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The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBRIDLED

VOLUME 93 - NUMBER 33

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 2014

TELEPHONE (919) 682-2913 PRICE: 30¢

Judge: NC vote can be held with GOP-backed changes

By Michael Biesecker and Gary D. Robertson
RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina's November election can be held under a new voting law approved by Republican lawmakers, a federal judge ruled Aug. 8. The law is considered one of the toughest in the nation and the groups challenging it say will suppress minority voter turnout.
U.S. District Court Judge Thomas D. Schroeder denied a motion seeking to hold the November vote under old rules, saying the groups failed to show they would suffer "irreparable harm."
"In the absence of the clear showing for preliminary relief required by the law, it is inappropriate for a federal court to join a state law passed by

duly-elected representatives, wrote the judge, who was appointed to the federal bench by Republican President George W. Bush.
A coalition of groups, including the League of Women Voters and the state NAACP, have filed three lawsuits challenging many changes to voting laws approved by the GOP-controlled state legislature in 2013.
The groups say the changes are designed to suppress turnout at the polls among minorities, the elderly and college students - blocs considered more likely to vote for Democrats.
In a weeklong hearing last month, they asked Schroeder to stop implementation of the new law until a trial to determine whether the changes violate the U.S. Constitution or the Voting

Rights Act of 1965. Schroeder did deny a motion from the state seeking to have the case dismissed, setting the stage for a trial next year.
The law requires voters to present a government-issued photo ID, ends same-day registration, trims the period for early voting by a week and ends a popular high school civics program that encouraged students to register to vote in advance of their 18th birthdays.
Supporters of the measure, including GOP lawmakers and Republican Gov. Pat McCrory, said the law was needed to combat in-person voter fraud, which they said is rampant in the state despite only a handful of confirmed cases in recent years.
"Today's ruling is just more evidence that this law is constitutional," said Bob Stephens, a lawyer for McCrory, who signed the law and is one of the defendants.

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M&F Bank Appoints James H. Sills III as President and CEO Banking Veteran has Strong Roots in North Carolina



JAMES H. SILLS

Mechanics and Farmers Bank (M&F Bank), the wholly owned subsidiary of M&F Bancorp, Inc., a one-bank holding company headquartered in Durham, North Carolina, today announced that following a national search, James H. Sills III will lead the bank as president and chief executive officer effective Sept. 1.
Sills leaves his appointed position of Secretary of the Department of Technology and Chief Information Officer for the State of Delaware to serve as the president and CEO of both M&F Bank and M&F Bancorp, Inc. Kim Saunders, president and CEO of M&F Bancorp, Inc., will step down from her post on August 31, and James Sansom, interim president of M&F Bank, will continue on in his role as chief lending officer.
In 2009, Sills was appointed by Gov. Jack Markell to his Cabinet. In this role, he oversaw the department's information technology budget, implemented numerous enterprise technology projects and led the department's Technology Investment Council in executing IT performance and consolidation initiatives for the State of Delaware.
"Under Jim's leadership as Cabinet Secretary, our Department of Technology and Information experienced a positive cultural shift while implementing technology solutions and programs that are not only cost-effective, but enhance productivity and service delivery," said Governor Jack Markell. "He earned the respect of many throughout the State of Delaware and though we are sad to see him leave, we know his exceptional leadership skills and extensive banking background will serve Mechanics and Farmers Bank well."
With the appointment of Mr. Sills, M&F Bank aims to expand its connection and service to the community in new ways through enhanced online capabilities while continuing to serve its legacy customers.
"The future of community banking is in the technology arena, and we have been driving innovation at the intersection of banking and technology for more than 20 years," said M&F Board of Directors Chairman James A. Stewart. "Jim has an impressive track record of success in executive leadership roles, and we are confident that his enthusiasm and insight will enable us to deliver even greater business value to our customers across North Carolina and enhance shareholder value."
Founded more than 100 years ago, M&F Bank holds great historical and cultural significance in Durham. The original nine incorporators were prominent businessmen united by a common goal: to provide African Americans in their community with banking services that were largely unavailable to them in the early 20th century. More than a century later, M&F Bank still embodies its founding principle of service to the community. It is committed not only to meeting the financial needs of personal and business customers, but to supporting underserved communities and promoting community development.
During her seven years of service as M&F's outgoing president and CEO, Kim Saunders steered the bank as it fought through and emerged victorious from the financial crisis. "I am confident the new leadership will continue the legacy of success for the community and the great people associated with M&F Bank," said Saunders.
Prior to his appointment to the Cabinet of Gov. Markell, Sills served in multiple senior leadership positions. Earlier in his career, Sills served as chief operating officer of First Tuskegee Bank and also served as president and CEO of Memphis First Community Bank (now Landmark Bank). For five years, he served as executive vice president of MBNA America Bank/Technology Sector (now Bank of America). Following this role, he founded Homeland Security Verification, LLC, a small employment verification company, in 2007.

Jesse Jackson Calls Michael Brown Shooting 'Crime of Injustice'

By Chris King
ST. LOUIS - Rev. Jesse Jackson told The American he hopes that the U.S. Department of Justice sees the Ferguson Police shooting of Michael Brown on Saturday and resulting community violence as "systematic of a national crisis."

Jackson said, "It was a crime of injustice." Jackson said.
The injustice, he said, was two-fold: a police shooting of an unarmed black teen followed by black youth from high-unemployment neighborhoods erupting in rage.
"Black men should not be the objects of target practice," Jackson said of the shooting. "It's not a unique situation. It's a prototypical American situation. Police departments do not reflect the population. It's awful, but it's not unique."
The resulting community violence on Sunday, following a non-violent candlelight vigil to commemorate Brown, should be seen in the context of a chronic urban crisis, he said.
"Poverty is a weapon of mass destruction," Jackson said. "Poverty is in the community, guns are in, drugs are in, jobs are out. Banks are bailed out without meaningful community reinvestment. Too many people have no stake in the culture."
Jackson said that chronic urban problems remain to be addressed after the shooting of Michael Brown and the community's outrage are resolved.
"These kids need education, skills, job training, jobs, scholarships to college," Jackson said. "We need a national forum on urban policy, justice and repression. This is a national crisis that has manifested in Ferguson."
Asked for advice to organizers on the ground, Jackson said, "That's tough. I saw a sign that said we need quietness. Quietness is not the answer. Quietness is the absence of noise. We need the presence of justice."



When Howell Brown III, a 10-year-old boy who is recovering from a rare brain tumor, left his Durham home with his mom Ms. Sue Brown on Sunday afternoon, he thought he was going to the Alfonso Elder Student Union on the campus of North Carolina Central University to play games and hang out with members of the NCCU football team.
Well, before the fun and games, Howell was greeted by reporters and TV cameras for a press conference in his honor. NCCU football head coach Jerry Mack called a surprise press conference to have Howell sign a mock scholarship certificate to make him an official member of the team. See story on page 6. (NCCU Athletics Photo)

Rep. Brooks charges war on whites by Democrats Does That Mean The GOP Has War On African Americans?

By Erica Werner
WASHINGTON (AP) - A Republican congressman from Alabama says Democrats are engaged in a "war on whites."
Congressman Mo Brooks made his comment on conservative talk radio host Laura Ingraham's program on Aug. 5. He said the Democratic Party claims white people hate everyone else and that it's part of President Barack Obama's strategy of dividing people on the basis of race, sex and class.
The remarks came in a discussion of immigration legislation passed last week by the House that could result in increased deportations.
Brooks was responding to analysis saying that the Republican Party risks losing any appeal to Latino voters and will not be able to be successful in a national race if it appeals only to white voters.
"This is a part of the war on whites that's being launched by the Democratic Party. And the way in which they are launching this war is by claiming that whites hate everybody else," said Brooks. "It's a part of the strategy that Barack Obama implemented in 2008, continued it in 2012, where he divides us all on race, on sex, creed, envy, class warfare - all those kinds of things."
Brooks defended his comments in a phone interview Tuesday with The Associated Press and disputed the suggestion they were incendiary. He said that Democrats were the ones being incendiary, pointing to comments including an assertion by House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi this year that the GOP's failure to act on comprehensive immigration legislation had something to do with race.
"Race should not be an issue in public policy debates, we should be color-blind, we should be the melting pot," Brooks told the AP. "But so long as the Democrats have a political campaign strategy to divide Americans based on skin pigmentation then they are the ones who are fanning the fires and doing a disservice to our country, not those who try to hold the Democrats accountable for what is a very counterproductive and sinister campaign tactic."
To a request for comment, the spokeswoman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Emily Bittner, wrote in an email: "Wow. Congressman Brooks is living in his own world of paranoia, but sadly, this is precisely the kind of divisive rhetoric that has come to define House Republicans."