

NC Democratic Party And Common Cause Sue In Federal Court over NC Gerrymandering

By Administrator

Friday, 05 August 2016 14:04 - Last Updated Friday, 05 August 2016 14:30

RALEIGH – Common Cause and the North Carolina Democratic Party launched a potentially landmark lawsuit in federal court today directly challenging the foundation of partisan gerrymandering in North Carolina. Filed in the Middle District Court in Greensboro, the challenge in Common Cause v. Rucho could be a watershed moment in the fight against gerrymandering. While judges have weighed in on racial gerrymandering and set constraints for such factors as equal population in drawing voting maps, the courts have largely avoided determining if partisan gerrymandering is legal. The lawsuit filed by Common Cause seeks to resolve that lingering question, arguing that manipulation of voting maps for partisan gain is unconstitutional.

Common Cause North Carolina has been a longtime opponent of all forms of gerrymandering, working with a broad bipartisan coalition to champion impartial redistricting for more than a decade.

The move to challenge partisan gerrymandering in the courts comes just months after North Carolina lawmakers were required to redraw congressional districts found by a panel of federal judges to be unconstitutional racial gerrymanders. Legislative leaders replaced that racially gerrymandered congressional map with what they openly boasted were partisan gerrymanders, crafted with the sole aim of unfairly maximizing their party's advantage.

“Perhaps for the first time ever in North Carolina, state legislators have freely and publicly admitted that they gerrymandered for rank partisan advantage,” said Bob Phillips, executive director of Common Cause NC. “That open admission was done because the courts have placed limits on racial gerrymandering, but have left unanswered the question of whether partisan gerrymandering is allowable. We believe our case can finally make clear that gerrymandering of any kind violates the constitutional rights of North Carolina voters.”

Phillips added, “What is at stake is whether politicians have the power to manipulate voting maps to unjustly insulate themselves from accountability, or whether voters have the fundamental right as Americans to choose their representatives in fair and open elections. We believe this is a vital case that could strike at the very foundation of gerrymandering.”

The challenge in Common Cause v.

Rucho

argues that the legislature's blatant partisan gerrymander is a clear violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the

NC Democratic Party And Common Cause Sue In Federal Court over NC Gerrymandering

By Administrator

Friday, 05 August 2016 14:04 - Last Updated Friday, 05 August 2016 14:30

14th

Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The full lawsuit filing can be read online at cmnca.us/vRucho

The North Carolina gerrymandering suit comes as Common Cause has filed a separate court challenge to gerrymandered voting maps drawn by Maryland Democrats

North Carolina has long felt the negative impact of partisan gerrymandering. Since 1992, nearly half of all legislative races have had just one candidate on the ballot, leaving millions of voters with no choice at the ballot box. Similarly, the state's congressional maps have been gerrymandered by the legislature in such a way as to minimize competition, undermining the right of voters to have a voice in who represents them.