

# FORUM

## Don't forget to think F.A.S.T.



**Allison  
Brashear**  
Guest  
Columnist

Oct. 29 was World Stroke Day, but every day we all need to remember to think F.A.S.T. The American Heart Association will be sponsoring the 2017 Winston-Salem Heart and Stroke Walk on Nov. 11 at Bailey Park in the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter, but here are some tips to help you start thinking about strokes and how to prevent them.

What is stroke? Stroke happens when a clot or rupture interrupts blood flow to the brain. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells die and every minute matters.

Why should you care? Worldwide, stroke is the No. 2 cause of death and a leading cause of serious

disability. Stroke is the fifth leading killer in the U.S. and is the fourth leading cause of death in Forsyth County. The number of strokes is sharply up for those under 55. The American Heart Association and Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center are partnering to raise awareness of stroke in Forsyth County. Now it is more critical than ever. We know that every 40 seconds someone suffers a stroke in the U.S. Treatment is available but must be given quickly. Time is brain!

What do you need to know? The majority of stroke patients still do not arrive at the Emergency Department quickly enough to receive the care that can dramatically improve their outcomes, in large part because they or those around them do not recognize the warning signs and the importance of calling 9-1-1. Tell everyone in your life what the acronym F.A.S.T. stands for:

\*Face Drooping - Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven?

\*Arm Weakness - Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

\*Speech Difficulty - Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "The sky is blue."

\*Time to Call 9-1-1 - If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get to a hospital immediately. (Tip: Check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared.)

Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells die. Time loss is brain loss. Receiving immediate, professional help can get you the immediate treatment to greatly improve recovery outcomes. With today's

advanced technology, stroke is more treatable than ever before. There are treatments that can help significantly reduce disability and even death in a stroke emergency. Stroke patients treated with a clot-busting drug within 90 minutes of their first symptoms are almost three times more likely to recover with little or no disability.

Can you prevent stroke? Up to 80 percent of strokes can be prevented. High blood pressure, often referred to as the silent killer, is a leading cause for stroke. According to the American Stroke Association, every 10 mmHg drop in systolic blood pressure equates to an average 41 percent reduction in stroke risk. Quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy diet and weight, and staying active can help to prevent stroke.

How can you help? Join the American Heart Association for the 2017 Winston-Salem Heart and Stroke Walk on Nov. 11 at Bailey Park in the Wake

Forest Innovation Quarter. Sponsored by Wake Forest Baptist Health and MedCost, the festivities begin at 8:30 a.m. and the walk begins at 10 a.m. All funds raised at the Walk benefit heart disease and stroke research and prevention education in our community. Bring your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to help celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Heart & Stroke Walk in Forsyth County!

Get your exercise in with the 1, 2 or 4-mile stroller and dog-friendly walk. The After Party from 10 a.m. to noon includes heart-healthy food trucks, local mascots and live music by The WINmars. Your dollars help others in our community learn the F.A.S.T. warning signs, teach our community how to prevent stroke, and help fund the next big advancements in stroke care. Five current research grants, totaling \$1.2 million, are currently being funded by the American Heart Association right here in

the Triad and Wake Forest Baptist is currently conducting a number of clinical trials related to stroke. ([www.WakeHealth.edu/BeInvolved/](http://www.WakeHealth.edu/BeInvolved/))

For more information about the Winston-Salem Heart & Stroke Walk, visit [www.winstonsalemheartwalk.org](http://www.winstonsalemheartwalk.org), email [winstonsalemheartwalk@heart.org](mailto:winstonsalemheartwalk@heart.org), or call (336)542-4828.

For more information about stroke and to find a complete list of the stroke warning signs, visit [www.StrokeAssociation.org](http://www.StrokeAssociation.org) or [www.WakeHealth.edu/Stroke](http://www.WakeHealth.edu/Stroke).

Allison Brashear, MD, MBA is professor & chairwoman of Neurology, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, president of the American Heart Association's Triad Board of Directors and co-chair of the Winston-Salem Heart & Stroke Walk.

## Why are legislative leaders so afraid of fairer elections?



**Chris  
Fitzsimon**  
Guest  
Columnist

The latest news from the federal courts about the unconstitutional racially gerrymandered General Assembly districts and the

response to it from legislative leaders makes one thing clearer than ever.

The folks in charge of the House and Senate are terribly afraid of what will happen if our elections are fairer, if every district is not gerrymandered by race and partisan considerations to all but guarantee that their supermajorities will remain in place, and if the voters have a slightly better chance at electing who they want instead of having their representatives chosen for them.

That's the only conclusion you can draw from the bitter reaction from legislative leaders to their latest setback in the courts - that they are scared - as a three judge panel brushed aside lawmakers' objections and hired an outside expert to redraw several districts lawmakers drew after their original maps were struck down as unconstitutional because of the role race played in their development.

A spokesperson for the Senate leadership told the Associated Press that the court has "seized the constitutional and sovereign right to draw districts from lawmakers to an unelected California college professor with clear conflicts of interest. We are disturbed the court has apparently planned all along to achieve its preferred political outcome and are reviewing our legal options."

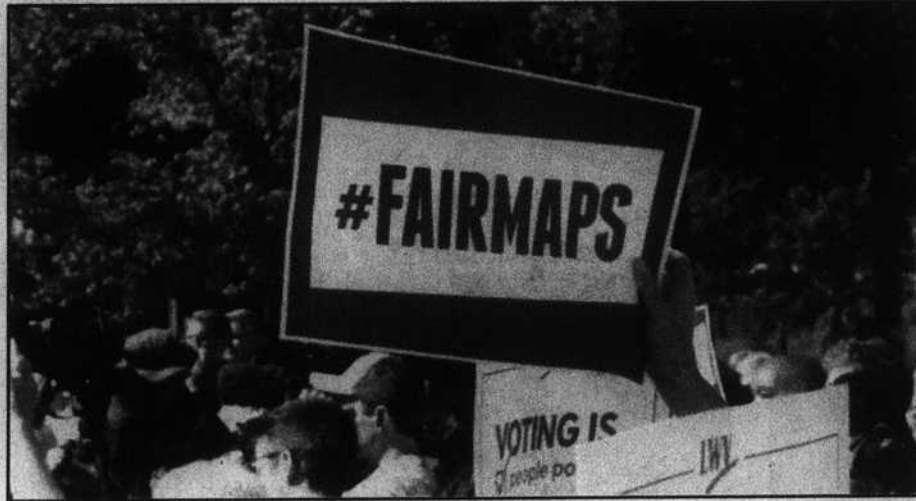


Photo by Melissa Boughton

This from a General Assembly that has not only been given two chances to draw constitutional districts and failed each time but also has been allowed to hold an election using the illegal districts.

Legislators in the House and Senate were elected in 2016 under maps that judges appointed by Republicans and judges appointed by Democrats have agreed were unconstitutional. Now legislative leaders are desperately trying to delay the case against them long enough to force the 2018 elections to be held with illegal districts too.

That seems highly unlikely. The three-judge panel said in this week's ruling appointing the outside expert that "the state is not entitled to multiple opportunities to remedy its unconstitutional districts."

In other words, legislative leaders have had their chances but they could not resist

drawing another set of illegal districts. They apparently don't trust the voters to reelect them otherwise.

And raising the question of "sovereignty" at this point is an interesting response. North Carolina at last check was still part of the United States and therefore subject to the decisions and orders of the federal courts and every level of the court system has weighed in on this case and found that the legislative districts violated the U.S. Constitution, which at this point also governs North Carolina.

The federal courts have long been involved in redistricting disputes and are now considering two cases questioning the constitutionality of extreme partisan gerrymandering, with one of them now before the U.S. Supreme Court.

As to outside experts drawing the new districts, it's not unusual for the courts to rely on one and the Republicans them-

selves started that trend this time by using an out of state GOP hired gun to draw the original and illegal districts that the courts have repeatedly struck down.

House Redistricting Chair David Lewis famously said of the gerrymandered congressional districts that were also struck down that the only reason he drew 10 Republican districts of the 13 in North Carolina is that he could not figure out how to draw 11 that favored Republicans.

The same is true of the General Assembly districts that the courts have rejected. They were drawn using race to guarantee Republican supermajorities. The only reason there are not more Republican districts is that they couldn't figure out how to draw them either.

It does all make you wonder why legislative leaders are so panicked. They tell us every day that their policies that have cut taxes on the wealthy and corporations, underfunded our schools, and rolled back important environmental protections are popular with the people in North Carolina.

There is a simple way to find out if that is true. Stop fighting to maintain districts that make fair elections impossible. Let's have a more honest election - without the courts making us do it - and see what happens.

Chris Fitzsimon is founder and executive director of N.C. Policy Watch. Contact him at [chris@ncpolicywatch.com](mailto:chris@ncpolicywatch.com).

Article printed from NC Policy Watch: <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com>

Copyright © 2016 NC Policy Watch. All rights reserved.

## Pro athletes use different platform for protesting



**James B.  
Ewers Jr.**  
Guest  
Columnist

If you want a hot topic to debate and gather some opinions about it, I have an issue for you.

Why not talk about the flag controversy that has been brewing since last year. Colin Kaepernick knelt during the playing of the National Anthem and it has created a firestorm.

It seems that because Colin Kaepernick was an NFL player that an instant social justice platform was launched. I suspect if Joe or Josephine average would have made the attempt, it probably would

have taken longer.

I have been attending athletic events for years and have observed that not everyone stands when our national anthem is played. I, nor any of the people around me, made any comments to the person who didn't stand. I wonder why?

Was it because it was none of our business? Could it have been because we didn't want to get into a protracted conversation about why they didn't stand? Or lastly, could it have been that we wanted the game to begin and enjoy ourselves?

Certainly, before Kaepernick, you didn't see cameras scanning the crowd to see who was standing and who was sitting. People go to games to get an emotional release from the everyday issues of life.

When we pay as fans roughly \$200 for tickets, parking, refreshments and a T-shirt, do we really want to engage the fan next to us about his or her political views? Probably not.

Does that mean we don't care? No. However it does mean in my opinion that the venue is the wrong one to have that type of discussion.

Just think if the cameras had not shown Kaepernick kneeling, would there be this debate? That's a good question. We don't need to answer that question because the cameras did show him taking a knee, so the stage was set.

His kneeling has sparked a movement not only in professional sports like football and basketball but also in homes across America.

Everyone has an opinion and wants to make a

statement about it. If things go as planned, Colin Kaepernick will attend the next meeting between the players and the owners.

Speaking of the owners, Robert C. McNair, owner of the Houston Texans, said, "We can't have the inmates running the prison." Of course, those comments led the Houston Texan players to kneel in their game against the Seattle Seahawks.

Now if you ask me, I don't think McNair thought he would get this kind of reaction from what he said. Arthur Blank, owner of the Atlanta Falcons, said he used the wrong expression and McNair is really a "solid citizen."

Well, I think you must hold McNair accountable for what he said. I remember my mom telling me when I was a boy that if

you can't say something good about someone to just keep your mouth closed. Mr. McNair should have just kept his mouth closed.

What Colin Kaepernick did last year, while new to some, was not new if you are old-school like many of us.

John Carlos and Tommie Smith, two Olympic champions, gave the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. The Black Power salute was a clenched fist raised in the air. Both Carlos and Smith used their sport to call attention to the social issue of the time and that was how black people were being treated in America.

Unfortunately, Carlos, Smith and Kaepernick were and are dealing with the same issue.

Professional athletes occupy a unique position

that we don't have. Some have chosen to use their platform to bring attention to issues of social justice.

NFL players like Doug Baldwin and Richard Sherman of the Seahawks are speaking truth to power. Those in positions of power cannot shy away from understanding the importance of these issues and the subsequent actions and reactions.

Professional athletes are not property. They have ideas they want to bring forward for the common good. We as fans cannot think they are mindless and thoughtless people who have nothing to say. They are not gladiators in an arena.

That is why some fans get so upset now because they want athletes to "stay in their place."

Their place is in America, just like ours is.