
From: Vincent Sylvain [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 3:33 PM
To: House & Governmental Affairs
Subject: Vincent Sylvain, NCBCP - Question about redistricting

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Please do not click on links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

One question that we have for the panel is whether we as a community have paid enough attention to the district lines of units of government other than that of the congressional lines? Specifically those of the Louisiana Supreme Court, BESE, the Public Service Commission and such.

Second, how much progress has been made towards creating a second minority-majority Congressional District without creating too much damage to the existing 2nd Congressional District?

Thanks for your attention and consideration,

Vincent Sylvain
Convener
Louisiana Unity Coalition - National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

From: Vincent Sylvain [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 8:33 PM
To: House & Governmental Affairs
Cc: Vincent Sylvain
Subject: In an attempt to gain a second majority-minority seat in Louisiana, we must be careful not to create a situation which violates the principle of racial fairness
Attachments: Louisiana Redistricting Roadshow continues January 5 at the University of New Orleans .pdf

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Louisiana Redistricting Roadshow continues January 5 at the University of New Orleans at 5:30 PM

In an attempt to gain a second majority-minority seat in Louisiana, we must be careful not to create a situation which violates the principle of racial fairness

NEW ORLEANS (1/5/2022) - Citizens are encouraged to join the Louisiana Senate and House Governmental Affairs Committees at the next "Louisiana Roadshow" taking place today, Wednesday, January 5, 2022 from 5:30-8:30 pm at the University of New Orleans in the University Center. For those who are not able to attend in person, they may view the proceedings via Livestream: <https://redist.legis.la.gov/live>.

Every ten years, the state legislature uses decennial Census data to redraw political maps for local, state, and federal Congress, state legislature, city councils, school boards, and more. That process is known as redistricting and in Louisiana where six United States Representatives and 145 state legislators are elected from political divisions called districts. The state legislature is responsible for redrawing maps for State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), Courts and the Public Service Commission. These districts determine how communities are represented at the local, state, and federal levels. While local government authorities are responsible for entities such as City and Parish councils, Police jury and local school board districts.

Since October, the Louisiana state legislature has been holding a series of public hearings across the state to solicit public input. Tonight's hearing is a continuation of the series of "redistricting roadshows".

In addition to individuals, organizations such as the Urban League of Louisiana, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, ACLU, Louisiana Unity Coalition, Black Voters Matters, Citizen SHE United, E Pluribus Unum, Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, Southern Poverty Law Center, have gathered to provide testimony as to how best to develop maps that would increase the likelihood of fair representation. Several organizations have even submitted their own version of proposed maps expressing their viewpoints.

Of particular interest to many in the Black community is the possible creation of a second minority-majority congressional district which on the surface would appear to give Louisiana a chance at electing a second Black congressperson. One such proposed plan advances the ideal of drawing district lines as such to create two minority-majority districts in Louisiana: Congressional District 2 running from New Orleans to parts of Lafayette Parish, and Congressional District 5 running from Baton Rouge to Caddo Parish.

Under this scenario, District 2 would have a Voting age population of 50.45% Black, while District 5 would contain a Voting age population of 50.1% Black. Thus, seemingly creating two districts which would increase the likelihood of electing Black leaders from both areas.

However, it is the position of the Louisiana Unity Coalition, an affiliate of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, and other groups that such districts may prove to be nothing more than ‘pixie dust,’ an optical illusion of mass proportion.

In addition to diluting the number of Black voters in the existing 2nd Congressional District, it would create two districts which would unlikely create the intended outcome. Instead, because of traditional Black/White voter differential turnout, both districts would likely prove too difficult to produce a Black elected official from either.

An examination of past voting practice suggests that in order to assure the election of Black officials, particularly in federal elections, that Black voters must equal at least 55% of the Voting age population of a particular district in order to assure victory. We must do that in at least one of the two proposed districts.

In an attempt to gain a second minority-majority seat in Louisiana, we must be careful not to create a situation that violates the principle of racial fairness and ignore the preservation of existing political communities. That is why your participation is needed.

We hope you can join in person or online.

Vincent T. Sylvain
Convener

Louisiana Unity Coalition, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

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