

Community Groups and Local Residents File Lawsuit Challenging Racially Gerrymandered Congressional and State House Districts in South and Southwest Florida

MIAMI, Fla. – Cubanos Pa'lante, Engage Miami, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Club at Florida International University, and five local residents filed suit in federal court today, challenging the racial gerrymandering of four congressional districts and seven state house districts in South and Southwest Florida, in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

The plaintiffs are represented by the ACLU of Florida, Vasquez Segarra, and O'Melveny & Myers.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Miami, alleges that the Florida Legislature and Governor Ron DeSantis drew Congressional Districts 19, 26, 27, and 28, and State House Districts 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, and 119, by connecting disparate neighborhoods, dividing established communities, and creating noncompact shapes with an overriding racial goal. This racial gerrymandering, according to the lawsuit, undermines fair representation and cannot be justified by the Voting Rights Act or any other compelling interest.

The plaintiffs argue that, in drawing these districts along racial lines, the state government ignored the nuanced, multifaceted, and diverse nature of South Florida's Hispanic and Latino community. Lawmakers treated Hispanic voters as a monolithic group, based on false and stereotypic assumptions, thereby violating the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Statements from plaintiffs:

"Politicians who treat us as nothing more than a checkbox on the census form cannot be trusted with the mapmaking pen," said **Luis Sorto, an individual plaintiff in the case and West Miami resident**. "Our diversity is our strength. We won't stop fighting until these gerrymanders are replaced with fair maps that recognize the full diversity and richness of our community."

"As a proud Cuban American, I'm standing up for my community and against the politicians who are suppressing our diverse voices through racial gerrymandering," said Mike Rivero, **co-founder of Cubanos Pa'lante and an individual plaintiff in the case**. "From my native Miami to my current home in Southwest Florida, these maps divide cohesive communities and lump other distinct areas together in districts that just plain don't make sense."

"Congressional District 26 stretches 100 miles across the Everglades from Biscayne Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, scooping up diverse Latino communities from Hialeah to Immokalee. One glance tells you it's gerrymandered," said **Enrique Cruz, president of the ACLU Club at FIU**. "We're going to court because the Latino community deserves better than racially gerrymandered districts that slice through communities and deny representation."

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“These maps determine whether we are fairly represented in Tallahassee and D.C.,” said **Rebecca Pelham, executive director of Engage Miami**. “We will keep fighting until we have fair maps.”

Statements from legal representatives:

“Voters should choose their representatives—not the other way around. The Legislature and Governor DeSantis cannot deprive the people of fair representation by packing these districts to achieve arbitrary racial quotas,” said **Nicholas Warren, staff attorney with the ACLU of Florida**. “Legislators and Governor DeSantis must be held accountable for the way they gerrymandered the Hispanic community.”

“Across South and Southwest Florida, the Legislature broke up established communities and lumped far-flung areas together, simply because of race,” said **Vasquez Segarra partner Jorge Vasquez**. “That tactic doesn’t further Latino representation—it diminishes it. We’re suing because it’s illegal and wrong.”

“It is vital that the state of Florida afford all Floridians—including its Latino residents—with fair representation,” said **O’Melveny partner Andrew Frackman**. “O’Melveny is proud to work alongside the ACLU of Florida and Vasquez Segarra in seeking to ensure every eligible Florida voter can fully and freely participate in the democratic process.”

The complaint in *Cubanos Pa’lante v. Florida House of Representatives*, including maps of the challenged districts, can be found [here](#).