

Immigration

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If a student came forward seeking legal help, we could direct them to the right place.”

Carter said the Coalition is not set on requiring the school label itself a sanctuary campus, it just wants the actions implied in that title to be carried out.

“The word ‘sanctuary’ doesn’t have to be used. The important part is protecting students,” Carter said. “We just want to take concrete action to protect our students. When it comes to undocumented immigrants, you don’t necessarily want to call too much attention to the campus because you don’t want those students to be targeted.”

Grant said a brand of that sort can lead to misinterpreted expectations which can not be met.

“Labeling us a ‘sanctuary,’ that’s branding and I’ve seen lots of branding where underneath, they’re not doing the things that they say,” Grant said. “It’s important to ask ourselves, what things are we doing that keep our community safe, that provide a safe place for creative thought to support members of our community without having to brand that mission.”

Grant said she is happy the students and administration are talking because that is what causes change and that is important, even if UNCA is not heavily affected by this executive order.

“It doesn’t matter if we have one or two or zero or 1,500 undocumented students, this is something we should all be concerned about,” Grant said.

Carter said she is encouraged by the response of the administration to the Coalition’s request for this open meeting.

“I feel grateful that this is the kind of university where the administration would meet with us to discuss that type of thing,” Carter said. “I think that they’re going to work with us. I don’t think they would have held that meeting if they didn’t take the situation seriously. I’m glad that we had an open dialogue. It’s a start.”

Gerrymandering

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Sydney Nazloo, a sophomore political science student, discussed redistricting in its affirmative and negative aspects.

“The idea of racial gerrymandering when you use it to exclude large groups of minorities and disperse them along congressional districts so they have less voting power, that’s definitely an issue because it means that they’re being, essentially, disenfranchised and breaking that one person, one vote doctrine from Baker v. Carr,” Nazloo said.

Although racial gerrymandering isolates minority groups, Nazloo argues there must be some redistricting in order to balance the skewed placement of minorities.

“The Voting Rights Act actually stipulates that there should be majority-minority districts and that there needs to be in order to re-enfranchise previously discriminated-against groups,” Nazloo said. “Striking a balance between that is difficult, striking a balance between really enfranchising minority voters and completely disenfranchising them.”

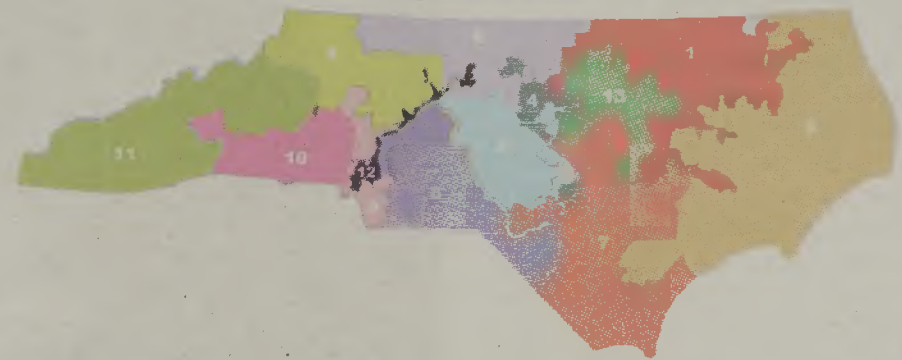
Non-profit organizations such as Democracy North Carolina and Common Cause held Lobby Day training sessions in order to train citizen lobbyists how to speak to their representatives about gerrymandering.

Darlene Azarmi, a Democracy North Carolina organizer for Western North Carolina, said persistence in lobbying builds relationships with legislators.

“Getting to know those leaders and building relationships by showing up to talk or call or write somebody three times versus one time or 12 times or 72 times versus never, that is relationship building that, inevitably, in some capacity will pay off,” Azarmi said.

Compared to paid lobbying where experts on a certain topic or policy speak to political actors, citizen lobbyists typically carry influence if enough people show up to lobby, Moraguez said.

“Citizen lobbying can be effective if it happens in large enough numbers. One citizen lobbyist is probably not enough to actually make much of an impact, but if a group of citizens lobby for something, you’re hitting legisla-



The 2011 North Carolina district design (top) shows how gerrymandering occurred in the redistricting process. The districts were corrected in 2016 (bottom).

tors or any political actor where it hurts the most, which is their electoral vulnerability,” Moraguez said.

The success of Lobby Day strengthens the already growing movements of citizen activism, Moraguez said.

“I do think that right now, we’re seeing more grassroots activism than we have in a very long time, where your average citizen is actively getting involved and is trying to put pressure on their elected officials,” Moraguez said. “We saw a little bit of this during Obama’s presidency where the Tea

Party movement was really, really active and they got people to go to town halls and advocate, but it wasn’t on the scale that it is today.”

Non-partisan organizations such as Democracy North Carolina continue to encourage advocacy, insisting citizen involvement manifests change, according to Jones.

“It’s incredibly important that people get involved now, and there seem to be endless opportunities to do so,” Jones said.