

## KLEIN EXHIBIT 21

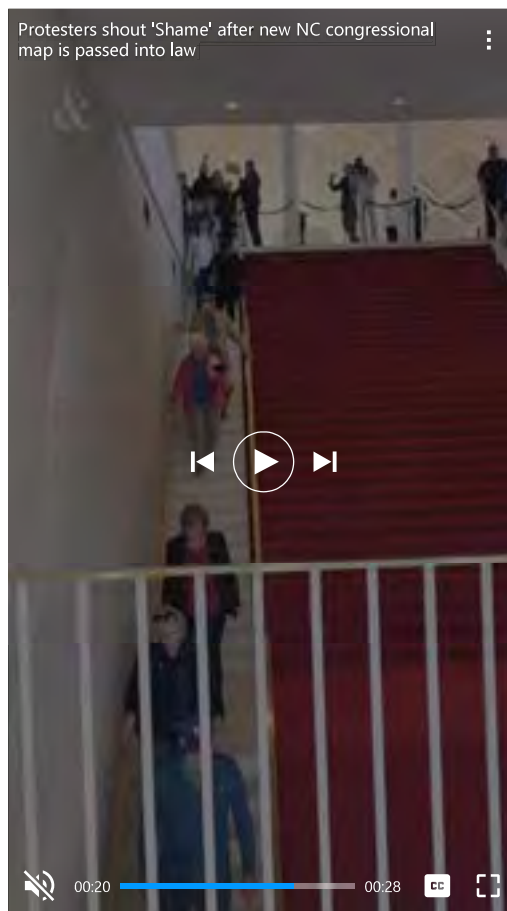
October 24, 2025 article by Kyle Ingram titled *12,000 comments poured in on NC's new Trump-backed map. And they weren't positive*, published by The News & Observer



## 12,000 comments poured in on NC's new Trump-backed map. And they weren't positive

By Kyle Ingram

Updated October 24, 2025 11:47 AM | Gift Article



Watch as protesters leave the Legislative Building after the new NC congressional map is passed into law. The new map is intended to pick up another seat for Republicans, who already won 10 of the state's 14 congressional seats despite winning 53% of the statewide congressional vote. By Luciana Perez Uribe Guinassi



### Key Takeaways

AI-generated summary reviewed by our newsroom.



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Last week, North Carolina Republicans unveiled a plan, backed by President Donald Trump, to redraw the state's congressional map in order to pick up another seat for the GOP in the 2026 midterms. Less than a week later, [that map became law](#).

During the intervening six days, lawmakers held no public forums in the affected areas, did no outreach to voters whose districts would be changed and heard roughly two total hours of public comment during committee hearings in Raleigh where each speaker was limited to one minute.

#### TOP VIDEOS



Despite that, the legislature received over [12,000 public comments](#) via an online portal it set up.

A cursory review of the comments, which were released to the public by House Minority Leader Robert Reives, show an overwhelming opposition to the new map.

Commenters accused Republicans of bowing to Trump, [disenfranchising Black voters](#) and shutting out the public.

A smaller group of commenters supported the map, saying that Republicans deserved another seat in Congress.

Asked if he'd reviewed the comments, Republican House Speaker Destin Hall said he saw a few and had some sent to him.

"This issue, it's obviously going to animate folks on the left a lot," he told reporters. "... I just disagree with them."



The News & Observer has compiled a sampling of the comments, organized by the key themes that motivated their responses.

### **'Abuse of power'**

A large portion of the reviewed comments criticized Republicans for openly drawing maps intended to help their own party and Trump in the midterms.

"This is a blatant and egregious abuse of power," one commenter, who said they were from Wilson County, wrote. "... You are more worried about cheating for a dictator who doesn't care about you or the American people ... History will remember that you only win by cheating. I teach my students that CHEATERS never win in the long run. Don't take away our voices because you're scared. Win fairly or lose with dignity."

Another commenter accused Republicans of being "afraid of fair elections."

"Clearly, they know that they cannot win unless they rig the system by picking their own voters, because surveys show that more than half the voters disagree with their policies," the commenter continued. "This cheating may work over the short term, but it will fail over time. It is very sad that the once-proud GOP has become a lapdog for a lawless, vengeful, power-mad president."

Throughout the week's hearings and votes, Republicans repeatedly and explicitly stated that they decided to redraw North Carolina's map because Trump asked for it.

Senate leader Phil Berger, who faces a contentious primary election against Rockingham County Sheriff Sam Page, has [denied claims](#) that he agreed to redraw the state's map in exchange for an endorsement from Trump.

### **A deviation from process**

Other commenters lambasted lawmakers for deviating from the traditional redistricting process, in which maps are drawn every 10 years after the census and voters are given ample time to provide public input on proposed changes.

"This is horrifying to me," one comment said. "Redistricting happens every ten years after the census. Republicans know this. I am a registered Republican and as much as I hate the direction Democrats have gone, I will be voting Democrat if this

happens. People are rapidly turning and will do the same as me. We know the law. Those who were ignorant to the law are now researching and seeing the laws being broken and are extremely hurt, angry and feel stabbed in the back.”

“You claim to accept public comments, but your actions betray you,” another wrote. “You release maps only at the eleventh hour, you schedule few public hearings, and you rush this process while almost every corner of the state is watching. That is disrespectful, dismissive, and undemocratic.”

One comment said the process “appears to be happening in the shadows, with the intent to rush through changes before voters can react.”

## Allegations of racism

Other commenters noted that the redistricting plan primarily affects the 1st Congressional District, located in northeastern North Carolina, home to the state’s historic “Black belt.”

For over 30 years, the 1st district has elected Black members of Congress, including current Democratic Rep. Don Davis. But under the new map, the influence of Black voters is diminished as the 1st district is redrawn to include Republican-leaning counties along the coast.

“This new redistricting plan is intended to further dilute the Black vote in our state, which is racist and immoral,” one comment said. “We need fairly drawn districts to fairly represent all North Carolinians. Districts should not be drawn to benefit one party over another or to curb the voting power of any particular demographic. Proceeding forward with this redistricting plan is deeply undemocratic.”

Another comment called the map a “shameless discriminatory gerrymander, surgically diluting the power of Black voters and cracking communities apart.”

“They packed and cracked the state’s most urban and diverse communities, diminishing the voting power of these areas, despite the fact that they have driven population growth over the past decade,” they continued. “Towns and communities are senselessly split for no other reason than to give politicians an unfair advantage. Counties with vastly different issues and values are now grouped together in far-reaching districts. Residents in Rocky Mount and residents in the Outer Banks face very different problems — how can one lawmaker fairly represent both communities? They won’t.”

## Support for independent redistricting

Many comments expressed support for establishing an independent redistricting commission, a process used in several states that is intended to take the politics out of the mapmaking process.

“I urge you to support and advocate for the establishment of an independent redistricting commission and ensure that any future redistricting efforts are guided by fairness, transparency, and the principle of ‘one person, one vote,’” one comment wrote.

North Carolina’s redistricting process has always been carried out by the state legislature, which has frequently been found to have illegally gerrymandered maps under both Republican and Democratic rule.

The state constitution also [prohibits the governor from vetoing](#) electoral maps, meaning they become law after achieving a simply majority in both chambers of the General Assembly.

“If North Carolina prioritized democracy, federalism, and political fairness, it would overhaul its redistricting process to ensure transparency, equity, and accountability,” another commenter said. “First, it should establish an independent redistricting commission to remove partisan influence and draw maps based on nonpartisan criteria like compactness, community integrity, and compliance with the Voting Rights Act. The process should be open to public input, with hearings and online feedback tools... This isn't a radical process, just a commonsense approach for a good democracy.”

## Misguided priorities

Commenters consistently derided lawmakers for focusing on enacting a new congressional map instead of passing a comprehensive state budget.

Republican leaders in the House and Senate have been [unable to reach a budget deal](#) since the fiscal year ended over three months ago.

“This is just plain, flat out, despicable and amounts to election theft,” one commenter wrote. “The budget, which was supposed to be passed by July 1, is still not passed and teachers and other state employees have not been given a raise, but you have found time to rig the election for King Trump. You are nothing short of despicable and worthless.”

Lawmakers have passed some smaller spending bills this session, but have failed to enact across-the-board teacher raises or efforts to fund Medicaid.

“For the life of me, I do not understand the priorities of our legislature,” another comment said. “For the last year, I heard you consistently say that Bidenomics destroyed our state and that things were too expensive. So to me, I voted for the party that I believe would help reduce those costs and make things more affordable. But instead of doing that, here we are redrawing a map AGAIN. What are you scared of? If you are doing the right thing, you should not worry about losing power.”

## Support for the map

While debating the bill on Wednesday, Democratic Rep. Pricey Harrison said that after reviewing most of the comments, her assistant was able to find only three in support of the map.

Likewise, The N&O found few comments in favor of the map in its review of the data.

“I am in total support of your proposed district changes!” one commenter wrote. “Thank you for your efforts! Now, let's get it done! Districting should have never been race-based.”

Courts have historically interpreted Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to require the creation of majority-minority districts in some circumstances. An upcoming case from the U.S. Supreme Court could gut that law, though.

Some comments in favor of the map were more general, such as “proud of you guys” or “Great! Keep going. I agree with the redistricting plan.”

Another commenter wrote that the new map “better reflects the values and voices of the majority of our state.”

“This adjustment would help ensure fair representation, strengthen conservative leadership, and keep North Carolina moving in the right direction,” they continued. “Thank you for standing up for our communities and for your hard work on this issue.”

This story was originally published October 24, 2025 at 5:00 AM.

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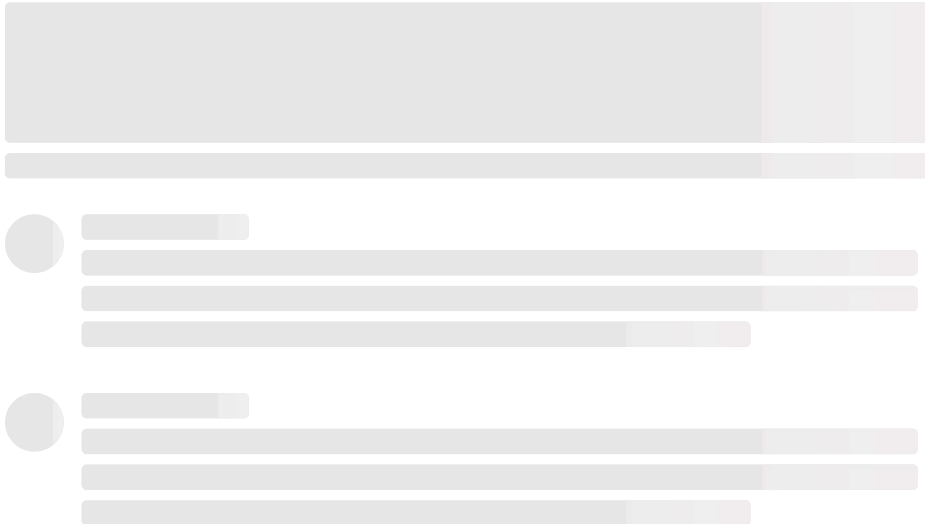
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