

## Civil Rights Groups and Local Activists File Lawsuit Challenging Jacksonville City Council's Racially Gerrymandered Redistricting Maps

*The maps diminish Black voters' influence for the next decade in City Council and Duval County School Board elections*

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**Jacksonville, Fla.** — Today, the [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) of Florida](#), [Harvard Election Law Clinic](#), and [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) filed a lawsuit on behalf of the [Jacksonville NAACP Branch](#), the [Northside Coalition of Jacksonville](#), the [Northeast Chapter of the ACLU of Florida](#), [Florida Rising](#), and 10 individual city residents challenging the Jacksonville City Council's [newly drawn redistricting maps](#).

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Jacksonville, claims that the new district maps unconstitutionally pack four City Council districts and two School Board districts with Black voters, diminishing their influence in adjacent districts. This racial gerrymandering violates the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and reduces Black voters' ability to elect candidates of their choice for the City Council and the Duval County School Board. The lawsuit also challenges the maps as illegal under the City Charter, which requires districts to be logical and compact.

In March 2022, the Jacksonville City Council passed, and Mayor Lenny Curry signed, the new maps, redrawing the voting districts for the next decade. In passing these maps, the Council impermissibly packed Black residents into Council Districts 7, 8, 9, and 10. As a result, the Council also ensured an artificially high white population in three adjacent districts—Districts 2, 12, and 14.

“These maps must be redrawn to represent all Jacksonville residents equitably,” said **Nicholas Warren, staff attorney with the ACLU of Florida**. “The Jacksonville City Council cannot deprive the people of fair representation by intentionally packing these districts and minimizing the voices of Black voters. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and the fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties rest. The Council must be held accountable.”

“These maps deny Black communities equal representation in Jacksonville and diminish the voice of Black voters in how resources are allocated and their communities are

governed,” said **Jack Genberg, senior staff attorney for voting rights with SPLC.** “We hope this litigation will achieve equal representation for all voters in Jacksonville and allow all communities in the city to advocate for their needs.”

The packed districts snake through the City to capture as many Black voters as possible, making their Black populations artificially high. The Black populations of the surrounding districts are simultaneously depressed because they carefully avoid concentrations of Black voters. As a consequence, most of Jacksonville’s Black voters are segregated into just four of fourteen districts, depressing their influence over City Council elections overall.

The lawsuit also challenges the gerrymandering of Duval County School Board Districts 4, 5, and 6, which are each made up of two of the challenged City Council districts.

Upon filing, plaintiffs said:

“In their efforts to dilute Black voting strength, the Jacksonville City Council has taken away our right to an equal say in how our city is run,” said **Ben Frazier, president of the Northside Coalition of Jacksonville.** “We won’t stop fighting until we scrap these maps and secure fair districts that protect equal representation for all of the people.”

“Through these district maps, the Jacksonville City Council has attempted to strip us of our right to have our votes matter equally,” said **Isaiah Rumlin, president of the Jacksonville NAACP.** “This represents an assault on one of our most fundamental rights since it determines how our communities will be treated by the city. We must prevent these maps from going into effect so that we can continue advocating for our communities.”

“These efforts by the Jacksonville City Council to ‘pack’ Black voters into as few districts as possible, denying their equal representation, must be overturned,” said **Michelle Charron Hollie, president of the ACLU of Florida Northeast Chapter.** “Not only do these maps violate the fundamental rights of Black voters in Jacksonville, they could also strip communities of color of fair access to resources and deny communities of color fair treatment by the city.”

“Black residents in Duval County deserve to have their voices heard and their votes fairly represented. The City of Jacksonville has chosen to overthrow the fundamentals of democracy by packing districts and we will not stand for it,” said **Moné Holder, Senior Director of Advocacy & Programs of Florida Rising.**

Maps of the challenged districts can be found [HERE](#)

The complaint in Jacksonville Branch of the NAACP v. City of Jacksonville can be found [HERE](#)

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