106:12 113:18 128:1 135:24 137:5 138:3,5 139:19 150:25 157:4,5 160:15 161:7,8 163:2 165:11 166:24 172:16 wanted 11:14 30:3 42:7 62:6 62:25 69:23 87:10 103:8 108:13 111:18 112:1 140:10 151:22,23 169:8 wants 92:16,20 war- 3:3 Washington 1:24 wasn't 78:4 100:14 104:7 136:20 148:12 Water 139:14 waterway 64:15 64:16 waterways 18:11 18:17 21:4 75:20 way 3:6 25:6 39:12 41:18	42:18 43:9,22 48:12 55:5 56:16 62:10 63:3,17 71:13 75:13 77:2 84:19 98:21 106:16 112:5 113:5,7,8 120:25 125:5 126:2 129:21 133:15,15 134:10 140:11 143:16 149:16 163:7 164:16 164:18 169:25 174:24 176:11 179:23 we'll 77:9 119:25 141:13 154:2 we're 7:22 9:13 10:8 11:5 22:20 26:18 27:25 28:4 32:12 38:6 43:6 53:15 57:1 64:3 65:2,2 71:10,12 73:9 89:2 96:2,2,4 96:16 98:17 99:21,23 100:25 103:12 108:15 109:8 109:18 110:15 110:17,18 111:14 113:10 114:8 118:24 123:11 128:19 129:15 130:12 133:13 134:11 139:6 140:11 140:12 142:25 147:7,9 148:7 150:5 152:10 153:3,11 157:18 163:7 166:5,6 167:11 170:19 177:23 179:11 188:2	189:2,6 191:12 we've 7:4 14:19 57:7 63:11 81:5 92:17 103:22 104:15 105:12 105:12 113:17 139:3 167:20 167:21 189:3 weapon 98:1 weapons 98:7 website 13:17 69:6,9 Wednesday 4:18 week 37:19 weeks 63:24 146:8 172:19 weight 85:18 well-recognized 18:10 went 9:1 110:2 129:15 171:2 weren't 29:6 west 15:18 18:20 western 18:12 19:10 21:3 wheel 16:23 17:21 whichever 39:4 white 100:8 who've 143:21 wholeheartedly 186:23 wholly 19:9 Willhite 22:8,9 28:20,21 33:1 33:20,21 37:22 37:23 40:11,12 52:16,17 61:22 61:23 66:15,16 69:16,17 76:13 76:14 79:5,6 80:7,8 85:6,8 102:25 103:1 113:23,24 114:1 120:4,5 126:7,8,9,22,23 131:3,4 134:14
V v 1:4 valid 180:25 validate 74:9 validated 54:9 valorem 154:9 variation 39:14 variations 56:15 various 31:17 51:21 vary 41:16 vendetta 128:17 venue 47:9,13,16 48:9,17 95:9,19 veracity 42:21 43:1,16 version 16:25 35:8,8,20 versions 35:19 versus 50:3 63:23 101:18 155:7 vet 8:4 11:5 12:3 145:3,5 157:12 vetting 172:9 viable 57:14 VIDEO 191:25 viewpoint 181:3 Vineland 18:14 violate 79:15 129:23 violates 117:25 violation 80:4 174:1 violence 3:5 virtue 180:5	W wacky 105:1			

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 32

134:15 138:8,9 141:16,17 145:25 146:1 151:8,10 168:22,24 177:3,4 181:21 181:22 185:15 185:17 Williams 37:25 38:1,3,13,14,20 38:21 39:5,6,17 39:18,25 40:1,9 willing 2:15 Winter 18:4 wish 91:1 122:1 136:25 Women 80:1 wondering 51:19 Woodson 141:19 141:20,22 142:13,14 143:5,6 144:1,2 144:23,24 177:5,6,8,18 178:5,6,15 179:7,8 180:7,8 180:17 181:5,6 181:15 words 2:25 66:11 81:25 115:3 160:21 work 2:23 115:7 126:2 158:19 159:11 163:4 worked 24:5 104:16 106:18 115:5 138:17 workers 158:15 158:16 159:3 159:10 160:4 working 19:11 works 153:10 187:17 world 102:16 105:9 109:6 123:18 127:6 159:6 164:6	182:19 worship 2:14 worth 131:11 wouldn't 177:19 178:1 wrap 57:3 58:9 write 127:10 writers 164:11 writing 164:20 164:22 written 92:23 wrong 91:18 92:17,17 wrote 184:23 185:6 <hr/> X <hr/> Y yays 5:5 yea 5:4 12:11 94:19 101:25 168:2 yeah 41:25 83:22 112:25 161:11 175:18 year 7:19,21 94:3 102:22 110:19 111:10 116:4 119:6,7 120:25 126:4,5 128:11 135:13 136:22 140:13 145:15 145:17 156:17 158:23 165:20 169:19 182:25 183:6 186:16 187:3 year's 119:14 years 6:18 29:23 91:13 92:6,18 104:21 105:10 106:20 108:17 108:22 111:15 112:9 122:23 123:17 125:18 138:17 139:23	143:4,22 144:21 156:14 165:20 yeas 12:12 94:20 102:1 168:3 189:22 yesterday 6:21 14:22 15:19 17:7 18:21 23:13,20 29:5 33:5 36:23 37:10 42:4 47:25 49:22 67:4,13 68:12 68:12,19 104:9 106:1,3 109:13 112:14 114:20 115:4 117:1,8 117:13 127:3 141:25 145:2 151:16 152:3 154:3 169:7 171:3,7 185:25 yield 85:7 185:18 yielding 19:2 yoke 144:21 YouTube 176:23 <hr/> Z Zephyrhills 19:6 zero 82:22 122:4 <hr/> 0 0.43 14:1 0.47 13:25 0.81 13:25 <hr/> I I 10:18 14:7 21:10 27:15 28:10 38:6,8,15 40:2 45:21 46:24 50:3,10 50:16 55:10 57:2,14 60:5,8 63:25 64:8 65:3 65:4 67:22 72:18 78:25	92:14 93:20,21 93:22 94:5,9 145:14 1(c) 98:12 1,000,000 151:6 1.1 131:19 132:2 142:1,11 149:12 10 6:18 14:4 17:1 17:24 18:2,3,9 18:12,13 33:16 86:22 88:19 10,000 115:5 10:00 1:13 191:13,18 100 108:15 127:17,20 11 16:22,23 17:1 17:5,6 18:2,5 18:13,15,19,21 187:19 11.12 5:17 8:20 11th 21:18,22 12 17:2 18:23 19:1,4,8,25 129:8 127 109:4 112:9 140:1 145:23 13 6:19 19:9,11 19:21 133 104:17 1367 99:8 13th 100:12 14 19:11,16,24 29:12,15 31:10 63:1 64:5,9 100:19 140 6:18 141,000 19:2 14th 49:7 61:1 91:16,18 92:18 100:2,4,20,24 101:4,12,15 179:2 15 19:3,4,6,24 20:5,9,11,12 31:10 146:15	146:17 172:20 172:25 150 92:18 16 15:16 20:6,7 17 18:21 20:6,16 20:18 1730 1:24 178 121:1 18 14:9,13 15:16 20:9,19,21,23 21:1,7 180 53:4 54:8 1800 131:21 163:9,9 164:14 1843 161:17 1871 61:18 189.072 151:17 152:6 189965 153:17 19 14:11 19:12 21:5 1965 90:10 91:12 1967 122:21 1968 102:21 104:19,22 105:2 108:18 109:5 111:12 116:1 127:22 138:24 140:4 145:24 198 54:16 1992 61:19 1C 5:18,25 6:16 13:1 1st 53:1 102:22 111:10 119:5 119:13 140:13 <hr/> 2 2 13:19 14:7 16:7 20:14 27:14,23 28:12 30:18,25 37:1 38:6,7,15 40:2 45:8,13,20 46:3,4,6,10,24 49:24 50:3,4,10 50:16,18,20,23
---	--	---	---	---

4/20/2022

Common Cause, et al. v. Cord Byrd

Audio Transcription

Page 33

53:4 54:3 64:1 64:20,22 65:2 67:22 76:10,11 78:25 87:1 92:15 131:10 149:25 20 1:12 2:1 4:18 5:1 14:7 59:13 74:3 82:11,12 82:24 83:4 84:5 84:12 86:22 108:22 200 159:14 2000 159:10 2000-plus 159:3 20036 1:24 202 1:25 2022 1:12 2:1 4:18 5:1 141:5 191:18 21 14:7 191:18 22 6:18 14:7 162:18 187:20 23 14:8 82:13 83:7 85:7 153:17 230 170:14 173:9 174:19,20,25 232-0646 1:25 24 14:8 59:13 86:22 25 14:8 86:25 26 14:11 21:2,5 42:3,7,14 43:11 45:7,10,19 69:25 70:8 71:12,14 86:25 27 14:8 16:17 47:9 86:25 28 14:8 86:17 99:8 129:8 181:19 182:13 188:20 28th 171:12 178:24 29 20:24 2C 189:13,18	190:1,7,10,12 191:9 3 3 14:11 31 153:18 34 113:17 34th 75:25 350 159:8 3500 20:25 356 158:18 36 47:8,9 89:25 89:25 92:11 3627 95:2 96:8 3647 86:7 95:2 96:8 373 13:23 382 115:10 126:1 396 13:22 3C 102:9,19 104:1 4 4 14:20,21 15:2 15:11 31:9 34:3 35:2,9,20 89:25 90:1 92:11 4,500 20:20 4.7 128:5 4:22-cv-109 1:4 400 158:19 159:9 42,876 86:19 46 20:25 47 47:9 48 175:22 49 13:21 4c 189:13,18 190:2,17,19,21 191:9 5 5 14:20,21 15:2 15:12 31:9,24 32:10 34:3,18 35:9,20 53:25 54:16 59:13 64:2 81:18 82:25 85:15	86:22,24 50 13:21 101:14 123:17 125:18 143:22 144:21 500 52:9 540 175:14 55 104:21 105:10 108:16 112:9 122:23 139:23 143:4 55-plus 111:14 555 175:14 5C 168:11,18 6 6 15:16 17:5,6 18:15,18 145:22 163:8 60 7:1 91:13 92:5 60s 154:17 62 20:8 63 92:8 67 54:19 6C 189:13,18 190:2 191:1,3,5 191:9 7 7 17:1,17 47:8 95:8 7072 177:13,14 717833 86:7 769,221 86:18 772 175:7 799545 95:2 8 8 17:11,12,14 74:3 80,000 114:21 115:6,7 80,000-plus 159:5 80/60 86:14 8011 17:9,25 8019 30:7,18 32:9 8060 30:7 32:10 812 1:24	82 20:23 846 45:16 847.001 173:10 175:5 85 106:22 129:6 129:12 9 9 16:10,16 18:2 90 177:13,13 900,000 15:8 95 86:7	
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