

Exhibit 7

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OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

Governor Jeff Landry Opens First Special Session on Court Ordered Redistricting

January 16, 2024

Baton Rouge, La - Today, Governor Jeff Landry opened his first special session, which will address the court order to redistrict the congressional districts of Louisiana along with the districts of the Louisiana Supreme Court, and it will make other election-related changes.

Remarks as prepared:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the House and Senate,

Thank you for your cordial welcome.

May I begin by recognizing on this day Dr. Martin Luther King, JR. whose moral fortitude, and spiritual inspiration allowed millions to live the American Dream.

I would like to begin with one of my favorites of his many quotes: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Our state's DNA, is directly connected to the diverse and varied relationships we all share with one another. Diverse relationships between our friends and acquaintances, Our neighbors, old classmates, co-workers, caregivers, teammates, colleagues, our family, and EACH OTHER right here in this room. For our culture is built on these relationships.

We are here today because we have inherited issues that others have laid at our feet. Let us accept this task. Let us do the work incumbent upon us so we can move on to solving MUCH larger problems.

Now I am aware Huey Long was shot over redistricting, I am hopeful and confident we can dispose of this matter without you disposing of me.

For various reasons known and unknown, spoken and unspoken, CLOSURE of this re-districting problem has evaded us. It is time to stop averting the issue and confront it head on. We are here today because the Federal Courts have ordered us to perform our job. Our job - which is not finished. A job that our own laws direct us to complete. AND a job that our individual oaths promised we would perform.

To that end, I ask you to join me in adopting the re-districting maps proposed. These maps will satisfy the Court...and ensure that the congressional districts of our State -- are made right here in the Legislature and not by some heavy-handed member of the Federal Judiciary.

We do not need a federal judge to do for us what the people of Louisiana have elected YOU to do. You are the voice of the people. It is time to use that voice.

The people sent us here to solve problems, not exasperate them. To heal divisions, not widen them. To be fair and reasonable. The people expect us to operate government efficiently, and to act in compliance with the laws of our nation and the instruction of our Courts - even when we disagree with them. And let me say this: I know of the hard work some of our Legislators have endured -- trying their very best to get this right.

As Attorney General -- I did everything I could to dispose of this litigation. I defended the re-districting plan adopted by this body as the will of the people. I sought a stay at the 5th Circuit. We successfully stayed the case at the U.S. Supreme Court for more than a year, allowing our 2022 elections to proceed. Last October, we filed a writ of mandamus, which was granted by the 5th Circuit -- giving the people of Louisiana yet another chance to take care of our own business. But when the 5th Circuit panel ruled against us in November, I filed for an en banc hearing, which was denied.

We have exhausted ALL legal remedies, and we have labored with this issue for far - too - long.

I recognize the difficulty of getting 144 people to agree on anything, and I sincerely commend you for the work you have done so far. But now, once and for all, let's put this to bed. Let's make the Adjustments necessary, heed the instructions of the Court, take the pen out of the hand of non-elected Judges and place it in your hand -- the hand of the people. It's that simple.

Help me make this a reality... in this special session for this special purpose on this special day.

This redistricting challenge goes further than just our congressional maps. While one Federal Judge has a pen in her hand eager to draw our Congressional maps, another threatens to pick up a pen and redraw OUR Supreme Court.

In your 2021 Regular Session, you passed Senate Resolution 248, asking our State Supreme Court to provide this legislature with recommendations for redistricting their districts. A wide majority of the Court (OVER 2/3) have responded.

Justice McCallum, Justice Genovese, Justice Crain, Justice Hughes, and Justice Griffin have conscientiously, unselfishly, and courageously stepped forward and presented us with a map that re-draws our Supreme Court districts in a manner that will comply with the Voting Rights Act, - and alleviate costly litigation. You can fulfill your responsibility -- and honorably meet your obligation to re-district our High Court -- so the people of Louisiana will have a fair, democratic, and equally representative judiciary. The litigation involving our Supreme Court districts -- has been pending for some time. There are cases in all 3 federal districts in this state.

As Attorney General we worked to defend the state and to have those cases dismissed. I know first-hand, this matter is in-defensible.

Our Supreme Court districts have been re-districted by the Legislature only ONE TIME in the last 103 years. The result -- is districts that are grossly unbalanced -- with two districts twice as large as another one.

Last year, I negotiated a scheduling order with the plaintiffs allowing the Legislature the chance to willingly handle our own affairs, rather than unwillingly have it done by another non-elected Federal Judge.

I want to publicly commend the 5 Justices for their willingness to set aside any regard for their own careers, and the power they hold. They epitomize statesmanship, honor, integrity, and the very embodiment of fairness. They are a reflection of our people's goodness, decency, and just-ness. Every single person in our great state can look up to these 5 Justices with pride, with reverence, and with a reborn confidence in the judicial system that these great men and women administer for us each and every day.

Just as we would respect, honor, and comply with any other decision reached by such a majority of our High Court; I ask that you do so now by adopting the Court's re-districting map, and allowing the first seat to be filled this Fall.

Every voting aged citizen in Louisiana may or may not join the political party of his or her choosing. It is a choice. It is a freedom. If you do choose to join a political party, it is only fair and right that you have the ability to select your Party's candidates for office, without the interference of another party and without the distraction and the interference of a convoluted, complicated, and extended ballot to wade through and decipher.

As I travel this state, I have listened carefully to those who seek a more focused electoral process...where they may participate in the nomination of THEIR party's chosen candidate. And I believe it is an issue that our Legislature should consider. We have included the proposal for a closed party primary system for your consideration for these very reasons.

It is about fairness. It is about simplicity. It is about clarity.

We have tested this system before in this state, and it works. The U.S. House Majority Leader is in his seat as a result of being first elected to Congress under a party primary system. Our State Treasurer was elected to Congress under this tried and tested system. I was elected to Congress under a party primary system. President Joe Biden was elected in Louisiana's Presidential Primary, and President Trump, and our other Presidential nominees put forward by this state -- were chosen in a party primary system which allows the major parties to pick their candidates. It is fair and it is common sense. And, for our independent or no party voters who by their own choice decide not to join a political party - their voice is heard and counted...

...Counted on a simpler, shorter, clearer November election ballot containing generally one Democrat, one Republican, and ballot qualified independent candidates.

Some things make Louisiana very unique: our food, our music, and our culture. These are a source of pride. However, our jungle of election system is the only one of its kind in the country.

It is relic of the past -- which has left us dead last.

Our fellow southern states are succeeding -- because of their primary process. A process which results in a stronger, more unified team of elected leaders. It is time to re-write our story and move to a similar system we have already tried, tested and still use in Presidential primaries today. As we work on other electoral reforms with these redistricting maps, now is the time to also deal with this common-sense change.

Today, as we honor Dr. Martin Luther King, JR. I do not believe that it is mere irony that finds us here today. On this consecrated day, we seek to amplify the voice of the few... We seek to broaden the opportunity for participation in the governance of our people.

The courage, the wisdom, and the relentless pursuit of fairness in our electoral process by Dr. King, is profoundly moving. His words in 1968 are wholly appropriate 56 years later at this very hour: "...the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice..."

For Dr. King's was an uphill journey into the head winds of hate, His was a march into battle, while ours is a walk-in-the-park. His? -- Was persecution for speaking his truth, while ours is a comfortable dialogue. His was a mighty shove, while yours is the mere push of a button.

God bless Louisiana God bless each of you and God bless the people we represent.

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