

Supreme Court upholds N.C. ruling

Congressional districts found to violate Equal Protection Clause

BY LANNY HIDAY
Bertie Ledger-Advance

WASHINGTON, D.C. - "It is so ordered."

On Monday morning, May 22, with those four words an unexpected coalition of five U.S. Supreme Court justices delivered a rebuke to North Carolina's Republican-led legislative redistricting committees.

The dispute before the court concerned the re-drawn makeups of Tar Heel voting Districts 1 (Durham northeast to Virginia) and 12 (Charlotte northeast to Greensboro).

Writing for a five-judge majority including the unexpected addition of Justice Clarence Thomas, Justice Elena Kagan examined head-on the question of whether either or both of the two gerrymandered districts had been redrawn on political grounds, which is permissi-



ble, or racial grounds, which is forbidden.

Despite conflicting and unclear testimony from this case on the subject of politics vs. race in the lower state and federal courts, Justice Kagan's opinion made clear the Supreme Court's finding - that race impermissibly had been the overriding factor in re-drawing the districts after the 2010 census.

The U.S. District Court for

the Middle District of North Carolina had reached the same conclusion, and the Supreme Court on Monday affirmed the District Court's view that both re-drawn districts were unconstitutional.

In the background to this case, Cooper v. Harris, Republican state senator Robert Rucho of Mecklenburg County, along with Republican state representative David Lewis of Harnett County, had each chaired committees tasked with redrawing the districts. The two legislators then hired as their mapmaker Dr. Thomas Hosteller, who is the Director of Redistricting for the Republican National Committee.

Hosteller re-designed District 1 in such a way as to add voters to the district - a move he said was required by the new 2010 census. This addition was accomplished by re-drawing the lines in a way that removed and relocated

thousands of African-American voters from previous black-controlled Democratic areas of Durham.

Similarly, Hosteller did the same in District 12 "By slimming the district and adding a couple of knobs to its snakelike body," according to Justice Kagan, added 35,000 African-Americans and subtracted 50,000 whites.

This move, and the similar move involving Durham in District 1, had the effect of diluting African-American voting strength in their previous black-controlled Democratic districts.

Rucho, Lewis, and Hosteller denied that their redesigns were racially motivated. The Supreme Court disagreed.

When questioned about the Republicans' setback, N.C. Senate Leader Phil Berger said, "We have the utmost respect for the Supreme Court, but it is challenging

for our lawmakers, to draw congressional districts that the courts will accept when the courts regularly change the rules state legislatures must follow when drawing them."

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper had a different view.

He said, "North Carolina voters deserve a level playing field and fair elections, and I'm glad the Supreme Court agrees. The North Carolina Republican legislature tried to rig Congressional elections by drawing unconstitutional districts that discriminated against African Americans, and that's wrong."

The maps in question in Monday's opinion by the Supreme Court have since been re-drawn, but those too are under judicial review following a number of lawsuits.

Bertie County Health Dept. schedules clinics

WINDSOR - The Bertie County Health Department has slated its clinics schedule for the remainder of the week.

There is a fee, based on income, for most clinics. Immunizations and General clinics are held every day,

and other clinics are by appointment.

They include:
Wednesday, May 24
Bertie: General, WIC All Day, DR PN PM
Thursday, May 25
Bertie: General

Friday, May 26
Bertie: General
Monday, May 29
Holiday
Tuesday, May 30
Bertie: General
Wednesday, May 31
Bertie: General

Thursday, June 1
Bertie: General, WIC
Friday, June 2
Bertie: General
Monday, June 5
Bertie: DEPO PM, General, WIC All Day
Tuesday, June 6

Bertie: General, WIC
Wednesday, June 7
Bertie: New Prenatal AM, General
Thursday, June 8
Bertie: General, WIC
Friday, June 9
Bertie: General, Pediatric

Tillmon

From A1

Tillmon, 33, was found guilty of multiple counts of conspiring to distribute controlled substances, attempting to possess with intent to distribute controlled substances, conspiring to use and carry firearms in relation to drug trafficking offenses, using and carrying firearms in relation to drug trafficking offenses and federal programs bribery.

The charges stemmed from a large scale undercover investigation into allegations of systemic law enforcement corruption in Northampton County.

The evidence at trial established Tillmon accepted \$6,500 from undercover FBI agents posing as drug traffickers in return for transporting a total of 30 kilograms of heroin from North Carolina to

Maryland over three separate occasions between August 2014 and April 2015.

On each occasion, Tillmon carried his law enforcement badge and a firearm to secure the illicit narcotics. Tillmon was prepared to use his badge and fake documentation to evade drug interdiction in the event the

transport vehicle was stopped.

The evidence also showed Tillmon agreed to participate in a fourth drug transport, to which he brought five firearms, including an assault rifle accompanied by three magazines of ammunition.

Fourteen other defendants, 13 of whom were law enforcement or cor-

rectional officers, were charged in the drug trafficking and firearm conspiracies - the law enforcement and correctional officers were also charged with federal programs bribery.

Those defendants all pleaded guilty to various offenses and are scheduled to be sentenced later this year.

Halifax County Sheriff

Wes Tripp, whose officers received the initial tips in the case said this evening, "The Rockfish 15 placed a stain on the Roanoke Valley. With the recent court proceedings, the Roanoke Valley continues to move forward and law enforcement is working together to make our community a safer place to live. Operation

Rockfish is in the past but it is something we all must remember."

Tripp said, "I'm beyond being proud of the law enforcement officers that we have working in the sheriff's office, even those who have retired and those who continue to work. This was one of the battles we have won against the war on drugs."

Notice of Public Hearing ON THE NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Notice is hereby given that the Bertie County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing at their June 5th, 2017 regular Board meeting inside the Commissioners Room at 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. The Board will discuss the Northeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Following the public hearing, the Board will consider adoption of the plan. All citizens are encouraged to attend.

A copy of the plan is available for public review at the following web address: <https://www.rapregionalhmp.org/participate.html>.

The public is encouraged to review the draft plan.

For questions and/or additional information, please contact Mitch Cooper, Emergency Services Director, at 252-794-5302.

BATH MEMORIAL CELEBRATION

MAY 27, 2017 * 4-9:30PM FREE CONCERT AT 6:00!

4-8PM FREE TOURS BONNER HOUSE
COSTUMED INTERPRETERS
OPEN HEARTH COOKING DEMO

SKYDIVERS AT 8PM

FIREWORKS AT 9PM SPONSORED BY



THE EMBERS

* COME TO BEAUFORT COUNTY FOR MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND & BRING THE FAMILY! *

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BERTIE COUNTY Community Development Program

The citizens of Bertie County are hereby informed that the County intends to apply to the North Carolina Department of Commerce for Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. In an effort to involve the citizens of the County and obtain their comments in the planning of the community development program, the Bertie County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Monday, June 5, 2017 at 4:00 pm in the Commissioners Room of the County Office Building at 106 Dundee Street in Windsor. The purpose of the public hearing is to explain the CDBG funding categories and allow citizens of the County an opportunity to express their views concerning community development needs and priorities.

Bertie County does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, age, or political affiliation in the admission, access to, treatment or employment in the CDBG program and activities. Person having any questions concerning the CDBG Program are urged to attend the public hearing and make their views known. Persons with disabilities or who otherwise need assistance should contact Sarah Tinkham, Clerk to the Board, at 252-794-6110 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. Hearing impaired persons desiring information or having questions regarding this subject should call the North Carolina Relay Number for the Deaf at 1-800-735-8262. Accommodations will be made for all who request assistance with participating in the public hearing. For additional information or to submit written comments, please contact Sarah Tinkham, Clerk to the Board at 252-794-6110 or 106 Dundee Street or P.O. Box 530, Windsor, NC 27983. Comments will receive a written response within 10 working days.

This information is available in Spanish or any other language upon request. Please contact Sarah Tinkham, at 252-794-6110, or at the Bertie County Office Building located at 106 Dundee Street in Windsor for accommodations for this request.

Esta información está disponible en español o en cualquier otro idioma bajo petición. Por favor, póngase en contacto con Sarah Tinkham, al 252-794-6110 o en Bertie County Office Building at 106 Dundee Street in Windsor, de alojamiento para esta solicitud.

John Trent, Chairman
Bertie County Commissioners

POUND THE SOUND 2017

WHEN:
THURSDAY,
JUNE 1ST AT
6:00 P.M.



TRIATHLON CLINIC
Sprint Triathlon of 750m Swim, 14 mile Bike and 5k Run

WHERE:
BERTIE COUNTY YMCA

Are you interested in participating in the Pound the Sound Triathlon but you've never done a triathlon before? Not sure why anyone would be crazy enough to swim, bike and run all in the same day? Maybe you've done a few triathlons and you want to get faster on your transitions.

Worried about the swim? Think your bike tires are too fat? Do you want to participate in a sport that could be your springboard to a stronger body and a healthier lifestyle?

Get answers to all of these questions and more at a triathlon clinic taught by local resident and triathlete, Jonathan Huddleston, who has competed in over 29 triathlons and is a 2011 Florida Ironman finisher.

TRIATHLON IS SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2017








For additional information call the YMCA at 794-9622.

