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## Lawsuits target GOP amendment referendums, candidate label

By Gary D. Robertson and Alex Derosier

RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and other opponents of legislative Republicans filed a flurry of late-hour lawsuits Monday, August 6 to block referendums on constitutional amendments and to let a Supreme Court candidate disclose his party affiliation on ballots.

The lawsuits filed in state court against GOP legislative leaders mark yet another round of litigation in the power struggle pitting Cooper and his allies against the GOP-dominated General Assembly that began when Cooper was narrowly elected governor in late 2016.

Since then Republican legislators have passed legislation in the closely-divided state that reduced Cooper's powers and retooled the state's judicial branch. Spokesmen for GOP House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger described the lawsuits challenging the amendment referendums as last-ditch and absurd efforts to prevent the people from deciding on what their constitution says.

Trial judges scheduled hearings late Monday and Tuesday on requests by the plaintiffs for quick action. Time is fleeting - state election officials say they must finalize the composition of ballots for this fall's elections later this week.

The legislature agreed in June to submit to voters this fall six constitutional amendments for consideration. And Republicans over the weekend overrode Cooper's veto of a bill that prevents Supreme Court candidate Chris Anglin, until recently a Democrat, from having his new Republican designation on the ballot. Anglin's lack of affiliation could help a sitting Republican justice seeking re-election.

Cooper sued Monday to block voting on one constitutional amendment changing how vacant judgeships are filled and another that resets the division of powers between the executive and legislative branches on appointing members to boards and commissions. The amendments, if approved, would swing the pendulum from Cooper and future governors and toward the legislature.

Constitutional amendments are exempt from Cooper's veto stamp. But Cooper's attorneys contend the questions on the ballots are so "false and misleading" as to what the amendments would actually do as to be unconstitutional.

The questions are part of a scheme to "eliminate the separation of powers, usurp the governor's executive authority and seize control of the appointment of every member of virtually every board and commission in all three branches of state government," Charlotte attorney John Wester wrote in Cooper's lawsuit.

The North Carolina NAACP and Clean Air Carolina, an environmental group, sued to stop the two amendments Cooper is targeting, plus a third that would mandate photo identification to vote in person and a fourth that would lower the maximum income tax rate legislators could set from 10 percent to 7 percent.

The NAACP and Clean Air Carolina says referendums must be canceled because the current version of the legislature is "unconstitutionally constituted" through district maps found by federal courts to be illegal racial gerrymanders.

The General Assembly "is irredeemably tainted," the groups' lawyers wrote. "This illegal body may not be allowed to alter our state constitution in ways designed to further entrench its power at the expense of popular sovereignty."

Berger spokesman Bill D'Elia said Cooper and Democratic activists "waited five weeks to file these absurd lawsuits, which assume that voters aren't smart enough to understand the amendments being placed before them."

Anglin sued Monday to halt enforcement of a new law that would leave his Republican affiliation off the ballot because he was a registered Democrat three weeks before filing as a candidate in late June.

Anglin is running against Republican Justice Barbara Jackson and Democratic candidate Anita Earls. Jackson and Earls will have their party affiliations next to their names. While the law would affect four judicial candidates - a District Court candidate filed a similar lawsuit Monday - the change clearly targets Anglin.

"Even children understand that you don't change the rules in the middle of the game, especially in an election," Anglin told reporters at the Wake County courthouse when filing his lawsuit.

Republicans say the law is necessary to prevent candidates from masquerading being from another political party. Those who sued are "trying to mislead voters and nefariously sway the outcome of key elections," Moore spokesman Joseph Kyzer said in an email.

## 1 of first black University of North Carolina students dies

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) - The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill says one of its first black students has died.

News outlets report J. Kenneth Lee died last week. A funeral for the 94-year-old was July 30 in Greensboro.

The university says in a statement that Lee was one of four African-American students who helped integrate the campus. The four had joined a lawsuit filed in 1949 that led to the desegregation of the university's law school.

Thurgood Marshall was then-director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and represented Lee and the other plaintiffs in the suit. Marshall later became the U.S. Supreme Court's first African-American justice.

Lee enrolled in the law school in 1951 and became a prominent civil rights attorney in Greensboro after graduating. His career spanned more than five decades.



Former First Lady Michelle Obama has joined a number of actors, musicians and professional athletes to encourage people to register and vote. In this photo, First Lady Michelle Obama thanks U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) employees for their service and dedication at the Jefferson Auditorium, USDA on Friday, May 3, 2013. (Bob Nichols/USDA/Wikimedia Commons)

## Michelle Obama Joins New "When We All Vote" Campaign for the Midterms

By Lauren Victoria Burke (NNPA Newswire Contributor)

Former First Lady Michelle Obama is featured in a video along with celebrities Tom Hanks, Janelle Monáe, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw and Lin-Manuel Miranda to encourage people to register and vote.

In less than 100 days, the midterm elections that will either expand President Trump's power or greatly restrict it, will take place on November 6. There has been much talk about the likelihood of a "blue wave" that could give Democrats the gavel and investigative power in Congress over the next two years of Trump's presidency. The underlying urgency of Michelle Obama's message is an unspoken aspect of her new registration effort.

The name of the new effort, "When We All Vote," is also an indication that the former first lady is well aware of the fact that higher voter turnout usually leads to Democratic victories at the polls. The effort is also a challenge registered voters to participate in elections "both big and small." Though the effort is billed as "non-partisan," the sense of urgency about the country's direction under President Trump's leadership is an unavoidable backdrop.

Several live events are also expected as part of the effort between now and election day.

Former President Barack Obama is expected to hit the campaign trail to assist Democrats who are looking to take back the House and Senate in 2019. On July 31, the former President announced that he is endorsing 81 Democratic candidates on the ballot this November.

There is a record number of women on the ballot this year. Many of the endorsements former President Obama has focused on were candidates who worked in his administration, like Colin Allred, Lauren Underwood and Richard Cordray.

The Obamas have been relatively quiet since departing the White House in early 2017, but that is likely to change. The former president and the former first lady's launch of "When We All Vote" is likely to be only the first of several post White House efforts they will participate in.

"I'm confident that, together, they'll strengthen this country we love by restoring opportunity that's broadly shared, repairing our alliances and standing in the world, and upholding our fundamental commitment to justice, fairness, responsibility, and the rule of law," Obama wrote in his endorsement statement.

## Mysterious missing parts of Malcolm X's autobiography found

By Verena Dobnik

NEW YORK (AP) - For decades, a burning question loomed over a towering 20th century book: "The Autobiography of Malcolm X": What happened to the reputedly missing chapters that may have contained some of the most explosive thoughts of the African-American firebrand assassinated in 1965?

The answer came when an unpublished manuscript of a chapter titled "The Negro" was sold by Guernsey's auction house in Manhattan - for \$7,000.

The buyer was The New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, based in Harlem.

Schomburg Director Kevin Young confirmed to The Associated Press that this was in fact an unpublished missing section of Malcom X's autobiography, whose 241-page draft the Schomburg also acquired July 28 for an undisclosed sum.

The manuscript of the autobiography was for years owned by Gregory Reed, a lawyer for Rosa Parks who purchased the collection from author Alex Haley's estate.

The draft of the entire book is of immense value, beyond the historic, for the handwritten revisions and comments by Malcolm X and Haley, Young said in a telephone interview after the auction.

Their dialogue, in writing, reflects the human rights activism of the Muslim minister who indicted white America for what he saw as criminal behavior against blacks; opponents including the U.S. government accused him of inciting racism and violence. He was assassinated in Harlem in 1965 by three members of the Nation of Islam, a radical religious movement, shortly after he had broken away from the group.

The scribbled notes in the manuscript - not available until now - "are a very direct narrative that he's crafting," says Young, citing the image of racist cross-burning that Malcolm X's mother described to him as a child. "And that's what brings him into the world."

One mystery was solved in public on July 28, but another was born: loose fragments of Malcolm's writing-in-the-works. Were these parts of possible other missing chapters?

"I examined them, and I don't know what those are, it's too early to tell; they look like they were probably stapled at one time, or cut and pasted; some are half of a page, or just slips of paper," Young said. "The best way to describe them is that they're literal fragments and literary fragments."

## Trump rips LeBron James' smarts hours before rally in Ohio

By JONATHAN LEMIRE

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. (AP) - Ahead of campaigning in Ohio on August 4, President Donald Trump unleashed a withering attack on the state's favorite son, savaging NBA star LeBron James in a late-night tweet that derided the intelligence of one of the nation's most prominent African-American men.

Melania Trump's spokeswoman quickly distanced the first lady from the criticism of James, saying in a statement Saturday afternoon (August 4) that it appeared James was "working to do good things on behalf of our next generation" and that the first lady would be open to visiting his new school for at-risk children. The statement didn't criticize the president.

Trump blasted James late Friday (August 3) after an interview aired with CNN anchor Don Lemon in which he deemed Trump divisive. Although James has long been a Trump critic, calling the president "U bum" in a 2017 tweet, the tweet was Trump's first attack on the player, who just opened up a school for underprivileged children in his hometown of Akron.

The tweet came hours before Trump traveled to Columbus, Ohio, for a rally north of town in support of the Republican in a special U.S. House election on August 7. Once in Ohio, however, Trump stayed away from the controversy and never mentioned James as he hammered away at Democrats and other favorite targets.

"LeBron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon," Trump posted. "He made Lebron look smart, which isn't easy to do."

Trump then, unexpectedly, appeared to weigh in on the growing debate over who is the greatest NBA player of all time, James or Michael Jordan, by writing "I like Mike!"

Many former and current professional athletes, including Jordan, jumped to James' defense.

"I support LeBron James. He's doing an amazing job for his community," Jordan said in a statement to The Associated Press through his representative via text Saturday.

Trump has long denounced the media - CNN in particular - and rarely lets a slight go unnoticed. But the attack on James, who was being interviewed by another black man, to some resembled a racial dog whistle. He routinely deems Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters of California, who is also black, as "low IQ" - an insult he repeated during the Ohio rally Saturday night.

Ohio Gov. Josh Kasich, a Republican who at times criticizes Trump, tweeted: "Rather than criticizing (at) King James, we should be celebrating him for his charity work and efforts to help kids."

Trump has repeatedly been questioned about his views on race, from deeming many Mexican immigrants "rapists" during his campaign kickoff speech for the Republican presidential nomination to placing blame on "both sides" for the violent clash between white supremacists and counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, a year ago.

James, who campaigned for Trump's opponent, Democrat Hillary Clinton, and has not been shy about using his celebrity for social causes, did the interview from the public school he opened, called the "I Promise" school.