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TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

Congressional Redistricting Affects on Robeson County

A Report From Representative Ron Sutton, District 85



March was an active month in the General Assembly. Last week was especially busy and important to Robeson County and all of District 85.

As you know, North Carolina was required by the U.S. Supreme Court to re-draw U.S. Congressional Districts after declaring District 12 unconstitutional. The Federal Court late last year gave the General Assembly an April 1, 1997 deadline to submit new districts or the Court would draw their own lines.

Realizing the unique situation involving District 85 and the redistricting process, our multi-cultural population and Robeson County being the home of Congressman Mike McIntyre of Lumberton, I requested and was appointed as a

member of the House Congressional Redistricting Committee.

Most of the redistricting was done through negotiations between the N.C. House, N.C. Senate and incumbent Congress members in Washington. Numerous proposals were made, considered and rejected without formal vote in Committee.

For example, the original House proposal split Robeson County almost down the middle with approximately half in District 8 (Congressman Hefner's District) and the balance in District 7 (Congressman McIntyre's District). I was opposed to that plan for many reasons, but expressly because it split the Indian population down the middle. The plan was adopted in Committee over my objection, but was later abandoned. Several other plans were proposed and during the week of March 17th the House adopted a second plan that was more favorable to District 85 and kept Robeson County almost intact.

However, between the time of our leaving Raleigh for the weekend on Thursday March 20th and our return on Monday, March 24th, significant changes were proposed and made in the Committee Adopted Plan. These changes were reportedly based on input from Washington. Upon my learning of the changes, I immediately let both the House and Senate Chairmen know of my objections.

The revised plan took the former North and South Smith Precincts, now known as Prospect and Oxendine, from the McIntyre District and placed them in the Hefner District. This severely diluted the Robeson County Indian vote as this affected over 2,100 registered Indian voters. By the time I learned of the changes, they were already printed in a new document and were soon to be brought before the House Redistricting Committee for approval on Tuesday, March 25th. Not only was the substance disturbing but the manner in which it was handled was upsetting to me.

During the House Committee hearing on the "revised" plan, I attempted to amend the plan back to its original form. My amendment lost 11 to 10. Although I lost in Committee, I didn't give up.

I had the general Assembly legal staff prepare a proposal to shift Prospect and Oxendine Precincts back with the rest of Robeson County and give Congressman Hefner two precincts in Cumberland County. These precincts did not include Fort Bragg. I ran the plan by Congressman McIntyre and the Senate Redistricting Chairman was to do likewise with Congressman Hefner. Congressman McIntyre did not object, as long as he kept Fort Bragg as per the previous plan. Congressman Hefner wouldn't agree unless he received Fort Bragg

in Cumberland County from Congressman McIntyre's District. Without further consultation, Senator Cooper agreed with Congressman Hefner and so informed me the next day. Although Congressman McIntyre wanted to keep Fort Bragg in District 7, most proposals considered throughout the process tentatively transferred it to Congressman Hefner in District 8.

During the House floor debate on the redistricting Bill, I again ran an amendment to return Prospect and Oxendine Precincts to District 7, with the bulk of the rest of Robeson County. This time it passed with a vote of 117 to 0.

Incidentally, a local staff member said that my amendment that changed a redistricting bill was the first to pass on the House Floor in this 20 years on the staff. All other amendments during the House Floor debate last week were defeated.

The House redistricting Bill was passed in the House on Wednesday, March 26th and went to the Senate. After much debate and without further amendment, the Senate passed the House bill on Thursday and it went to Governor Hunt for signature. It must be submitted to the U.S. Justice Department and to the three Judge Federal Court Panel by Tuesday, April 1, 1997.

After all the work, planning, strategizing and negotiating, Robeson County remained the same in the final plan as it was before redistricting began. Of course, all twelve Congressional Districts had changes, including our own Districts seven and eight. However, I believe the plan to be reasonably fair, representative of the population, and gives every member of our Washington Delegation an opportunity to be re-elected without undue harm to either political party. Readers are reminded that only the 12th U.S. Congressional District liens were being redrawn. It will have no effect on any other elections.

On a new subject, my bill to give the N.C. Indian Cultural Center an extension of time to complete fund raising passed the House on Thursday, March 27th with only one negative vote. It is now in the N.C. Senate and I have to move it through their Committee system and have it voted on and passed in the Senate before the May 12th deadline, or all the Cultural Center lands will revert to the State of North Carolina and the 99 year lease becomes void. I will give you the complete details of the bill, including the requirement for the reorganization of the Cultural Center Board in my next report, after it passes and becomes law.

Other significant items facing us

in the near future are the famous "Hog" Issue Bills, the budget, teachers and state employees raises, the Governor's Excellent Schools Act Bill and the Graduated Drivers License Bill. On the Drivers License Bill, you may recall on the House Floor I successfully amended it's night driving time to 10:00 p.m. from 9:00 p.m. However, when the bill went to the Senate, in response to the request of the bill sponsors, they changed it back to 9:00 p.m. before they passed it. Now a Conference Committee will have to agree on a final time. I plan to try and get it changed back to 10:00 p.m., but I'm not sure I can get the votes in the Conference Committee. While I question the entire Bill as being too restrictive, too harsh and extremely punitive, I do plan to support it as something must be done about the high accident rate of our 16/17 year old drivers.

We are all now in our permanent office spaces for this term and I remained in the Main Legislative Building, Room 1317. My telephone number is (919) 733-5782. You may contact me at my Raleigh office or in my District 85 office, located in my Law Office, 208 Union Chapel Road, (910) 521-4797 anytime between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. daily.

Miss Lumbee Attends UNC-Greensboro Festival

Rebekah Revels, Miss Lumbee, recently attended the Third Annual UNC-Greensboro Native American Cultural Festival. Master of Ceremonies was Mr. Ray Littleturtle. Traditional flute music was performed by Tony Littleturtle. Participants from many areas enjoyed Kat Littleturtle's traditional storytelling.

Rebekah with Mr. Lonnie and Ms. Ruth Revels.

Ray Littleturtle, Miss Lumbee, Rebekah Revels, Kat Littleturtle.

Miss Lumbee, Rebekah with 1996 Miss Indian North Carolina-Millicent Hunt.

Rebekah wishes to thank Ms. Jennifer Revels-Baxter and Ms. Becky Goins for the invitation and opportunity to attend this wonderful event.

Scenes from the Indian Unity Conference - March 13-15, 1997-Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Miss Lumbee and Jr. Miss Lumbee proudly present the Lumbee Banner.

Miss Lumbee with Ms. Ruth Revels and Mr. Ray Littleturtle at the banquet.

Miss Indian USA-Natascha Waggoner, Jr. Miss Lumbee, Miss Lumbee, Little Miss Lumbee.

Miss Lumbee-Rebekah Revels with Mr. Monroe Chavis, Miss Lumbee pageant coordinator at the Indian Unity Conference breakfast.

Miss Lumbee, Rebekah Revels with the new Miss Indian North Carolina-Melissa Silver.



Miss Lumbee Rebekah Revels and James M. Chavis, Director of the LRDA Tribal Enrollment Office.



Miss Lumbee Rebekah Revels and Junior Miss Lumbee Morgan Hunt



Miss Lumbee Rebekah Revels is shown with Lonnie Revels, Member North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, and Ruth Revels, Chairman of the Board of the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center.



Miss Lumbee Rebekah Revels is shown with Ray and Cat Littleturtle of Turtle Vision, Inc.

Black History Month Observed

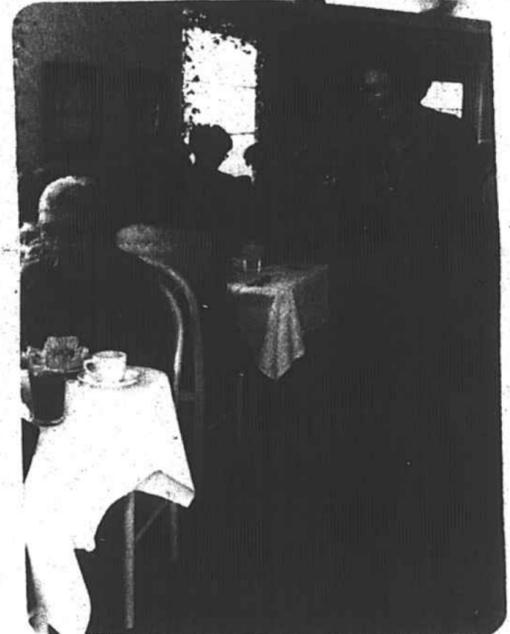
Jeanette Locklear took first place in the annual Black History Month presentation in which students dressed up as an important person in

Black history and gave a speech on that person's life. Jeanette received a fifty-dollar savings bond, courtesy of Progressive Savings and Loan of Pembroke.

Pembroke High Class of '76 to be Reunited June 14

The 1976 class of Pembroke High School will hold their class reunion on June 14, 1997. For more information

contact Dollar Bill Oxendine at 422-8129, Ramona L. Clark at 521-0577 or Iris Hunt Locklear at 521-1179



Eva Sampson modeled at the Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon for Hospice of Robeson

Sunshine House Fashion Show Benefits Hospice of Robeson

Bright citrus colors, breezy spring fabrics, and styles for women of all ages dazzled more than 100 guests at the first Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon for Hospice of Robeson held Tuesday at the Kelly Green Cafe. Mary Taylor of the Sunshine House hosted the benefit with all proceeds from the event's ticket sales going to the Hospice program of care for terminally ill persons and their families.

Before lunch, Miriam Edwards, director of Hospice of Robeson, welcomed the guests and thanked all the people who made the event possible. At the top of the list was Taylor and her Sunshine House staff.

"Some of my family have certainly benefited from the Hospice program," said Taylor. "My children, Keith and Myra, are active each year with the Hospice Festival of Trees so it was natural for me to offer to hold a fashion show when Carolyn Clark was in the store one day and mentioned Hospice fund-raising. I can't think of any other local organization that does more for the people of this community."

Edwards also thanked Hospice Volunteers Carolyn Clark who coordinated the event, Evelyn Smith for procuring the door prizes, and Rosa Jacobs who added her creative touch to the table centerpieces. Edwards expressed appreciation to Ellen McLean for printing the tickets and to Lowe's of Lumberton for donating flowers for centerpieces and door

prizes. Hospice staffers Lisa Parnell and Anne Crain also lent their hard work and creativity to make the fundraiser successful. It raised more than \$1,600 for Hospice.

After a delicious lunch, the audience delighted to a wide variety of spring outfits selected for modeling by Hazel Lesane, also a model herself. A varied array of fashions, from casual walking shorts to pastel suits to black and white full-length formal gowns, was shown. Models were Laura Britt, Laura Cave, Hazel Lesane, Shelli Livermore, Cynthia Locklear, Brenda Martin, Armilee McGeachy, Janet McLean, Lisa Parnell, Adrienne Oxendine, Eva Sampson, Kelley Stanley, Mackie Williams, Beth Williamson, and Evelyn Williams. Irene Stuart was the makeup artist.

Mary Lou Andrews won recognition and a prize for selling the most tickets; Bev Townsend was awarded the grand prize, a fashion outfit from the Sunshine House located at 3021 Roberts Avenue.

Hospice Volunteer Carolyn Clark said that all tickets for the event were sold out weeks prior to the event. "It's just a shame that all 120 people who bought a ticket were not able to attend," she said.

Donations to Hospice in honor or in memory of a loved one can be made at any time by sending a gift to Hospice of Robeson, 2300 N. Pine St., Lumberton. For more information, call 738-1905.

Reunion to be held

The descendants of Sion and Sarah Wilkins, H.T. (Sonnice) and Rosella (Sis) Lowery will reunite on May 24, 1997 between 4 and 9 PM at Harpers Ferry Baptist Church in Pembroke.

Donations: R.F.V.P.: A.S.A.P. \$7.00 min. per person. Children under 10 - \$4.00. For more information contact Hazel Strickland at (910) 521-3663 or contact John Lowery at (301) 587-5434.