



# New kind of salesman?

# Undefeated



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# THE CHRONICLE

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Thousands of demonstrators from all across North Carolina jammed Fayetteville Street leading up to the state Capitol on Saturday, Feb. 10, for the Moral March/HK On J People's Assembly.

## March leaders issue call for 'resistance'

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

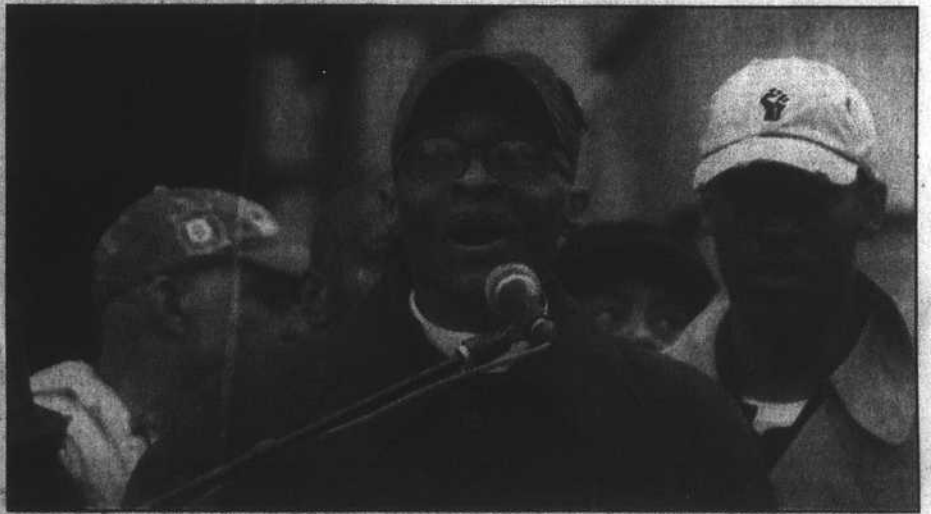
With the theme, "Taking Resistance to the Ballot Box," the 12th Annual Moral March/Historic Thousands on Jones Street People's Assembly (Moral March/HK On J People's Assembly) in Raleigh on Feb. 10 attracted thousands of demonstrators from across the state despite heavy rains. With protest

signs castigating everything from the Trump Administration, to North Carolina's legislative Republican leadership, the extraordinarily diverse crowd of young, old, black, white, Hispanic, straight, gay and others, marched through downtown Raleigh from Shaw University to just outside the state Capital.

There they heard from a plethora of speakers, representing the unique coalitions involved, all imploring those gathered to make sure their voices, and votes, are heard come November for the midterm election.

Bishop Dr. William Barber, the former president of the N.C. NAACP, spoke to those gathered by phone, urging them to indeed turn out the vote, regardless of whatever bar-

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Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman, president of the N.C. NAACP, speaks Feb. 10.

## Candidate filings begin but court battles confuse

BY CASH MICHAELS FOR THE CHRONICLE

From now until noon Feb. 28, candidates for all state offices, except judge-ships, will be filing for the 2018 May 8 midterm primaries. Filing began Monday without a hitch, though at the end of last week, observers were concerned that another unexpected court order could possibly delay the process.

Indeed, on Friday, Feb. 9, the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals issued an

order that candidates for the N.C. Supreme Court and state Court of Appeals could not file for the May 8 judicial primaries because they will not be held. Instead, those candidates will file during a special judicial filing period June 18-29.

That order stayed an original ruling by a federal judge, who ordered primaries for state Supreme and appellate court candidates, but not for district and superior court candidates.

The Republican-led

N.C. legislature last year passed a law eliminating the 2018 judicial primaries



Local candidates file for election. See Page A6.

for all judicial candidates because of judicial redistricting, but Democrats successfully challenged

that law. The federal judge reinstated the judicial primaries for the state judicial races, but not for district and superior court races. Now, that's to the Fourth Circuit appellate court, there will be no May judicial primaries, and the special June filing period will go forward, unless a court stops that as well.

The legal back-and-forth have state Republican legislative leaders seeing red.

Thus far a three-judge federal panel has had

Republican 2011 legislative redistricting maps redrawn twice, finally ruling that the maps drawn by a court-ordered special master be used for the 2018 elections. Republicans successfully petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court, in part, to stay that order for Wake and Mecklenburg counties alone, pending review.

Republicans also were successful in getting an order by another three-judge panel striking down their 2016 partisan con-

gressional maps, stayed by the U.S. high court. That stay is pending review of two other partisan gerrymandering cases the U.S. Supreme Court is considering elsewhere in the nation.

And just this week, a three-judge state panel refused to take up the issue of Wake and Mecklenburg counties being blocked by the U.S. Supreme Court in the legislative redistricting case involving the special master. The judicial panel cited, "... significant prac-

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## Commissioners to discuss social services, health department consolidation

BY TODD LUCK THE CHRONICLE

During a tumultuous time at the Department of Social Services, Forsyth county commissioners will be discussing the possibility of consolidating it with the Health Department.

The county commissioned a study last year by Cansler Collaborative Resources to look into consolidating the two departments, an option given to counties by a 2012 state law. The commissioners heard a presentation on its options in December and plan to discuss them during a winter

work session on Feb. 22 that starts at 9 a.m. in the Forsyth County Library auditorium. Former N.C. Health Secretary Lanier Cansler, who owns the Cansler firm, is expected to make a presentation followed by a discussion by the commissioners. There is no voting during winter work sessions, but commissioners may give staff directives there that could result in an item they'll vote on later.

Currently both of these large departments have their own boards, which hire their department directors. Consolidation mainly involves who runs the departments, which would involve eliminating or combining the boards. Cansler's study recommended that if the county consolidated, that it use an option that involves a combined board of human services with a human services director, which the county manager would hire with the board's advice and consent. The board would have similar positions to the current health

board, but with new required positions for its DSS half, such as social services clients and their family members. The State Human Resources Act, which employees of both departments are under, would be optional.

County Commissioner and DSS Board Chair Fleming El-Amin said that he's reviewed the information in Cansler's report, but was still undecided on consolidation. He said he's heard success stories from counties that have done it, but others have had problems consolidating. He said he wants what's best for those that the depart-

ments serve.

"I want to make sure it fits our needs," El-Amin said about any possible changes to the departments.

In an unrelated matter, the DSS Board voted to fire the department's director, Debra Donahue, on Thursday, Feb. 8. In early January, DSS employees were informed Donahue would be absent as Deputy County Manager Ronda Tatum acted as interim Social Services director. County Human Resources Director Shontell Robinson said the county couldn't comment on Donahue's situation since then due to state law, but that the letter of dismissal she was sent last week was public record.

The letter said that she was terminated due to "unacceptable personal conduct and grossly inefficient job performance." The letter said that Donahue didn't renew a

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