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# The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBRIDLED

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THE BEST SHOW STOPPING  
HEART THUMPIN' UP ALL NIGHT HAND CLAPPING  
AMPLIFIED CELEBRATION ON THIS PLANET  
WE ARE TALKIN' ABOUT THE ultimate  
NCCU HOME COMING  
EXPERIENCE OCT 25 Nov 31

## NCCU Homecoming Events on Page 6 Ruling awaited over pair of North Carolina congressional maps

By Gary D. Robertson  
RALEIGH (AP) - Another panel of judges is considering whether some electoral districts drawn by North Carolina Republicans four years ago and used in the past two elections are illegal because too many black residents were placed inside of them. Three federal judges held a three-day trial in Greensboro this week that examined the legality of a pair of congressional districts that have consistently elected black Democrats for more than 20 years. They didn't immediately rule. An ultimate favorable decision - likely after more appeals - for voters who sued to require the General Assembly redraw the 1st and 12th Congressional Districts that are being challenged, and likely force adjustments to adjoining districts. At least four lawsuits have been filed challenging congressional districts drawn by the General Assembly boundaries, or both, drawn by GOP lawyers in 2011 as discriminatory against minority voters, but the courts haven't been struck down. The boundaries have helped Republicans expand their state House and Senate majorities and give them 10 of the 13 seats in the state's congressional delegation. GOP lawmakers said the maps were fair and followed state constitutional provisions. GOP lawmakers drew the 1st and 12th Districts with majority-black voting age populations - 53 percent in the 1st and 51 percent in the 12th. In the previous round of redistricting in the 2000s, the black voting-age population ranged from 44 to 48 percent. Attorneys for the voters argue the district boundaries should be struck down because there was no legitimate reason to increase the percentages when the districts had allowed black residents to elect candidates of their choice. The 1st District, which covers all or portions of 24 eastern counties stretching from Elizabeth City to Durham, is represented by Rep. G.K. Butterfield. The 12th District, which stretches like a wedge along the Interstate 85 corridor between Charlotte and Greensboro, is represented by Rep. Alma Adams. "For decades, African-Americans enjoyed tremendous success electing their preferred candidates in former versions" of the districts, said a trial brief written for the voters that sued. Instead, the state responded by purposefully packing even more African-Americans into those districts. The plaintiffs wrote lawmakers failed to show there was a compelling interest to increase black percentages. But attorneys for the state wrote race wasn't the predominant factor for forming either district. Rather, they said the mapmakers removed voters who supported President Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election into the 12th District and moved out voters who supported John McCain to make surrounding districts more Republican. The 1st District raised the black voting population above to protect legislators from a legal challenge under the Voting Rights Act, according to the state's brief. This evidence demonstrates that several legitimate redistricting criteria reasons other than race were used to assign voters to districts," the brief said. A panel of state judges and the state Supreme Court upheld more than two dozen districts challenged in two consolidated lawsuits filed in state court. But the U.S. Supreme Court told the state's justices last spring to review the case in light of an Alabama redistricting case. The state Supreme Court took a second look in August but hasn't yet ruled. Another federal lawsuit challenging General Assembly districts was filed in May. A trial is scheduled for next April.

## Cemetery for slaves, Native Americans to get marker

CHARLOTTE (AP) - A proper memorial will finally mark the burial site of up to 80 slaves and Native Americans in a wooded area near Sardis Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. The Charlotte Observer reports about 20 people gathered Oct. 17 at the cemetery where people were buried more than 150 years ago. A small stone monument was set to be placed at the site that will alert people that the cemetery "is the final resting place of Afro-American slaves and Native Americans who were baptized communing members of Sardis Presbyterian Church." The burial ground was used from 1790 to the 1860s.

## State elections board removes Republican official who made racist posts

By Emery P. Dalesio  
RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina's elections board dumped a local official who made racially tinged Facebook posts praising the Confederacy and suggesting that blacks who protested against Republican policies weren't "productive good citizens" with jobs. The State Board of Elections voted 3-2 to dismiss Rowan County Elections Chairman Malcolm "Mac" Butner, whose social media accounts also expressed support for individual candidates in violation of state law. Butner's case marks the first time the state board has removed an elections official over social media postings.

three-member elections boards in each of North Carolina's 100 counties. The state board then votes to appoint the parties' nominees to the local boards, with the majority in every county going to whichever party controls the governor's mansion - currently the Republicans. Butner was nominated by the state's Republican Party

"I GUESS THE WHITE FOLK COULD NOT GET OFF BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO BUSY BEING PRODUCTIVE GOOD CITIZENS," Butner wrote in 2013.

Butner told the board in a letter he did nothing wrong but couldn't respond fully due to medical problems. He didn't attend the hearing or respond to messages seeking comment. Butner had a long record of "intemperate" remarks that made him unsuited for a role that doesn't allow political expressions such as campaign bumper stickers on cars, said board chairman Josh Howard, a Republican who sided with the board's two Democrats to oust Butner. "If you're in charge of counting the votes everybody should be confident that you're going to count everyone's vote equal," Howard said.



First Lady Michelle Obama breaks a bottle of champagne on the sail of the PCU-Illinois submarine during a christening ceremony at General Dynamics Electric Boat Shipyard in Groton, Conn., Oct. 10.. (Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)

The two state board members opposed to removing Butner said they didn't think his comments affected his ability to run fair and honest elections. For more than a year, the state board has alerted county elections officials to a federal appeals court ruling that social media commentary can compromise efforts to project fairness in election decisions.

## Democrats acknowledge Black Lives Matter during debate

By Jesse J. Holland  
WASHINGTON (AP) - Democratic presidential candidates gave a meaningful public nod to the Black Lives Matter movement in their first televised debate, fully adopting its slogan and raising the core concerns stemming from police killings of African-Americans that protesters have articulated while disrupting some of their campaign events.

Butner made national news last year for Facebook postings extolling the Confederacy, denouncing gays and blasting demonstrators protesting the priorities of Republican legislative leaders and Gov. Pat McCrory. On Facebook, Butner displayed a photo taken at one demonstration in Raleigh and noted the black participants. "I GUESS THE WHITE FOLK COULD NOT GET OFF BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO BUSY BEING PRODUCTIVE GOOD CITIZENS," Butner wrote in 2013.

The candidates were careful to avoid uttering the phrase "all lives matter," showing they clearly learned from confrontations earlier this year with Black Lives Matter protesters. Some in the movement say the phrase "all lives matter" minimizes the deaths of African-American men and women at the hands of law enforcement. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, the first to be confronted by Black Lives Matter protesters while campaigning, called during the debate for "major, major reforms" to the criminal justice system and invoked the name of Sandra Bland, the black woman found hanged in a Texas jail after being arrested on a traffic charge. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley apologized last summer after using the alternative "all lives matter" slogan. On the stage Oct. 13 in Las Vegas, he said, "Black lives matter, and we have a lot of work to do to reform our criminal justice system, and to address race relations in our country."

Butner was chairman of a local housing agency at the time and a public housing resident complained anonymously to a U.S. Housing and Urban Development official in Greensboro. Butner did not seek reappointment when his term ended in August 2014.

Observers noted that the candidates discussed some issues that people have complained about for years, even though there was no minority candidate in their midst - a rarity for Democrats. A black candidate has sought the Democratic presidential nomination in almost every election cycle since Jesse Jackson's second White House bid in 1988. Former Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, who is Hispanic, ran in 2008. No minority candidates ran against President Bill Clinton in his 1996 re-election campaign. By contrast, the Republican field for 2016 has four candidates of color: Ben Carson, Marco Rubio, Bobby Jindal and Ted Cruz. Fredrick Harris, a Columbia University political science professor and director of its Center on African-American Politics and Society, said it would have been unlikely without the Black Lives Matter movement that any of the Democratic candidates would have been talking Oct. 13 about the relationship between police and minority communities.

Butner resigned his seat on the state Republican Party's executive committee in June to join the three-member county elections board and told The Associated Press a month later he wouldn't resign under any circumstances. "I'm the victim," he said then. "The problem is, in this society, you can't express your First Amendment rights. You have to be politically correct."

Police relations with minority communities and the deaths of unarmed black men have been topics of great interest since the shootings of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012 in Florida and 18-year-old Michael Brown in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri. Those deaths, and others of some black women, have inspired protests under the "Black Lives Matter" moniker around the country. Martin, Brown and Bland's families were featured speakers at the "Justice or Else" march marking the 20-year anniversary of the Million Man March in Washington last weekend. Despite their influence, one of the co-leaders of the official Black Lives Matter organization, Alicia Garza, has said they will not be endorsing any presidential candidates this election cycle. She also told The Associated Press in an earlier interview that they may continue to make appearances at Democratic campaign events.

Under state law, the Republican and Democratic leaders of the state parties each nominate a list of names for appointment to the three-member elections boards in each of North Carolina's 100 counties. The state board then votes to appoint the parties' nominees to the local boards, with the majority in every county going to whichever party controls the governor's mansion - currently the Republicans. Butner was nominated by the state's Republican Party

African-American voters are a key part of the Democratic bloc. In 2012, the percentage of black voters eclipsed the percentage of whites for the first time, when 66.2 percent of blacks voted, compared to 64.1 percent of non-Hispanics whites and about 48 percent of Hispanics and Asians. That number is expected to drop after the end of the Obama presidency, but black, Hispanic and Asian voters are key portions of any Democratic presidential success. Two of the 2016 Democratic debates are set for Charleston, South Carolina, and Miami and are sponsored in part by the Congressional Black Caucus Institute and Univision, respectively. It is likely that issues directly affecting black and Latino voters will be dealt with in more depth during those January and March debates. "They're always interested in the black vote, because those are the ones who are turning out and making the critical difference in important electoral states like Ohio," Harris said. Emory University political scientist Andra Gillespie noted that both O'Malley and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton seemed to realize the need to acknowledge the grassroots protests was greater than any risk associated with not invoking Black Lives Matter. Like O'Malley, Clinton came under criticism earlier this year for her "all lives matter" comment at an African-American church, and met later with activists. "Their statements really reflected that they had already been challenged," she said.