

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WAKE

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
21 CVS 015426, 21 CVS 500085

NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS, INC.;
HENRY M. MICHAUX, JR., et al.,

Plaintiffs,

REBECCA HARPER, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

REPRESENTATIVE DESTIN HALL, in
his official capacity as Chair of the House
Standing Committee on Redistricting, et al.,

Defendants.

**NCLCV PLAINTIFFS' RESPONSE
TO LEGISLATIVE DEFENDANTS'
PROPOSED SPECIAL MASTER**

Pursuant to this Court's February 9, 2022 Order for Responses to Special Master Candidates, the NCLCV Plaintiffs respectfully oppose the selection of the Special Master suggested by the Legislative Defendants, John Morgan.

Significant questions exist about whether Mr. Morgan has the neutrality required to assist the Court in the critical task the North Carolina Supreme Court has set. Aside from his positions at Applied Research Coordinates, Mr. Morgan's sole employment consists of Republican-aligned political-action funds (one chaired by former Republican representative J.C. Watts; another chaired by former Republican representative John Shadegg). Moreover, Mr. Morgan's work has repeatedly been rejected by courts—precisely because, in prior engagements, they have found that his work was not neutral.¹

¹ Mr. Morgan's credentials also do not approach those of the other candidates who have been proposed: He has no advanced degree, has never held an academic appointment, and has never published a peer-reviewed article.

Ohio 2022. Recently, the Ohio Supreme Court invalidated maps drawn by the Ohio Redistricting Commission as unconstitutional partisan gerrymanders. The mapdrawer for the invalidated Senate plan was Ray DiRossi, who worked for the Republican Caucus; the opinion identifies Mr. Morgan as a “technical consultant” to Mr. DiRossi. *League of Women Voters of Ohio v. Ohio Redistricting Comm’n*, slip op. 2022-Ohio-65, 2022 WL 110261, ¶ 168 (Ohio Jan. 12, 2022).

Ohio 2019. A federal district court identified Mr. Morgan as a “national Republican operative[.]” who “advised ... and collaborated with” “Ohio Republican staffers” on drawing maps; Mr. Morgan “gave a presentation on map drawing, advising map drawers to keep the process secret and to score the maps to determine the likely partisan outcome.” *Ohio A. Philip Randolph Inst. v. Householder*, 373 F. Supp. 3d 978, 998 (S.D. Ohio), *vacated and remanded sub nom. Chabot v. Ohio A. Philip Randolph Inst.*, 140 S. Ct. 101 (2019); *see also Ohio A. Philip Randolph Inst. v. Householder*, 367 F. Supp. 3d 697, 715 (S.D. Ohio 2019) (explaining that Mr. Morgan collaborated with Mr. DiRossi in drawing the map). Mr. Morgan told mapmakers that, when it came to the redistricting process, they should “keep it secret, keep it safe.” Plaintiffs’ Proposed Findings of Fact, *Ohio A. Philip Randolph Inst. v. Householder*, No. 1:18-cv-00357-TSB-KNM-MHW, ECF 251-1 at 14 (S.D. Ohio Mar. 23, 2019) (quoting Tr’l Ex. P346). Other “national Republican operatives” who “collaborated” included “Mark Braden”—counsel to Legislative Defendants here—and “Tom Hofeller,” who drew the North Carolina maps invalidated in *Common Cause v. Lewis*. *Ohio A. Philip Randolph Inst.*, 373 F. Supp. 3d at 998–99. The Ohio federal district court invalidated the map Mr. Morgan helped draw as a partisan gerrymander. *Id.* at 1170.

Virginia 2018. In Virginia, Mr. Morgan has been described as a “gerrymandering mastermind.”² In 2018, a federal district court invalidated eleven Virginia House of Delegates districts that Mr. Morgan helped to draw on the ground that the mapdrawers “subordinated traditional districting criteria to racial considerations.” *Bethune-Hill v. Va. State Bd. of Elections*, 326 F. Supp. 3d 128, 173 (E.D. Va. 2018). The court rejected Mr. Morgan’s claims that he “really didn’t take race into account” in drawing districts and found that “Morgan’s testimony was wholly lacking in credibility.” *Id.* at 174. The court explained that its “adverse credibility findings are not limited to particular assertions of” Mr. Morgan, “but instead wholly undermine the contents of ... [his] testimony.” *Id.* These findings were “outcome-determinative” in the case. *Id.*

Michigan 2021. The Legislative Defendants note that Mr. Morgan is currently engaged by the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. The proposal in that case, however, identified Mr. Morgan’s firm as “the top Republican map drawing firm” and the proposal described Mr. Morgan as a “subcontractor” to a prime contractor that “is sometimes viewed with Democratic leanings.” Election Data Services, Inc., *Proposal to Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission for Line Drawing and Redistricting Technical Services* at 1 (Feb. 10, 2021), https://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/MICRC_Election_Data_Services_717054_7.pdf. Mr. Morgan thus served as the “Republican” half of a “bi-partisan team,” not as a neutral and independent advisor. *Id.*

North Carolina 2011. Mr. Morgan was one of “four individuals engaged by the 2011 [North Carolina] General Assembly to draw maps,” along with “Dr. Thomas Hofeller.” Reply Br.

² Ben Paviour, Va. Pub. Media, *A Blank Slate & Familiar Face as Virginia Redistricting Begins New Maps*, Aug. 23, 2021, <https://vpm.org/news/articles/24853/a-blank-slate-and-familiar-face-as-virginia-redistricting-begins-new-maps> (quoting statement of Virginia Delegate Marcus Simon).

of Legislative Defendants, *Dickson v. Rucho*, 366 N.C. 332, 737 S.E.2d 362 (2013) (No. 201PA12) (filed July 6, 2012). The Legislative Defendants admitted, and the *Common Cause* Court found, that those 2011 plans were “designed to ensure Republican majorities in the House and Senate.” *Common Cause v. Lewis*, No. 18-CVS-014001, 2019 WL 4569584, at *4 (N.C. Super. Sep. 3, 2019). A federal court invalidated 28 of the districts in those plans as unconstitutional racial gerrymanders. *Covington v. North Carolina*, 316 F.R.D. 117, 124 (M.D.N.C. 2016), *summarily aff’d*, 137 S. Ct. 2211 (2017).

* * *

The NCLCV Plaintiffs respectfully submit that, given the critical and sensitive task before this Court, the Court should not select a Special Master whose background will inevitably spur legitimate questions about objectivity and neutrality—particularly given the many qualified candidates that the NCLCV Plaintiffs have identified.

Dated: February 10, 2022

JENNER & BLOCK LLP

Sam Hirsch*
Jessica Ring Amunson*
Kali Bracey*
Zachary C. Schauf*
Karthik P. Reddy*
Urja Mittal*
JENNER & BLOCK LLP
1099 New York Avenue NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 639-6000
shirsch@jenner.com
zschauf@jenner.com

David Bradford*
Benjamin J. Bradford*
JENNER & BLOCK LLP
353 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654
(312) 923-2975
dbradford@jenner.com

* *Admitted pro hac vice*

Respectfully submitted,

ROBINSON, BRADSHAW & HINSON, P.A.

/s/ Stephen D. Feldman

Stephen D. Feldman
North Carolina Bar No. 34940
ROBINSON, BRADSHAW & HINSON, P.A.
434 Fayetteville Street, Suite 1600
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 239-2600
sfeldman@robinsonbradshaw.com

Adam K. Doerr
North Carolina Bar No. 37807
ROBINSON, BRADSHAW & HINSON, P.A.
101 North Tryon Street, Suite 1900
Charlotte, NC 28246
(704) 377-2536
adoerr@robinsonbradshaw.com

Erik R. Zimmerman
North Carolina Bar No. 50247
ROBINSON, BRADSHAW & HINSON, P.A.
1450 Raleigh Road, Suite 100
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
(919) 328-8800
ezimmerman@robinsonbradshaw.com

Counsel for NCLCV Plaintiffs

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that the foregoing document was served upon each of the parties to this action by electronic mail to counsel at the e-mail addresses indicated below, in accordance with North Carolina Rule of Civil Procedure 5(b)(1)(a):

Burton Craige
Narendra K. Ghosh
Paul E. Smith
PATTERSON HARKAVY LLP
100 Europa Drive, Suite 420
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
bcraige@pathlaw.com
nghosh@pathlaw.com
psmith@pathlaw.com

Lalitha D. Madduri
Jacob D. Shelly
Graham W. White
ELIAS LAW GROUP LLP
10 G Street NE, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20002
lmadduri@elias.law
jshelly@elias.law
gwhite@elias.law

Abha Khanna
ELIAS LAW GROUP LLP
1700 Seventh Avenue, Suite 2100
Seattle, WA 98101
akhanna@elias.law

Elisabeth S. Theodore
R. Stanton Jones
John Cella
Samuel F. Callahan
ARNOLD AND PORTER KAYE SCHOLER LLP
601 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001-3743
elisabeth.theodore@arnoldporter.com
john.cella@arnoldporter.com
stanton.jones@arnoldporter.com
samuel.callahan@arnoldporter.com

Phillip J. Strach
Thomas A. Farr
Gregory P. McGuire
D. Martin Warf
John E. Branch III
Alyssa M. Riggins
Nathaniel J. Pencook
NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH LLP
4140 Parklake Avenue, Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27612
phillip.strach@nelsonmullins.com
tom.farr@nelsonmullins.com
greg.mcguire@nelsonmullins.com
martin.warf@nelsonmullins.com
john.branch@nelsonmullins.com
alyssa.riggins@nelsonmullins.com
nate.pencook@nelsonmullins.com

Mark E. Braden
Katherine McKnight
Patrick T. Lewis
Sean Sandoloski
Richard Raile
BAKER HOSTETLER LLP
1050 Connecticut Avenue NW,
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
mbraden@bakerlaw.com
kmcknight@bakerlaw.com
plewis@bakerlaw.com
ssandoloski@bakerlaw.com
rraile@bakerlaw.com

Counsel for Plaintiffs Representative Destin Hall, Senator Warren Daniel, Senator Ralph E. Hise, Jr., Senator Paul Newton, Representative Timothy K. Moore, and Senator Phillip E. Berger

*Counsel for Plaintiffs Rebecca Harper,
et al.*

Allison J. Riggs
Hilary H. Klein
Mitchell Brown
Katelin Kaiser
Jeffrey Loperfido
SOUTHERN COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
1415 W. Highway 54, Suite 101
Durham, NC 27707
allison@southerncoalition.org
hilaryhklein@scsj.org
mitchellbrown@scsj.org
katelin@scsj.org
jeffloperfido@scsj.org

J. Tom Boer
Olivia T. Molodanof
HOGAN LOVELLS US LLP
3 Embarcadero Center, Suite 1500
San Francisco, CA 94111
tom.boer@hoganlovells.com
olivia.molodanof@hoganlovells.com

Counsel for Plaintiff Common Cause

This 10th day of February, 2022.

Terence Steed
Stephanie Brennan
Amar Majmundar
N.C. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Post Office Box 629
Raleigh, NC 27502-0629
tsteed@ncdoj.gov
sbrennan@ncdoj.gov
amajmundar@ncdoj.gov

*Counsel for Defendants the North Carolina
State Board of Elections, Damon Circosta,
Stella Anderson, Jeff Carmon III, Stacy Eggers
IV, Tommy Tucker, Karen Brinson Bell; and the
State of North Carolina*

/s/ Stephen D. Feldman
Stephen D. Feldman