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NC will appeal ruling that blocked voter photo ID law

By Martha Waggoner

RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina will appeal a federal judge's ruling that blocks the state's photo identification voting law but not before the March 3 primary, the state Department of Justice said Jan. 2.

The office of Attorney General Josh Stein said in a news release that he will appeal the decision issued Dec. 31 by U.S. District Court Judge Loretta Biggs. The judge ruled the ID mandate is tainted by bias that would deter black and Latino residents. The Republican leaders of the state House and Senate had asked Stein, a Democrat, to appeal.

Stein's release said his office won't appeal the law in time for the March 3 primary because it would cause confusion. The requirement would have been put into motion in less than two weeks for mail-in absentee voters, who also would have had to provide an ID copy.

The state DOJ won't go to court to try to require the use of photo identification for the March 3 primary "to avoid further voter confusion in the primary election in which absentee voting begins in just 11 days and to ensure that the primary election proceeds on schedule and is administered in an orderly manner," the

release said.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will review Biggs' decision once it's appealed, "but we anticipate that photo identification will not be required to vote in the primary," the release said.

On Dec. 31, Biggs blocked the newest version of North Carolina's photo ID voting law until a lawsuit filed by the state NAACP and others is resolved. Stein will ask the higher court to allow photo ID until the lawsuit is heard.

In 2013, North Carolina's Republican-led legislature passed a photo identification voting requirement that a federal appeals court struck down in 2016. Republicans then put a question on the November 2018 ballot to enshrine voter ID in the state constitution, which passed with 55% of the vote.

Lawmakers approved a separate law in December 2018 detailing how to implement that amendment.

The 2016 ruling said photo ID and other voter restrictions were approved with intentional racial discrimination in mind, and Biggs wrote in her ruling that the newest version of the law was no different in that respect.

Legislators received a breakdown of voter

behavior by race before passing the first voter identification law and used that data to target African American voters, the court wrote in striking down that law.

The same key lawmakers championed both bills, Biggs wrote. "They need not have had racial data in hand to still have it in mind," the ruling said.

Register To Vote



NCCU JAZZ ENSEMBLE (NCCU Photo)

NCCU Jazz Ensemble to Perform at Lincoln Center in Jack Rudin Competition

By Kia C. Bell

NCCU Public Relations

The North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Jazz Ensemble will perform at Lincoln Center in New York City during the debut of the Jack Rudin Jazz Championship, a two-day invitational band competition.

The event, which takes place on Jan. 18-19, 2020, will feature sets from 10 ensembles chosen from among prominent university jazz programs in the country. NCCU is the only historically black college and university (HBCU) represented. The Jack Rudin competition is expected to become an annual event.

This is a great honor and opportunity to participate in Inaugural Rudin Jazz Collegiate Jazz Competition. As educators and musicians, we strive to provide our students with quality education and hands-on experiences while maintaining the integrity of jazz.

Ira Wiggins, Ph.D., director of NCCU Jazz Studies Program

Honoring the legacy of Jack Rudin, a longtime supporter of Jazz at Lincoln Center, the competition will provide participants with quality musical literature and a forum for celebrating their achievements, while instilling higher education methodology and philosophy to the Jazz at Lincoln Center programs.

"This will be the greatest collection of young jazz talent in recent history," said Todd Stoll, Jazz at Lincoln Center's vice president of education. "These 10 bands represent the highest level of achievement in our music by young people."

The two-day invitational competition will include a combo showcase and a final concert featuring the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in Rose Theater.

"It's not just about winning, but the significance of being recognized among nationally acclaimed Jazz Programs," Wiggins adds.

The ensembles will also participate in rehearsals, workshops and competition at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater. The final competition will feature performances by the top three bands, followed by an awards ceremony and announcement of the winner of top honors.

NCCU was the first university in the state to offer the Bachelor of Music degree in jazz studies. The program now includes a comprehensive vocal jazz component and offers a Master of Music in both jazz composition and jazz performance. Alumni from the Jazz Studies Program include professors at the college and university levels, teachers of primary and secondary music education, as well as production and performance artists.

To learn more about the competition, visit jazz.org.



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