

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NORTH DAKOTA

CASE NO:

Charles Walen, an individual; and Paul)
Henderson, an individual.)

Plaintiffs,)

vs.)

**COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

DOUG BURGUM, in his official capacity)
as Governor of the State of North)
Dakota; ALVIN JAEGER in his official)
Capacity as Secretary of State of the)
State of North Dakota,)

Defendants.)

Plaintiffs, Charles Walen and Paul Henderson, for their Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief against the Defendants, state and allege as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

[1] This is an action for declaratory and injunctive relief against the implementation and use of the newly enacted legislative redistricting plan creating two new Subdistricts passed by the North Dakota Legislative Assembly and signed by Governor Doug Burgum on November 11, 2021.

[2] At issue in this action is the Legislative Assembly’s enactment of a new statewide legislative district map, which for the first time in North Dakota’s history, includes two Subdistricts located in Districts 4 and 9 respectively. The Subdistricts intentionally include the boundaries of the Forth Berthold and Turtle Mountain Indian Reservations.

[3] The Legislative Assembly created the Subdistricts solely on the basis of race and for the purported purpose of complying with the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

[4] The creation of Subdistricts in Districts 4 and 9 was racial gerrymandering for which race was the predominant factor.

[5] The Legislative Assembly made no statistical analysis or inquiry regarding voting history or racial voting patterns in Districts 4 and 9 that would justify the use of race as a predominant factor in its creation of the Subdistricts. Therefore, the Legislative Assembly did not have a compelling state interest for creating the Subdistricts.

[6] The Subdistricts cannot pass constitutional muster because they were drawn with race as the predominant factor and without a compelling justification or narrow tailoring.

[7] Plaintiffs seek a declaration that the challenged Subdistricts are invalid and an injunction prohibiting the Defendants from calling, holding, supervising, or taking any action with respect to legislative elections based on the challenged Subdistricts as they currently stand.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

[8] This Court has original jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Article III of the United States Constitution and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343(a)(3) and (4). This Court has jurisdiction to grant declaratory relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

[9] This suit is authorized by 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988(a).

[10] Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b).

PARTIES

[11] Plaintiff Charles Walen is a United States citizen and resident of District 4. As a resident of District 4, Mr. Walen intends to vote in 2022 and future elections.

[12] Plaintiff Paul Henderson is a United States Citizen and resident of District 9. As a resident of District 9, Mr. Henderson intends to vote in 2022 and future elections.

[13] Defendant Doug Burgum is sued in his official capacity as the Governor of North Dakota. As the Governor of North Dakota, Governor Burgum is the head of the Executive Branch in the State, which includes the North Dakota Secretary of State's office. Governor Burgum issued Executive Order 2021-17, which convened a special session of the Legislative Assembly for the purposes of "redistricting of government." Governor Burgum signed into law House Bill 1504, which provided for a complete redistricting of North Dakota's legislative districts.

[14] Defendant Alvin Jaeger is sued in his official capacity as the Secretary of State of North Dakota. As Secretary of State, he is the supervisor of elections in North Dakota. Secretary Jaeger supervises the conduct of elections and is responsible for publishing a map of all legislative districts in the State.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

[15] The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment provides that "[n]o State shall...deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." U.S. Const., Amdt. 14, §1.

[16] The United States Supreme Court has found that the central purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment is to "prevent the State from purposefully discriminating between individuals on the basis of race." Shaw v. Reno, 509 U.S. 630, 642 (1993).

[17] Racial gerrymandering occurs where a state intentionally assigns citizens to a legislative district on the basis of race. Abbot v. Perez, 138 S. Ct. 2305, 2314 (2018).

[18] Because racial gerrymandering of legislative districts creates inherent racial classifications, it is limited by the Fourteenth Amendment. Cooper v. Harris, 137 S. Ct. 1455, 1463 (2017).

[19] When redistricting a legislative map, if racial considerations predominated over other redistricting principles, the burden is on the state to demonstrate the design of the legislative district is narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest. Id. at 1464.

[20] Compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 may be a compelling state interest which justifies the drawing of district boundaries on the basis of race. Alabama Legislative Black Caucus v. Alabama, 575 U.S. 254, 278 (2015).

[21] In order for a state to demonstrate a racial gerrymander is justified under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, it must demonstrate its decision to draw district boundaries based on race meets the preconditions set forth by the Court in Thornburg v. Gingles, 478 U.S. 30 (1986).

[22] In Gingles, the Court laid out three preconditions which are required to succeed on a Voting Rights Act § 2 claim: (1) the minority Group must be sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in some reasonably configured district; (2) the minority group must be politically cohesive; and (3) the district's white majority must vote sufficiently as a "bloc" to usually defeat the minority's preferred candidate. 478 U.S. at 50-51.

[23] If a state cannot demonstrate its racial gerrymandering meets the Gingles preconditions, the districts in question are not narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling

state interest, and are thus a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United State Constitution. Cooper, 137 S. Ct. at 1470.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

[24] Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution of North Dakota requires the North Dakota Legislative Assembly to redraw the district boundaries of each legislative district following the public release of each decennial census.

[25] Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution of North Dakota further provides that “[t]he Legislative Assembly shall guarantee, as nearly as practicable, that every elector is equal to every other elector in the state in the power to cast ballots for legislative candidates.”

[26] During the 67th Legislative Session, the North Dakota Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 1397 which was “to establish a legislative management redistricting committee” and “to provide for the implementation of a legislative redistricting plan.”

[27] On October 29, 2021, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum issued Executive Order 2021-17, which convened a special session of the Legislative Assembly for purposes of “redistricting of government.”

[28] A Joint Redistricting Committee was formed in order to develop new legislative district maps.

[29] In the process of developing new legislative district maps, the Joint Redistricting Committee discussed subdividing Districts 4 and 9, for purposes of avoiding a lawsuit under § 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The Committee focused on Districts 4 and 9 because they contain the boundaries of the Forth Berthold and Turtle Mountain Indian Reservations, respectively.

[30] The Committee was clear that race was the predominant factor in its decision to create legislative Subdistricts in Districts 4 and 9.

[31] In a Committee session which took place on September 28, 2021, a Committee member remarked, "I have issues with subdivisions and dividing them based on race."¹ The Committee Vice Chairman responded: "That's a reasonable position to take. I'm not a big fan of it, but either we do it or someone does it for us."²

[32] Redistricting Committee meeting minutes for September 28, 2021, state: "[s]ome committee members express discomfort with drawing subdistrict boundaries based on race."

[33] The Committee made no inquiry or analysis regarding the voting history or racial voting patterns in Districts 4 and 9.

[34] The Committee failed to statistically analyze or establish that the Native American populations in Districts 4 and 9 are politically cohesive in their voting patterns.

[35] The Committee failed to present or provide any evidence which demonstrated that the white majority in Districts 4 and 9 vote sufficiently as a "bloc" to usually defeat the minority's preferred candidate.

[36] The Committee failed to make a meaningful legislative inquiry into whether its decision to create Subdistricts on the basis of race met the Gingles preconditions.

[37] On September 29, 2021, the Committee recommended a "do pass" on the newly drawn redistricting plans, which included Subdistricts in Districts 4 and 9.

[38] On November 10, 2021, a debate was held on the floor of the House of

¹ Sep. 8 Hearing of the Joint Redistricting Committee, 67th Leg., 1st Spec. Sess. 1:23:50 (N.D. Sep. 2021), <https://video.legis.nd.gov/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20210910/-1/22601>.

² Sep. 8 Hearing of the Joint Redistricting Committee, 67th Leg., 1st Spec. Sess. 1:24:05 (N.D. Sep. 2021), <https://video.legis.nd.gov/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20210910/-1/22601>.

Representatives regarding the redistricting plan. Again, proponents of the Bill indicated that race was the predominant factor in the Committee's decision to create the Subdistricts.

[39] On November 10, 2021, the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 1504, which provided for a complete redistricting of North Dakota's legislative districts. The Bill was signed into law by Governor Burgum on November 11, 2021.

[40] Traditionally, the North Dakota House of Representatives consists of 94 members, with two Representatives being elected at-large in each district. However, under the redistricting plan enacted by the Legislative Assembly, Districts 4 and 9 are now subdivided into Districts 4A and 4B, and 9A and 9B respectively. Under this plan, Representatives from Districts 4 and 9, are no longer elected at-large, but are instead elected only by citizens in their respective Subdistrict.

[41] The creation of these Subdistricts deprives the citizens of Districts 4 and 9 from multi-member representation in the House of Representatives, as each citizen is now only represented by a single Representative elected in the Subdistrict in which they reside. All other North Dakota citizens retain the benefit of multi-member representation in the House of Representatives.

[42] The creation of Subdistricts in Districts 4 and 9 is a racial gerrymander for which race was the predominant factor, and for which the Legislative Assembly had no compelling state interest.

[43] As a result of the Legislative Assembly's racial gerrymander, citizens of Districts 4 and 9 will be denied equal representation under the law, as they will only be represented by one State Representative, while all other North Dakota citizens will be

represented by two State Representatives.

CAUSE OF ACTION

Violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution

[44] Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference, as if fully set forth herein, the allegations in paragraphs 1 - 43 above.

[45] The Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution provides in relevant part: “[n]o State shall...deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

[46] The Legislative Assembly’s creation of Subdistricts in Districts 4 and 9 constitutes racial gerrymandering, as it assigns citizens to specific legislative districts predominantly on the basis of their race.

[47] Racial considerations predominated over other traditional redistricting principles in creating the challenged Subdistricts.

[48] The Legislative Assembly’s plan for the creation the challenged Subdistricts is not narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling state interest.

[49] Accordingly, the subdistricting of Districts 4 and 9 into Subdistricts 4A and 4B, and 9A and 9B, violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

[50] As a result of the newly created Subdistricts in Districts 4 and 9, Plaintiffs are now deprived of multi-member representation in the North Dakota House of Representatives.

[51] Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law other than the judicial relief sought here. The failure to temporarily and permanently enjoin the conduct of elections

based on the challenged Subdistricts will irreparably harm Plaintiffs by violating their constitutional rights

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs request that this Court:

1. Declare that Subdistricts 4A and 4B, and 9A and 9B are racial gerrymanders in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment;
2. Issue a permanent injunction enjoining Defendants from enforcing or giving any effect to the boundaries of the challenged Subdistricts as drawn in the 2021 plan, including an injunction barring Defendants from conducting any future elections for the North Dakota Legislative Assembly based on the challenged Subdistricts;
3. Grant such other relief the Court deems necessary or appropriate, including but not limited to an award of Plaintiffs' attorneys fees and reasonable costs pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988.

Respectfully submitted this 16th day of February, 2022.

EVENSON SANDERSON PC
Attorneys for Plaintiffs
1100 College Drive, Suite 5
Bismarck, ND 58501
Telephone: 701-751-1243

By: /s/ Paul R. Sanderson
Paul R. Sanderson (ID# 05830)
psanderson@esattorneys.com
Ryan J. Joyce (ID# 09549)
rjoyce@esattorneys.com

Robert W. Harms
Attorney for Plaintiffs
815 N. Mandan St.
Bismarck, ND 58501
Telephone: 701-255-2841

By: /s/ Robert W. Harms
Robert W. Harms (ID# 03666)
robert@harmsgroup.net

JS 44 (Rev. 04/21)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>I. (a) PLAINTIFFS Charles Walen and Paul Henderson</p> <p>(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff <u>Mountrail</u> <i>(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)</i></p> <p>(c) Attorneys <i>(Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)</i> Please see attached addendum</p> | <p>DEFENDANTS Governor of the State of North Dakota Doug Burgum and Secretary of the State of North Dakota Alvin Jaeger County of Residence of First Listed Defendant <u>Burleigh</u> <i>(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)</i></p> <p>NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED. Attorneys <i>(If Known)</i></p> |
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| <p>II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION <i>(Place an "X" in One Box Only)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 U.S. Government Defendant</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Federal Question <i>(U.S. Government Not a Party)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Diversity <i>(Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)</i></p> | <p>III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES <i>(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)</i></p> <table style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:33%;"></td> <td style="width:33%; text-align: center;">PTF</td> <td style="width:33%; text-align: center;">DEF</td> <td style="width:33%;"></td> <td style="width:33%; text-align: center;">PTF</td> <td style="width:33%; text-align: center;">DEF</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Citizen of This State</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 1</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 1</td> <td>Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 4</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Citizen of Another State</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 2</td> <td>Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 5</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 3</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 3</td> <td>Foreign Nation</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 6</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> 6</td> </tr> </table> | | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF | Citizen of This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Citizen of Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Citizen of This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Citizen of Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

IV. NATURE OF SUIT *(Place an "X" in One Box Only)* Click here for: [Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.](#)

| CONTRACT | TORTS | FORFEITURE/PENALTY | BANKRUPTCY | OTHER STATUTES | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise | <p>PERSONAL INJURY</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice | <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability <p>PERSONAL PROPERTY</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability | <input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other <p>LABOR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act | <input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 <p>INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark <input type="checkbox"/> 880 Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016 <p>SOCIAL SECURITY</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) <p>FEDERAL TAX SUITS</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609 | <input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit (15 USC 1681 or 1692) <input type="checkbox"/> 485 Telephone Consumer Protection Act <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes |
| <p>REAL PROPERTY</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property | <p>CIVIL RIGHTS</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education | <p>PRISONER PETITIONS</p> <p>Habeas Corpus:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty <p>Other:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement | | | |

V. ORIGIN *(Place an "X" in One Box Only)*

1 Original Proceeding 2 Removed from State Court 3 Remanded from Appellate Court 4 Reinstated or Reopened 5 Transferred from Another District *(specify)* 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing *(Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):*
 42 U.S.C. 1983

Brief description of cause:
 Redistricting Plan violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. **DEMAND \$** _____ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY *(See instructions):* JUDGE _____ DOCKET NUMBER _____

DATE: 2/11/2022

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD: 

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # _____ AMOUNT _____ APPLYING IFP _____ JUDGE _____ MAG. JUDGE _____

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NORTH DAKOTA

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Henderson, an individual.)

Plaintiffs,)

vs.)

COVER SHEET ADDENDUM

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Capacity as Secretary of State of the)
State of North Dakota,)

Defendants.)

ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFFS

Paul R. Sanderson (ID# 05830)
psanderson@esattorneys.com
Ryan J. Joyce (ID# 09549)
rjoyce@esattorneys.com
EVENSON SANDERSON PC
1100 College Drive, Suite 5
Bismarck, ND 58501
Telephone: 701-751-1243

Robert W. Harms (ID# 03666)
robert@harmsgroup.net
Attorney for Plaintiff
815 N. Mandan St.
Bismarck, ND 58501
Telephone: 701-255-2841