

N.C. NAACP threatens civil unrest procedure

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

If state lawmakers insert themselves into deciding North Carolina's next governor, or changing the state Supreme Court to nullify Justice-elect Mike Morgan's victory, there will be mass demonstrations and civil disobedience, promises N.C. NAACP President Rev. Dr. William Barber II.

"We believe either attempting to stack the Supreme Court or deciding the governor's race in the legislature is, and would be, a major civil rights violation of the right to vote and equal protection under the law," Barber told hundreds of demonstrators during Monday night's Moral Monday march and rally at the state Capitol in Raleigh. "We pledge to fight with every legal and moral tool we have, including, if necessary, mass civil disobedience."

Barber joined the ranks of those concerned that the Republican majority in the N.C. General Assembly would appoint two new justices to the state's High

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Court in order to offset the 4-3 Democratic majority Morgan's Election Day victory resulted in. Thus far, GOP legislative leaders claim that they haven't discussed it with their caucus.

Barber's warning comes as the State Board of Elections posted new unofficial number tallies in the gubernatorial race between Republican incumbent Gov. Pat McCrory, and his Democratic challenger, state Attorney Gen. Roy Cooper. With all but 13 counties reporting in, Cooper leads McCrory by 9,716 votes of 4.7 million cast, what some observers are saying is an insurmountable lead for the governor to overcome

despite his legal action demanding a statewide recount, and specifically a recount of over 90,000 ballots in Durham County, which were tabulated hours after polls closed on Nov. 8 because of mechanical problems.

McCrory wants those Durham ballots recounted by hand, but the Durham Elections Board previously rejected his campaign's petition. At press time, the state Board of Elections was scheduled Wednesday to decide whether to order the Durham Board to proceed with the recount.

Meanwhile, the conservative Civitas Institute has filed a federal lawsuit, which will be heard in court Friday, seeking to stop any certification of

early voting ballots from same-day registrations, claiming that the addresses on those registrations were not confirmed before the ballots were cast.

During his remarks at the Moral Monday demonstration, Barber blasted what he saw as a deliberate manipulation of the election process by Republicans to deny communities of color their voting rights. He said N.C. NAACP lawyers would be in court Friday to challenge the Civitas lawsuit.

Barber also demanded that McCrory stop his attorneys from interfering with the post-election vote canvassing process with their many challenges and, thus far, "bogus allegations" of voter fraud.

"Pledge that after the canvass and recount, you will not try to get the legislature to take steps to unconstitutionally decide the governor's race," Barber added, noting that if the final margin of victory for Roy Cooper is below 10,000 votes, state law allows the Republican-led legislature to decide who the next governor will be.

Barber also warned that he expects the N.C. General Assembly to follow the ruling of the U.S. Fourth Circuit of Appeals to redraw the congressional and legislative voting lines when it reconvenes in January. A federal court on Tuesday ordered North Carolina lawmakers to redraw the state's legislative districts by March and

ruled that a special legislative election must be held in 2017. The decision comes after the federal court ruled this summer that lawmakers had unconstitutionally gerrymandered 28 legislative districts along racial lines, but allowed the already scheduled 2016 legislative elections to proceed under those unconstitutional maps.

Earlier this year, a separate court case found that lawmakers had unconstitutionally gerrymandered the state's congressional maps in 2011 and ordered them to be re-drawn, necessitating a special June 2016 primary for North Carolina's congressional races.

"We will be watching to see if the legislature continues to contemptuously thumb its nose at the federal courts," Barber said. "We will go back into court with the first sign the legislature delays justice again, because justice delayed is justice denied."

NCCU

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Trustee Board until 2015, served as vice chair of the Search Committee, and remembers how impressed the panel was with her commitment to educational excellence.

"In the interview process, we realized that there was something there, and we thought that [she] would be a tremendous

asset for North Carolina Central University. So she quickly rose to the top of our list as we looked at potential candidates."

"It's a tremendous loss for us," said Ruffin, a 1975 alumna and widow of a UNC System Board president, the late Benjamin Ruffin. "As a person, she was a sweet spirit. I believe that she had faith ... and her caring for the students of North Carolina Central and that university, and all that she did to pull us out of some really tough times, is an example of the greatness of her leadership."

Mable Stevenson, president of the NCCU Winston-Salem Alumni Association, recalled how Dr. Saunders-White always walked the Durham campus, meeting and encouraging students. And when she was in her office, she

always made time to meet with people who wanted to speak with her.

"She was always very warm, and she made you feel that you were important," Stevenson, a 1963 alumna, recalls. "I can see her now, running up the steps at football games. It's a big loss. She accomplished so much."

Winston-Salem State University Chancellor Elwood Robinson, like

William and Mary in 1993. In 2004, Saunders-White earned a doctorate in higher education administration from George Washington University.

In addition to her academic credentials, Saunders-White spent 15 years in the corporate sector, working at IBM in 1979 as a systems engineer, rising to marketing and management before she left. She later taught col-

lege preparatory math in Newport, R.I.

In 1999, Saunders-White became provost for technology at Hampton University, and in 2006 she went to UNC-Wilmington to become vice chancellor of information technology systems. While there, Saunders-White improved emergency communications for campus safety and cost effective classroom technologies.

SAUNDERS-WHITE accepted an appointment by the Obama Administration in May 2011 to serve as deputy assistant secretary for Higher Education Programs (HEP), administering more than 60 programs totaling nearly \$3 billion annually.

In February 2015, she was chosen to become the first permanent female chancellor in NCCU's his-

tory, assuming the post in June of that year.

"Chancellor Saunders-White was an effective leader, steering the University toward innovative teaching with a renewed focus on STEM programs," says U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield (D-NC-1). "She always encouraged her students to strive for 'Eagle Excellence.' Her vision for

NCCU and passion for uplifting all HBCUs left a lasting mark on the future of our students.

"Chancellor Saunders-White will be sorely missed, but her legacy will not be forgotten."

A memorial service was held on the NCCU campus Monday evening, followed by a candlelight vigil with students, faculty and administrators.

In her honor, a 'Celebration of Life Tribute' will be held on Friday, Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. in NCCU's McDougald-McLendon Arena. Saunders-White's funeral is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic Church (414 Buckroe Avenue, Hampton, Virginia 23664) in Virginia.



Chancellor Debra Saunders-White

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