

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
NEWNAN DIVISION**

GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE
OF THE NAACP, as an
organization; JAMES C. BRAY; and
JAMES C. CLEMENTS,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD
OF ELECTIONS AND
REGISTRATION; HARMON
DAVID CALDWELL, MARY
MCGILL, and MARK SPRADLIN,
in their official capacities as
members of the Meriwether County
Board of Elections and Registration,

Defendants.

Civil Action No.

**COMPLAINT FOR
DECLARATORY
JUDGMENT
AND INJUNCTIVE
RELIEF**

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks declaratory and injunctive relief to address voting discrimination faced by Black voters in Meriwether County, Georgia. Despite constituting a substantial percentage of the county's population, Black voters are being denied an equal opportunity to elect candidates of choice to the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners ("Meriwether County Board") under the redistricting plan enacted in 2022 in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. § 10301.

2. The Meriwether County Board controls much of the county's government. The County Board is comprised of five commissioners, each of whom is elected from a single-member district to serve a four-year term.

3. More than 35% of Meriwether County's population is Black. Yet none of the five districts for the Meriwether County Board are drawn so as to provide Black voters with an equal opportunity to elect candidates of choice.

4. As a result, all of the members of the Meriwether County Board are white. There is no Black representation on the County Board.

5. Since the adoption of the 2022 redistricting plan, there have been three competitive elections (i.e., elections with more than one candidate in the general election) for Meriwether County Board seats. All three featured a white candidate running against a Black candidate. There has also been one competitive election for a seat on the Meriwether Board of Education, which employs the same district boundaries as the Meriwether County Board. That election also featured a white candidate running against a Black candidate. In all four of these competitive interracial elections, the Black candidates were defeated.

6. These outcomes are not the result of chance. Voting patterns are racially polarized in Meriwether County. Black communities demonstrate cohesion in voters' candidate preferences, and Black voters vote cohesively in support of

their preferred candidates. White voters typically vote as a bloc against and defeat Black-preferred candidates.

7. The 2022 redistricting process could have resulted in a different outcome. The districts for the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners could have been—and could readily be—redrawn to reflect the reality that the Black voting age population of Meriwether County is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute an effective majority in two out of five districts.

8. In fact, the Meriwether County Board and the Georgia Legislature were presented with an alternative redistricting plan in 2022 that would have provided for a better opportunity to have Black voter representation on the County Board. The Georgia State House Representative who introduced that alternative map also warned stakeholders that the 2022 redistricting plan risked reducing minority representation on the County Board. Local leadership quickly rejected the alternative plan, citing other purported reasons such as additional burdens on Meriwether County election officials. Instead, a majority of the County Board favored the 2022 redistricting plan over the objection of its sole Black Commissioner, who is, predictably, no longer in office. Not a single town hall was held prior to the adoption of this plan, nor was any community feedback publicly requested or considered.

9. Under the totality of the circumstances, including the historical, socioeconomic, and other electoral conditions that prevail in Meriwether County, the 2022 redistricting plan violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The dilution of Black votes under the 2022 redistricting plan continues the long history of discrimination against Black voters in Meriwether County, Georgia.

10. Plaintiffs bring this action pursuant to 52 U.S.C. § 10301 and 42 U.S.C. § 1983 to enjoin Defendants from conducting further elections under the 2022 redistricting plan for elections to the Meriwether County Board. Unless and until Meriwether County Board districts are redrawn in compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, the Court should remedy the harms to Plaintiffs and other Black residents by ordering the implementation of a new, lawful redistricting plan or election plan that ensures that all voters in Meriwether County are afforded an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

11. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because it arises under federal law. This Court also has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1343(a)(4) and 1357, because this is a civil action to secure equitable relief under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which is an Act of Congress that protects the right to vote. 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

12. Plaintiffs' action for declaratory and injunctive relief is authorized by 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202, and Rules 57 and 65 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Plaintiffs are entitled to relief under, among other provisions of law, 52 U.S.C. § 10301 and 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Upon prevailing, Plaintiffs will further be entitled to fees and costs pursuant to 52 U.S.C. § 10310(e) and 42 U.S.C. § 1988.

13. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendants, who are citizens of the State of Georgia.

14. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims has occurred in Meriwether County, which is located entirely within the Northern District of Georgia. Venue is also proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because the Defendants are being sued in their official capacities, and each Defendant maintains offices in the Northern District of Georgia.

PARTIES

15. Plaintiff GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE, INC. ("Georgia NAACP") is a non-partisan, non-profit membership organization that was founded in 1941. Its mission is to eliminate racial discrimination through democratic processes and ensure the equal political, educational, social, and economic rights of all persons, in particular African Americans. The Georgia

NAACP's work includes efforts to register, educate, and advocate on behalf of Black voters throughout Georgia. It is headquartered in Atlanta and has approximately 10,000 total members, most of whom identify as Black and are legally registered voters. Approximately one-hundred Georgia NAACP members currently live in Meriwether County, including Plaintiffs JAMES BRAY and JAMES CLEMENTS. The Georgia NAACP's membership includes Black voters who reside in all five of the Meriwether County Board districts. These members do not have the ability to elect candidates of their choice to the Meriwether County Board under the current districting scheme. Some of these Black Georgia NAACP members live in an area of Meriwether County that could constitute a remedial district in which an effective majority of the voting age population would be Black. That district would be located in and around Greenville, Woodbury, Lone Oak, and/or other portions of north-central Meriwether County. Furthermore, other Black Georgia NAACP members live in an area that could constitute a second remedial district in which an effective majority of the voting age population would be Black. That district would be located in southern Meriwether County in and around Manchester and Warm Springs. The voting strength of these Black members of the Georgia NAACP who reside in Meriwether County is diluted by the ongoing violation of Section 2 in Meriwether County.

16. JAMES BRAY is a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of Georgia. Mr. Bray has been registered to vote in Meriwether County for decades and he votes regularly. Mr. Bray is the former mayor of Greenville. Mr. Bray is Black. As a result of the 2022 redistricting map, Mr. Bray has been unable to elect candidates of his choice to the Meriwether County Board. Mr. Bray resides in the City of Greenville in dilutive Commissioner District 2. That area could constitute part of a remedial district in which an effective majority of the voting age population would be Black, which would provide a remedy for the existing Section 2 violations. That district would be located in and around Greenville, Woodbury, Lone Oak, and/or other portions of north-central Meriwether County.

17. Reverend JAMES CLEMENTS is a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of Georgia. Reverend Clements is registered to vote in Meriwether County and he is a regular voter. Reverend Clements works as a pastor and he is a veteran of the United States Army. Reverend Clements is Black. As a result of the 2022 redistricting map, Reverend Clements has been unable to elect candidates of his choice, in particular, candidates who represent the voice of the marginalized and disparaged citizens of Meriwether County, to the County Board. Reverend Clements resides in an unincorporated area of northwestern Meriwether County near Lone Oak, in dilutive Commissioner District 2. That area could constitute part of a remedial district in which an effective majority of the voting

age population would be Black, which would provide a remedy for the existing Section 2 violations. That district would be located in and around Greenville, Woodbury, Lone Oak, and/or other portions of north-central Meriwether County. In 2024, Reverend Clements ran for the position of Meriwether County Commissioner for District 2 but was defeated by current Commissioner Jennifer Snelson.

18. Defendant MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION (“Meriwether BOER”) has statutory powers, duties and responsibilities concerning Meriwether County elections. The Meriwether BOER oversees and is responsible for the administration of elections in Meriwether County, including elections for the Meriwether County Board under the 2022 redistricting plan at issue in this case. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-40.

19. Defendants HARMON DAVID CALDWELL, MARY MCGILL, and MARK SPRADLIN are members of the Meriwether County BOER. They are being sued in their official capacities.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Meriwether County’s Persistent and Extensive Socioeconomic Disparities Between Black and White Residents

20. Meriwether County has a total area of approximately 500 square miles, and it is predominantly rural. Municipalities in Meriwether County include

Greenville, the county seat, as well as Luthersville, Gay, Manchester, Warm Springs, and Woodbury.

21. According to the 2020 Census, the voting age population in Meriwether County is 16,526, approximately 35% of whom identify as non-Hispanic Black and approximately 60% of whom identify as non-Hispanic white.

22. According to the 2010 Census, the voting age population in Meriwether County was 16,784, approximately 37% of whom identified as non-Hispanic Black and approximately 60% of whom identified as non-Hispanic white.

23. Black residents of Meriwether County are economically disadvantaged as compared to the county's white residents. The median household income for Black residents is \$44,514. The county's white residents have a median household income of \$64,430, which is nearly 45% higher.

24. More than a quarter of Black Meriwether County residents (27%) have an income below the poverty level, compared to 15% of the county's white residents.

25. Over a third of Black Meriwether County residents (35%) receive food stamps or SNAP benefits, compared to 16% of the county's white residents.

26. Nearly one-third of Black Meriwether County residents (29%) between the ages of 18 and 65 do not have health insurance. The percentage of

white Meriwether County residents in that same age bracket who lack health insurance is 16%.

27. The Meriwether County School District serves approximately 4,100 students, the majority of whom are Black. The school district remains under a 2004 desegregation consent order from the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. The order arose out of a school desegregation suit filed by the United States on August 1, 1969, against the State of Georgia and 81 individual school districts, including the Meriwether County School District. In September 1969, the Court issued a detailed regulatory injunction requiring that each of the individual school districts establish a fully integrated school system in compliance with *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). In 2003, the Meriwether County School District filed a Petition for Declaration of Unitary Status, which would dissolve all injunctions under prior orders. Following discovery, the Court entered the 2004 consent order. That order declared that the Meriwether County School District had not complied with prior orders of the Court and, therefore, had not achieved unitary status in several areas. The order preserved injunctions related to the assignment of students to schools in the county, the assignment of students to classes and courses, facilities available to Black and white students, and staff hiring and assignments.

28. Meriwether County's public schools are disproportionately attended by the county's Black and other low-income students. The schools are extremely underfunded, and the county spends less than \$4,600 per student annually in instructional expenses. These public schools are poorly performing. For example, at Greenville High School, 64.2% of the student population is Black and over 92% of the students are economically disadvantaged. Only 5% of students demonstrate proficiency in mathematics, and only 15% of the school's students demonstrate proficiency in reading. Not a single student at Greenville High School has passed an Advanced Placement examination in any subject.

The Meriwether County Board of Commissioners Has Expansive Powers That Touch on Nearly Every Aspect of Meriwether County Residents' Lives

29. Under a system known as home rule, the Georgia Constitution generally grants county governments autonomy to govern, administer, and legislate local matters. The Georgia Constitution vests the governing authority of each county with legislative power to adopt ordinances, resolutions, or regulations relating to its property, affairs, and local government consistent with the Georgia Constitution and state law.

30. County governments such as the Meriwether County Board are granted broad authority under the Georgia Constitution and the Georgia Code that impact much of county residents' lives. For example, under Georgia law "[t]he governing authority of each county has original and exclusive jurisdiction over . . .

[t]he directing and controlling of all property of the county,” “[t]he levying of a general tax for general county purposes and a special tax for particular county purposes,” and “[t]he establishing, altering, or abolishing of all roads [and] bridges,” among other areas.

31. The specific duties and powers of the Meriwether County Board include “the management and control of County property and the transaction of business affairs of the county,” including by “[a]dopting rules and policies,” “[a]ppointing members to County Board committees,” “[a]pproving capital improvement plans,” “[a]uthorizing expenditures,” “[e]nsuring citizen concerns are met,” “[e]stablishing a budget and levying taxes to finance County services,” “[m]aking land-use decisions,” “[m]anaging county roads, buildings, and property,” “[p]lanning land use within the county,” “[p]roviding assistance to constituents as their elected representative,” “[s]erving as employer for County personnel,” and “[s]erving on several other committees and boards.” In addition, the Meriwether County Board hires influential County employees, including the County Administrator, the Building and Zoning Director, the County Clerk, the Emergency Management Director, the Fire/Rescue (EMS) Chief, the Finance Director, and the Public Works Director.

The 2022 Redistricting Plan Dilutes Meriwether County's Black Voters

32. The 2022 redistricting plan was drawn based on the results of the 2020 Census.

33. According to the 2020 Census, approximately 35% of Meriwether County's voting age population identifies as Black.

34. At the time of the redistricting process, there were four white Meriwether County Commissioners and one Black Commissioner, Shirley Hines, who represented District 1.

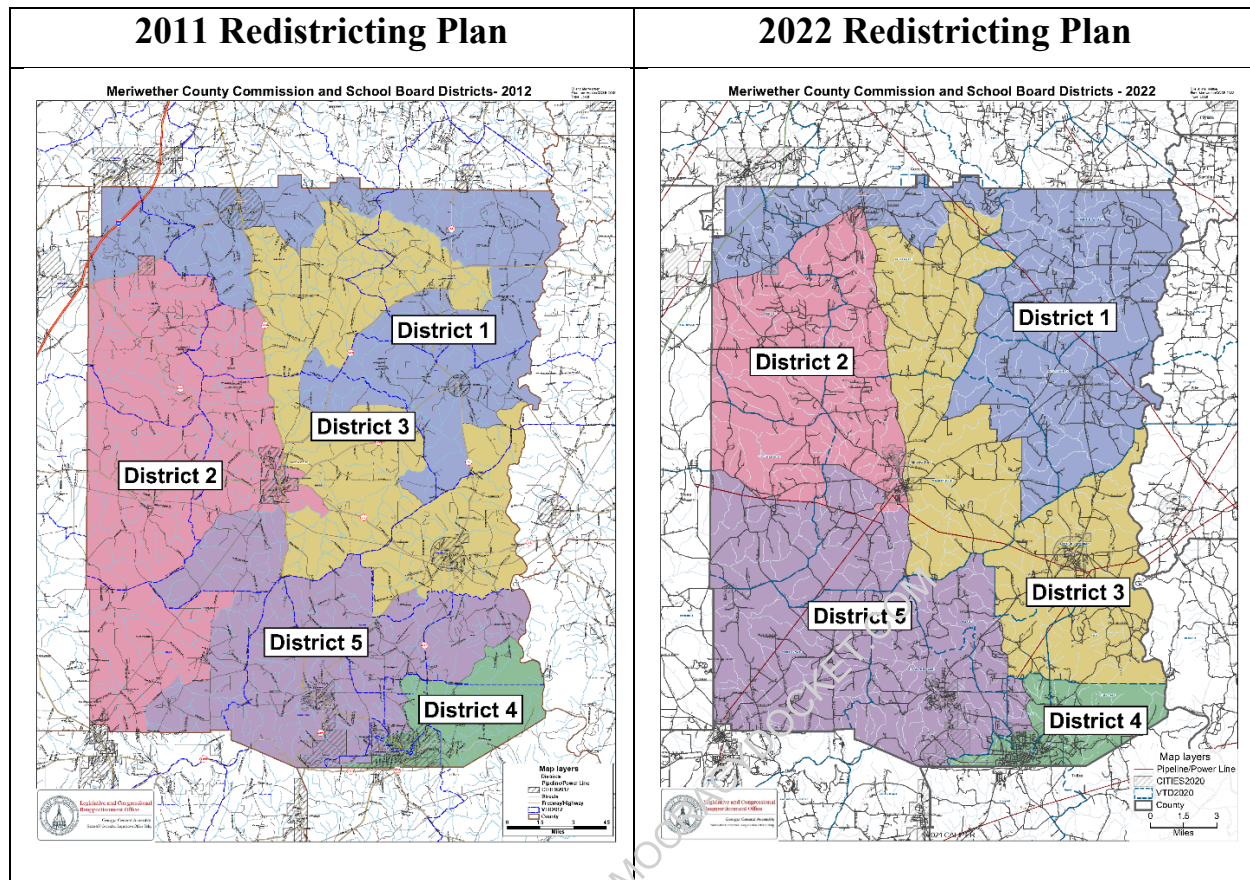
35. On October 26, 2021, the Meriwether County Board voted in favor of requesting that State Representative Debbie Buckner serve as the county's Legislative Sponsor and work with the Georgia Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office ("LCRO") on developing a redistricting plan.

36. The LCRO drafted a map that, relative to the 2010 Census, reduced the Black voting age population in the two districts that had the most Black voters. The 2022 redistricting plan dismantled District 1, the only district represented by a Black Commissioner at the time; the 2022 plan reduced the Black voting age population substantially, down from 44.4% (based on the 2010 Census) to just 28.7%. The new plan also reduced the Black voting age population in District 2 from 50.2% (based on the 2010 Census) to 50.1%.

37. Black voters do not have an opportunity to elect a candidate of choice in any of the five Commissioner districts under Meriwether County's current redistricting plan.

Comparison of the 2011 and 2022 Redistricting Plans Based on the Black Voting Age Population					
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
2011 plan (based on the 2010 Census)	44.4%	50.2%	29.7%	37.2%	25.3%
2022 plan (based on the 2020 Census)	28.7%	50.1%	31.1%	40.0%	27.2%

38. While Representative Buckner purportedly asked the LCRO to produce a "minimal change map," the plan she proposed, which was ultimately enacted by the Georgia Legislature, made significant changes to the district boundaries for all five County Board districts.



39. Neither Representative Buckner nor anyone else consulted with Black community leaders in Meriwether County in the course of developing the redistricting plan that was ultimately enacted.

40. On the other hand, State House Representative David Jenkins, the other state representative whose district covers Meriwether County, consulted with Black community leaders and separately worked with the LCRO to create a different redistricting plan. Representative Jenkins' redistricting plan would have created a stronger Black-majority district, with a Black voting age population of 52.4%. On December 13, 2021, Representative Jenkins submitted a letter

addressed to the “Meriwether Redistricting Stakeholders” raising concerns about Representative Buckner’s map. *See* Exhibit A.

41. Representative Jenkins’ letter said, among other things, that “[t]he effect of this map is that for the first time since the Federal Courts required Meriwether County to elect commissioners in districts as opposed to electing them at large, Meriwether County will have no minority commissioners in its governing body.” He also objected that the districts were not compact and divided communities in the north end of the county.

42. On December 14, 2021, Representative Buckner, Representative Jenkins, Senator Randy Robertson, and Bryan Knight of the LCRO attended a meeting of the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners where they—and a handful of key county officials—discussed Representative Buckner’s and Representative Jenkins’ redistricting plans. This meeting was a “work session” that was not open to members of the general public. *See* Exhibit B.

43. According to the minutes from the December 14 meeting, Mr. Knight represented that the LCRO could not create a map in which two districts had a majority-Black voting age population. There is no evidence in the public record that the LCRO provided any analysis to support this conclusion. On information and belief, no outside experts were consulted to determine whether a map with two majority-Black districts could be created.

44. According to the minutes, when Representative Jenkins' alternative redistricting proposal was raised for discussion at the December 14 meeting, certain County officials raised purported administrative concerns with Representative Jenkins' map. Meriwether County Special Projects Director Theron Gay objected that Representative Jenkins' proposed map would cause a tremendous amount of work for the Elections Office. Meriwether County Election Supervisor Patty Threadgill also voiced concern that Representative Jenkins' map would result in "a lot of re-do on the map," apparently referring to the need to designate county voters to the correct district and other election administration changes.

45. According to the meeting minutes, Senator Randy Robertson pushed back on that point, asserting that Election Supervisor Threadgill could make the changes necessary to implement Representative Jenkins' map.

46. On December 28, 2021, Representative Buckner's redistricting map was presented to the Meriwether County Board for a vote. *See* Exhibit C. According to the meeting minutes, when the Board Chairman asked if any of the Commissioners had comments, Commissioner Hines, the only Black Commissioner, suggested that the Board should have hosted Town Hall meetings to allow for citizen input and feedback. Four of the five Commissioners then voted in favor of approving Representative Buckner's redistricting plan. Commissioner

Hines opposed the motion. Representative Jenkins' alternative redistricting plan was never formally presented to the Meriwether County Board for a vote.

47. On January 12, 2022, the Board Chairman moved to approve a resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation present Representative Buckner's redistricting map for enactment by the General Assembly. Four of the five Commissioners voted in favor of the motion; Commissioner Hines again opposed.

48. Representative Buckner's redistricting map was filed in the General Assembly as Senate Bill 386. The Senate Committee on State and Local Governmental Operations favorably reported Senate Bill 386 on February 2, 2022, and it passed the Senate the following day.

49. The Georgia Legislature passed Senate Bill 386 using an atypical process different from the one that legislators employ to enact nearly all local redistricting plans.

50. Local redistricting bills are typically assigned to the House Committee on Intragovernmental Coordination, which, on a routine basis, favorably reports bills that have the support of the county's local delegation under a practice known as "local courtesy." The "local delegation" includes the Georgia State Representatives and Senators who represent districts within the relevant county.

51. But the Meriwether County redistricting bill, Senate Bill 386, was just one of a handful of local redistricting bills that were referred to the House Governmental Affairs Committee, which has no local courtesy rules and can favorably report redistricting bills notwithstanding opposition from the local delegation.

52. The House Governmental Affairs Committee favorably reported Senate Bill 386 on February 15, 2022, and it was passed by the House on February 17.

53. Representative Jenkins, the only Georgia state legislator who lives in Meriwether County, voted against Senate Bill 386.

54. On March 2, 2022, the Governor signed Senate Bill 386 into law.

55. Earlier in the session, Representative Jenkins separately filed his redistricting plan for the Meriwether County Board as House Bill 1098. That bill was referred to the House Committee on Intragovernmental Coordination on February 1, 2022, but never received a vote.

The 2022 Redistricting Plan Deprives Black Voters of any Meaningful Opportunity to Elect Preferred Candidates and Has Resulted in an All-White Board of Commissioners

56. Black voters in Meriwether County have been unable to elect a single Black Commissioner since the enactment of the 2022 redistricting plan.

57. Today, the Meriwether County Board is comprised of five white Commissioners: District 1 Commissioner Gene King; District 2 Commissioner Jennifer Snelson; Vice Chairman and District 3 Commissioner Emmett Collins; District 4 Commissioner Bryan Threadgill; and Chairman and District 5 Commissioner Adam Worsley.

58. As explained below, Black voters have no meaningful opportunity to elect candidates of their choice in any of the five County Board electoral districts under the 2022 redistricting map.

59. **District 1:** While District 1 had a Black voting age population of 44.4% following the post-2010 Census redistricting of Meriwether County's Board of Commissioner districts, and had been represented by a Black Commissioner prior to the implementation of the 2022 redistricting plan, the 2022 redistricting map sharply curtailed the Black voting age population. The voting age population in District 1 is now 28.7% Black. One Board of Commissioner election has been held in District 1 since the 2022 redistricting plan went into effect. In that election, a Black candidate named Katrina Robertson ran and received only 29.9% of the votes cast. Ms. Robertson lost to Gene King, a white candidate, who received 70.1% of the vote.

60. **District 2:** Under the 2022 redistricting plan, District 2 has a Black voting age population of 50.1%. In the 2024 election for the position of District 2

Commissioner, the Black candidate, Reverend James Clements, lost to the white candidate. Rev. Clements received 49.7% of the votes cast, while the white candidate received 50.3% of the vote. In the November 2024 election, white turnout exceeded Black turnout and white voters constituted a plurality of voters living in District 2 who cast a ballot. This is consistent with voting patterns in Meriwether County, where, due in part to the legacy of discrimination and current social, economic, and political realities, white turnout exceeds Black voter turnout. Indeed, under the 2011 plan, in which District 2 had a Black voting age population of 50.2% according to the 2010 Census, a white candidate, Rosla Plant, defeated a Black opponent in the 2020 County Commissioner District 2 election.

61. **District 3:** The Black voting age population in District 3 is 31.1% under the 2022 redistricting plan, a small increase from 29.7% under the 2011 plan, leaving Black voters firmly in the minority. In the 2022 election for the position of District 3 Commissioner, the Black candidate, Navarus Jamaal Mahone, lost to a white candidate by a wide margin. Mahone garnered 29.1% of the votes cast, while Emmett Collins captured 70.9% of the vote. District 3 has never been represented by a Black county commissioner.

62. **District 4:** The Black voting age population for District 4 is 40.0%. While the Black voting age population increased slightly under the 2022 redistricting map, from 37.2% under the 2011 map, District 4 is not a minority

opportunity district. In the 2024 election for the position of District 4 Commissioner, incumbent commissioner Bryan Threadgill, who is white, ran unopposed. District 4 has never been represented by a Black county commissioner.

63. **District 5:** The Black voting age population in District 5 is 27.2%, the lowest out of all five districts under the 2022 redistricting plan. Under the 2011 map, the Black voting age population was 25.3%. In the 2022 election for the position of District 5 Commissioner, Adam Worsley, who is white, ran unopposed. District 5 has never been represented by a Black county commissioner.

Each of the Three *Gingles* Preconditions for Establishing a Section 2 Vote Dilution Claim Is Satisfied With Respect to the 2022 Meriwether County Board Redistricting Plan

64. The United States Supreme Court, in *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30 (1986), identified three necessary preconditions for a claim of vote dilution under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act: (1) the minority group must be “sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single-member district”; (2) the minority group must be “politically cohesive”; and (3) the majority must vote “sufficiently as a bloc to enable it . . . usually to defeat the minority’s preferred candidate.” *Id.* at 50-51. Plaintiffs satisfy all three *Gingles* preconditions.

Gingles I: The Districting Map for the Meriwether County Board Can Be Redrawn to Include Two Majority-Black Districts, or One District with a Significantly More Robust Black Majority and One Minority Opportunity District

65. The current redistricting plan unnecessarily divides Black voters between the five single-member Commissioner districts, preventing them from combining to form a strong enough majority in any district to have an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of choice.

66. With respect to the first *Gingles* precondition, Meriwether County's Black population is sufficiently numerous and geographically compact to constitute a majority of the voting age population in two of the five Meriwether County Board districts.

67. One of those districts would be located in and around Greenville, Woodbury, Lone Oak, and/or other portions of north-central Meriwether County. This district would include territory that is within Districts 1, 2, and 3 under the current Board of Commissioner plan.

68. This remedial district can be drawn with a Black voting age population of more than 53%—substantially higher than in any district that exists under the 2022 redistricting plan.

69. The second majority-Black voting age population district would be located in southern Meriwether County in and around Manchester and Warm

Springs. This district would include territory that is within Districts 4 and 5 under the current Board of Commissioner plan.

70. While the LCRO claimed that it would not be possible to draw a map for the Meriwether County Board that includes two majority-minority districts, it is in fact entirely feasible to draw a districting map for the Meriwether County Board that adheres to traditional redistricting principles such as contiguity, compactness, protecting communities of interest, and core retention while including two majority-Black districts.

Gingles II and III: Black Voters' Preferred Candidates Are Typically Defeated by White Bloc Voting in Racially Polarized Elections

71. Voting is racially polarized across Meriwether County.

72. Black communities demonstrate substantial cohesion in voters' candidate preferences. Black voters tend to vote for the same candidates, comprising a politically cohesive minority voting bloc in Meriwether County.

73. In interracial Meriwether County elections, Black voters typically strongly support Black candidates.

74. Meanwhile, white voters typically support white candidates (and oppose Black candidates) in interracial Meriwether County elections. This leads to the defeat of Black-preferred candidates because white voters constitute a majority of the electorate.

75. Data from interracial elections demonstrates the extent of this racial polarization in Meriwether County. For example:

- a. In the 2024 election for the position of Meriwether County Tax Commissioner, the incumbent Commissioner, who is white, defeated Calandra “Shae” Tenney, who is Black. The white candidate captured 65% of the votes cast, while Ms. Tenney garnered 35% of the vote. An analysis indicates that Ms. Tenney received overwhelming support from Black voters while the white candidate received overwhelming support from white voters.
- b. In the 2024 election for the position of Meriwether County Coroner, a white candidate defeated Kristian Ellis, who is Black. The white candidate captured 59% of the votes cast, while Mr. Ellis garnered 41% of the vote. An analysis indicates that Mr. Ellis received overwhelming support from Black voters while the white candidate received overwhelming support from white voters.
- c. In the 2022 election for the District 3 seat on the Meriwether County Board of Education, a white candidate defeated Wacheicqua Watson, who is Black. The white candidate garnered 69.4% of the votes cast, while Ms. Watson garnered 30.6 % of the votes. An analysis indicates that Ms. Watson received

overwhelming support from Black voters while the white candidate received overwhelming support from white voters.

- d. In the 2020 election for the position of Meriwether County Tax Commissioner, a white candidate defeated Tiffany Prather, who is Black. The white candidate garnered 54% of the votes cast, while Ms. Prather garnered 46% of the votes. An analysis indicates that Ms. Prather received overwhelming support from Black voters while the white candidate received overwhelming support from white voters.

76. White bloc voting regularly causes the candidates preferred by Black voters to lose elections in Meriwether County.

The Totality of the Circumstances Confirms That Black Voters Have Less Opportunity Than White Voters to Participate in the Political Process and Elect Representatives of Their Choice

77. The totality of the circumstances makes clear that Black voters in Meriwether County have less opportunity than white voters to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice to the Meriwether County Board.

78. The 2022 redistricting plan for the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners lacks proportionality in that the percentage of districts in which

Black voters constitute an effective majority is less than the Black percentage of Meriwether County's voting age population.

79. An analysis of the facts under the "Senate Factors" demonstrates that the challenged districting scheme dilutes Black voting strength.

Senate Factor 1: History of Official Voting-Related Discrimination

80. Meriwether County and the State of Georgia have a long and extensive history of voting discrimination against Black voters.

81. As federal courts have recognized, "[r]acism and race discrimination were . . . the norm" in Georgia. *Brooks v. State Bd. of Elections*, 848 F. Supp. 1548, 1560 (S.D. Ga. 1994). Racism in Georgia "was ratified into state constitutions, enacted into state statutes, and promulgated in state policy." *Id.*; see also *Georgia State Conf. of NAACP v. Fayette Cnty. Bd. of Comm'rs*, 950 F. Supp. 2d 1294 (N.D. Ga. 2013), *vacated and remanded on other grounds*, 775 F.3d 1336 (11th Cir. 2015).

82. In 1976, Meriwether County was certified by the U.S. Attorney General for the appointment of federal observers to monitor local elections. Meriwether County is one of 29 Georgia counties to have received such a designation.¹

¹ Following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), the Department of Justice is no longer relying on the Attorney

83. In 1984, Meriwether County plaintiffs, including the Meriwether County Voter Education Project, secured a consent decree in a Voting Rights Act action against the Meriwether County Board of Education challenging the adoption of at-large elections for the election of members of the Board of Education. Consent Decree, *Meriwether Voter Educ. Project, et al v. Hicks, et al*, No. C84-117-N (N.D. Ga. Oct. 16, 1984).

84. Meriwether County plaintiffs, including the Meriwether County Voter Education Project, again secured a consent decree in 1987 in a Voting Rights Act lawsuit enjoining an unlawful method of electing members of the Manchester Board of Commissioners and requiring the creation of a Black-majority voting district. Consent Decree, *Meriwether Voter Educ. Project, et al v. Manchester, et al*, No. 3:86-cv-00006-GET, Dkt. 5 (N.D. Ga. Dec. 31, 1987). The consent decree stated that the at-large method of electing members of the Manchester Board of Commissioners violated Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act, as well as the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

Senate Factor 2: The Extent of Racial Polarization

85. Voting patterns in Meriwether County elections reflect stark racial polarization. Black voters in Meriwether County are politically cohesive and

General's certifications as a basis for sending federal observers to monitor elections.

overwhelmingly support the same candidates in county elections, including in elections for the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners.

86. The white majority usually votes as a bloc in County elections with the usual result of defeating Black voters' candidates of choice. White bloc voting in Meriwether County regularly causes the candidate preferred by Black voters to lose.

87. The racially polarized nature of voting patterns in Meriwether County is evidenced by Black candidates' consistent lack of success in competitive countywide elections.

Senate Factor 3: Use of At-large Elections, Majority Vote Requirements, and Other Discrimination-Enhancing Mechanisms

88. Elections for members of the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners feature voting practices that enhance the opportunity for discrimination against Black voters, including staggered terms and a majority-vote requirement.

Senate Factor 5: Effects of Georgia's History of Discrimination

89. Black residents of Meriwether County bear the effects of discrimination in such areas as housing, employment, and health, which hinder their ability to participate effectively in the political process.

90. Black residents in Meriwether County lag behind the county's white residents in terms of income, homeownership, education, and other metrics. The

median income for the county's Black residents is 31% less than that of the county's white residents. A substantially higher percentage of Black residents have incomes below the poverty level (27% as compared with 15% of white residents). Over a third of the county's Black residents receive government assistance for food purchases in the form of food stamps or SNAP benefits, while less than a sixth of the county's white residents receive such benefits. The county's white residents are also far more likely to own a home or have health insurance than the county's Black residents. All of these socioeconomic disparities are correlated with increased burdens on effective political participation.

91. Children of the county's Black residents disproportionately attend underfunded schools with poor educational outcomes. Public schools in majority-Black areas in Meriwether County are under-resourced—a disparity exacerbated by the disproportionate effect of housing inequality, underemployment, and lower incomes for Black Meriwether County residents on the local tax base. Education is correlated with political participation, and the lack of access to quality education further restricts Black Meriwether County residents' engagement with the political process.

92. These ongoing effects burden the ability of Black voters in Meriwether County to participate in politics and, at least in part, explain the fact

that white turnout exceeds Black turnout in Meriwether County, including in elections for the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners.

Senate Factor 7: Lack of Success of Black Candidates for Office

93. Since the adoption of the 2022 districting plan, not a single Black candidate has been elected to serve on the Meriwether County Board, and the Black candidate lost the only interracial election for a seat on the Meriwether County Board of Education, which uses the same electoral districts.

94. The Meriwether County Board is comprised of five white Commissioners, and every elected countywide office is also held by a white individual.

95. Upon information and belief, no Black candidate has *ever* prevailed in a contested interracial election for an at-large position in Meriwether County. Despite the county's sizable Black voting age population, not a single elected countywide officer is Black. Meriwether County's Sheriff, Tax Commissioner and Coroner are all white.

96. Although there are two Black members on the Meriwether County Board of Education, these Black members have never had a contested election.

Senate Factor 8: Significant Lack of Responsiveness

97. As described above, racial disparities in employment, education, housing, health, and criminal justice have plagued Meriwether County for

generations. Yet, the Meriwether County leadership has often opposed specific policies that might ameliorate the challenges faced by Black residents.

98. For example, Black residents have raised concerns that the Meriwether County Board is not responsive to their community's needs on important issues involving the allocation of County resources and facilities, such as road repairs, the availability of emergency services, and recreation funding.

99. These examples of non-responsiveness to the concerns of Black voters (among others not detailed here) further demonstrates that Black voters are disadvantaged in the political process and in electing representatives of their choice.

Senate Factor 9: Tenuous Policy Justification for the Challenged Practice

100. Lastly, the interests asserted in support of passing the current district lines were tenuous at best.

101. There was no strong policy justification cited by the Meriwether County Commissioners for supporting the 2022 redistricting plan over alternatives that would have better protected Black voting power, including Representative Jenkins' proposal.

102. Representative Buckner's initial request that the LCRO create a "minimal change map" was not met by the 2022 redistricting plan, which deviated significantly from the boundaries and demographics of the 2011 redistricting plan.

103. Map drawers inaccurately said that a second majority-minority district could not be drawn. There is no evidence in the public record supporting this assertion. On information and belief, no outside experts were consulted to determine whether a map with two majority-Black districts could be created.

104. The Meriwether County Board and other redistricting stakeholders failed to hold a town hall to discuss redistricting prior to the meeting in which the map was approved. The decision not to hold a town hall is particularly striking in light of the concerns raised by Representative Jenkins and others that the 2022 redistricting plan would dilute Black voting power.

105. One of the primary reasons given by Meriwether County Board administrators for not considering Representative Jenkins' map involved the administrative challenge of implementing changes that would result from a more substantial redrawing of the district lines. Such administrative burdens do not constitute a valid interest that outweighs the need to provide Black Meriwether County residents with a full and fair opportunity to elect candidates of their choice.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE:

VIOLATION OF SECTION 2 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

(52 U.S.C. § 10301 AND 42 U.S.C. § 1983) (Against All Defendants)

106. The allegations contained in the preceding paragraphs 1 through 105 are re-alleged as if fully set forth herein.

107. Under the totality of the circumstances, the 2022 redistricting plan for the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners does not afford Black residents, including Plaintiffs and/or their members, an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.

108. Accordingly, the challenged districting scheme results in the denial or abridgement of Plaintiffs' and/or their members' right to vote on account of their race and color by diluting their voting strength as Black residents of Meriwether County, all in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. § 10301.

109. Plaintiffs are entitled to redress from this violation of their federal rights, including pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

110. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law. Unless the conduct of elections under the Meriwether County Board's current electoral districts is enjoined and a remedial map or another election plan is adopted, Plaintiffs will be

irreparably harmed by being subjected to racial vote dilution in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request that the Court:

- A. Declare that the 2022 redistricting plan presently used in electing the members of the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act;
- B. Preliminarily and permanently enjoin Defendants, their agents and successors in office, and all persons acting in concert with, or as an agent of, any Defendants in this action, from administering, implementing, or conducting any future Board of Commissioner elections in Meriwether County, Georgia, under the 2022 redistricting plan;
- C. Order the implementation of a new redistricting plan or election plan for the Meriwether County Board of Commissioners that complies with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, and, if Defendants fail to enact or adopt a valid plan by the Court's deadline, order the adoption of a remedial plan that does not abridge or dilute the ability of Black voters to elect candidates of their choice;
- D. Order, if necessary, an interim electoral plan for future elections;

- E. Award Plaintiffs their costs, expenses, and disbursements, and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in bringing this action pursuant to and in accordance with 52 U.S.C. § 10310(e) and 42 U.S.C. § 1988;
- F. Retain jurisdiction over this matter until Defendants have complied with all orders and mandates of this Court; and
- G. Grant such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

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Dated: October 9, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Gail Podolsky

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Exhibit A

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STANDING COMMITTEES
BUDGET & FISCAL AFFAIRS OVERSIGHT
PUBLIC SAFETY HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION

December 13, 2021

Meriwether Redistricting Stakeholders;

I have reviewed the draft of the Meriwether County Redistricting maps prepared for Representative Buckner. This written input is provided since I am unable to attend the meeting on December 14th.

This map places the only minority commissioner serving in Meriwether County in a district that is only about 28% minority providing no reasonable opportunity to be reelected when her term expires next year.

The majority minority district created will have no opportunity to elect a minority commissioner for three years.

In addition, this map creates no minority opportunity districts, something that one would expect in a county with 35% of its population in the minority.

The effect of this map is that for the first time since the Federal Courts required Meriwether County to elect commissioners in districts as opposed to electing them at large, Meriwether County will have no minority commissioners in its governing body.

The second issue I have with the map is that the districts are not compact and divide communities of interest primarily in the north end of the county. The most extreme example is the panhandle created in the northwest portion of the county that removes the only minority commissioner from the only majority minority district.

I have provided HD 132 Draft 2 maps for consideration. These have been updated with incumbent protection. This map has one majority minority district and one minority opportunity district. The resulting map also contains districts that are more compact, contiguous and better group communities of interest than HD 137 Draft 2 map.

David Jenkins

Exhibit B

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MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

December 14, 2021 - 4:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Shirley Hines, Rosla Plant, and Beth Neely-Hadley

Staff Present: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, Special Projects Director Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, County Attorney Nathan Lee, and Election Supervisor Patty Threadgill

Invited guest present: State Senator Randy Robertson, State House Representative Debbie Buckner, and State House Representative David Jenkins

Bryan Knight from the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office participated by Zoom

Staff Absent: Finance Director Bill Gregory

I. WELCOME – Chairman Threadgill, 4:00 p.m.

II. NEW BUSINESS

1. Chairman Threadgill stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss redistricting. Chairman Threadgill then turned the meeting over to Representative Debbie Buckner. Representative Buckner stated she is joined by Senator Randy Robertson and Representative David Jenkins would be arriving shortly. Representative Buckner was aware that Meriwether County had attended the online training sessions for redistricting. There are two steps to this process resulting from the Census. District lines must be redrawn in the Senate, House, Congress, School Board and County due to people moving. The House and Senate in Atlanta has already drawn District lines and Congressional maps have been completed. After receiving the Census Data, you must decide on what size the Districts will be. This happens when you divide the number of districts by the population. Every district must be as close to the same size as possible. Representative Jenkins arrived. Representative Buckner stated District areas sometimes have to be reapportioned. Usually, for Counties and Commissions like this, the Legislator from the area will go to the Reapportionment Office and ask for a minimal change map. The minimal change map takes the current map and makes sure the population in those districts are the right number with the new Census numbers. Representative Buckner requested a redistricting map for Meriwether County that was a minimal change. Due to a shift in population it had to be a little bit more than minimal. Bryan Knight, from the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office in Atlanta, worked with Representative Buckner and with Representative Jenkins on the map he had drawn and is proposing. Representative Buckner stated whether it is one of these maps or a map that the County had drawn, it is the local responsibility to draw the map and submit it to the Legislature for approval. It goes to the reapportionment office before it comes on the House floor for discussion and passage to make sure that everything is accounted for and divided the way they should be by district.

Senator Robertson stated he wanted to make sure everyone understood the technical issues based on the map in case it needs to be adjusted. Adjustments and details were on the back of the small map provided. Senator Robertson stated they take the maps to the Reapportionment Office, and that office works out the new lines and checks all the numbers. They are under guidance of the Federal law related to the Voters Right Act. Senator Robertson stated when this starts they all hire their own Attorneys for marching orders as to what they, as elected officials, should do to stay within the law. They lean heavily on the expertise of the Reapportionment Office and Mr. Knight is available to answer any of the technical questions the Board may have.

Representative Buckner explained the three maps provided, the current map, the proposed map by Representative Jenkins and the draft Meriwether County CC/SB proposal were discussed. Most Counties that Representative Buckner has worked with start with the minimal and then adjust from there. None of

the Commissioners are drawn in the same District but are actually drawn into a District core of where each has been serving. They tried to fix as many split precincts as they could.

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley asked if the Board could get the population summary for the current District map. Mr. Knight shared the document on his screen as well as emailing it to the Clerk.

Commissioner Hines asked for more information regarding the precincts. Patty Threadgill explained that a split precinct has multiple Districts in it which creates more ballots. Senator Robertson provided more insight on this. Commissioner Hines stated on the old map Districts may split in the middle of the road. Senator Robertson stated they tried to keep as many communities together as possible and they looked at the community and county boundaries when drawing the map. There was additional discussion and explanation of this process.

Representative Jenkins stated on the map, they look for compact contiguous districts so that it does not divide communities of interest. The incumbent protection is basically that you protect all incumbents, or you protect no incumbents. This is necessary to keep from having a lawsuit. There was additional conversation in comparing the current population summary to what the new one is following the 2020 Census count.

Representative Buckner read from the documents provided and pointed out the population summary along with the deviation two districts have with documents provided population changes. Representative Jenkins stated the other significant thing involves the Voting Rights Act and the minority population and where that has moved. Representative Jenkins stated there is no Majority/Minority District in this County currently with those numbers unless he was reading them wrong. Representative Buckner understood there was one and asked Mr. Knight to speak on this. Representative Jenkins stated this was prior to redistricting and he did not see a prior number above 50%. Representative Buckner stated it was in how you define a minority, as all Black or all Hispanic, Black, and Non-White population and if counted together then there possibly could be a Majority/Minority district with all included together. They stated they would need to verify if District 2 would be that. A printed copy of the population summary was provided to the Board.

Mr. Knight explained where the Majority/Minority District was and where the new maps have Majority/Minority starting with the 2012 map with the 2020 data overlay. The largest African American, excluding other minorities population is in District 2 (44.05%) and the second is in District 4 (40.68%). This was based on the current district data. There was interest from all parties in abiding by the VRA in trying to get one of those Districts up to about 50%. Mr. Knight stated his office uses the non-Hispanic population calculation. One way of looking at it is that it is the lowest amount of African American population depending how you take into account multiple race population and Hispanic population, the African American population could be considered higher than this. This would be the lowest it would be. District 2 on both maps represents more African American. In the 18137 Map, District 2 is above 50% minority and on the District 132 Map, District 1 is above.

Chairman Threadgill asked what the next steps were. Representative Buckner stated the Board would need to decide what they want. Senator Robertson confirmed with Mr. Knight that from the 2021 Map we had two Majority/Minority Districts. Senator Robertson stated based on 2010 population, and looking at the effective 2012 map, there were two Majority/Minority districts. Mr. Knight confirmed District 2 was the only Majority/Minority district. They could not get two districts the same above 50%. Representative Jenkins stated the question was based on the 2010 Census, the way it was prior to the population shift. Representative Buckner stated with the new proposal on the Map from Representative Jenkins, there would be a Majority/Minority District in District 1 and you would almost have one in District 5. Special Projects Director, Theron Gay, stated he felt with that with Mr. Jenkins configuration it would cause a

tremendous amount of work for the Elections Office. Chairman Threadgill stated with all the Board overlapping if it goes into effect they do not represent their people anymore. Examples were given such as District 4 would be elected by Manchester in the upcoming election. Representative Jenkins stated this map includes incumbent protection and their constituents may change as it did in the House and Senate as a result of the new maps last year. Special Projects Director, Theron Gay, felt this configuration will cause a lot of issues if Meriwether County follows the outline. Ms. Threadgill stated it is a lot of re-do on the map and includes the incumbent. Senator Robertson stated he had seen both maps and he was logical and not a politician. Every ten years the paperwork changes and previously Senator Robertson had part of Troup County but now has all of Troup County. Senator Robertson gave an example of the change. Senator Robertson understood the concerns shared by both Theron Gay and Patty Threadgill, but the reality is that Ms. Threadgill is just as professional as any other Election Supervisor. Representative Jenkins stated the instructions from the Joint Redistricting Office was to keep old precinct lines where possible and provide incumbent protection. Ms. Threadgill gave an example of a Board of Education member living in an area that would no longer be their district. Theron Gay stated what we are looking at is a population decrease of about 500 people and it makes better sense to tweak this map rather than wipe it clean. Representative Jenkins stated when you get into the maps sometimes you have a lot less options. He then provided examples.

Commissioner Plant wanted clarification. District 2 has highest percentage from the previous Census, and it will also have the highest percentage of the current one. Commissioner Plant stated they are basically drawing her out of her District. There was several maps and one had been on Facebook. Ms. Threadgill directed everyone to the maps that were provided today including the minimal change map from Representative Buckner. Commissioner Plant asked why we have to go so drastic with District 2 since we have been and are currently fine with minimal changes. Representative Jenkins stated to preserve a Majority/Minority District and not abide the community of interest across the north end of the County.

Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated if you have a Majority/Minority District you can't dictate to the people how they vote. Commissioner Plant may be in a Majority/Minority District, but they elected her just like where Commissioner Hines is now. She is not in the Majority/Minority District but was elected anyway. Representative Jenkins stated the population shifts and they should have the opportunity to change again. Senator Robertson addressed Commissioner Neely-Hadley and stated he said the same thing to some of the Attorneys in Atlanta and was told that is not the way the Courts look at it. Commissioner Plant asked where her District was on the map from Representative Jenkins. Representative Jenkins confirmed Commissioner Plant's home was in her District on the new map. Representative Jenkins stated we draw these maps for the community not for the politicians. The overall concern is to give the Communities Districts that represents their Communities.

Chairman Threadgill asked Representative Jenkins if he had given them a map, and did he draw out the map stating, "this is how I would like it to look." Representative Jenkins stated no. Chairman Threadgill asked how they came up with his map. Mr. Knight stated Representative Jenkins asked to define the map, have clearly defined boundaries, maintain VRA status Districts, and maintain the incumbents in their existing Districts. Representative Buckner asked Mr. Knight to explain how we have County Commission and School Boards having longer terms of office and not drawing a map to draw people out of their unfinished term of office. Mr. Knight stated that question was best answered by the Legislative Counsel's office. Mr. Knight spoke about this from experience not legally. The goal of redistricting is never to remove an incumbent or shorten an incumbents term by redistricting or causing them to have to run for office in a new District during the course of their term. Examples were given. Representative Jenkins stated to shorten an Elected Officials term requires a Public Referendum in accordance with Georgia Law. Chairman Threadgill stated he was just trying to figure out how much of a difference there was in a minimal change and how the Reapportionment Office comes up with such a map without some type of guidance. Senator Robertson stated some hire consultants to draw their maps and others will do it

themselves. An example was given of Harris County. Most of the time, Senator Robertson would ask that they show a new map based on the population growth and what it should look like without splitting precincts. With a lot of research from prior years, it is science once you factor in Majority/Minority and look at the factors of the two maps and what would make a deviation.

Commissioner Hines stated in getting back to the Majority/Minority, was it true that Georgia does not meet pre-clearance anymore. It was confirmed that was true. Commissioner Hines stated then it doesn't really make a difference. Senator Robertson stated the maps can still be challenged but they would be challenged afterwards and explained how it worked previously under President Obama's Department of Justice. If it were to be challenged today it would go to Court where it would be decided if the maps were right or wrong.

Representative Buckner stated both maps have a 50% Majority/Minority District. You can't always draw District for Majority/Minority where you want them to be because it has to be where the people are. Representative Buckner stated they are willing to work with Meriwether County if the Board wanted to come to Atlanta and sit down with Mr. Knight's office. They would be the one to say if it is in the standard deviation, etc.

Chairman Threadgill asked when the Board needed to have this ready. Representative Buckner stated the session starts the 2nd Monday in January 2022. Senator Robertson stated he Chairs the Committee on Ethics and represents us at the State Capitol, he will go with what the majority of the Commissioners and School Board decide. The responsibility belongs to the Commissioners. Representative Buckner agreed and stated this was the Board's decision and whatever was decided she would work with us any way she could. Representative Buckner stated if the Board gets this to her before now and January 11th, she will go ahead and take it to Legislative Counsel and get it drawn up and approved before it goes through the process. Chairman Threadgill stated the Board will add this on the next Agenda.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

IV. CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The Work Session concluded at 4:52 p.m.

V. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Future Meetings were listed on the Agenda.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*

Attest: *Allyson G. Stephens, Deputy Clerk*

Date: *December 28, 2021*

Exhibit C

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MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
December 28, 2021

This meeting was held by Zoom due to COVID-19 for the public with Board Members and County Staff attending in Person

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Rosla Plant and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
Staff Present: County Administrator Michelle Irizarry, Director of Special Projects Theron Gay, Deputy County Clerk Allyson Stephens, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Michael Hill (by Zoom).
Staff Absent: County Clerk Beverly Thomas

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION – A moment of silence was observed for former School Board Member, Leon Coverson, and Former County Commissioner, Nancy Jones. Vice Chairman McCoy led the invocation.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to adopt the Agenda and move items #15 and #16 from appointments to items #7 and #8 under New Business. All were in favor.

V. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director, Bill Gregory provided the Board with finance reports and stated that the general fund was strong. He stated the County has not used much of the ARPA funds. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated that some of the local municipalities had already received the supplemental grant from the State of Georgia and asked Director Gregory to check the progress.

IV. CITIZEN COMMENT

None

VII. MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to accept the minutes presented for the December 8, 2021, meeting. A second was made by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor except Commissioner Hines abstained. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant to accept the minutes of the December 14, 2021, Work Session. A second was made by Vice Chairman McCoy. All were in favor.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

Case# 26-2021 – Angie Hamilton request for a rezoning of 5.808 acres on 2939 Lone Oak Road, Tax Map and Parcel 024 064, LD 11, LL 51. Property is currently zoned LDR and would be rezoned NHC. The purpose of the rezone is to construct a 1400 sq. ft. office space that Ms. Hamilton will use for her Counseling Practice. District 1. A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go into Public Hearing at 6:04 p.m. All were in favor. Jodi Sharpe, Planning and Zoning advised the Board that Ms. Hamilton is wanting to establish a counseling practice at this location. She advised she had calls of curiosity, however no opposition. She advised that Eugene Smenner at the Health Department

had already assessed the septic system and is waiting on zoning approval from the Board before issuing a permit. Mrs. Sharpe also advised Ms. Hamilton that the ordinance states a commercial piece of property has to have 100 ft. undisturbed buffer between commercial and residential. Mrs. Hamilton owns property on two of the three sides of the property in question. Mrs. Sharpe stated that there was a meeting to hear the zoning request for the Planning and Zoning Board, however, there was no quorum. According to Mrs. Sharpe, it is the recommendation of Planning and Zoning to approve the request. Commissioner Hines asked if this NHC zoning would be considered "spot zoning". Planning and Zoning Director, Butch Oliver stated he would not consider this spot zoning because eventually that corridor would all be commercial. Ms. Hamilton stated she looked forward to bringing counseling services to this area of the county and appreciated the Board hearing her request. No one else signed up or requested to speak on the zoning case. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of Public Hearing at 6:07 p.m. All were in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Hines and seconded by Commissioner Plant to approve the request for rezoning of 5.808 acres on Lone Oak Road from LDR to NHC for Ms. Angie Hamilton to establish a counseling service. All were in favor.

X. APPOINTMENTS

1. A motion was made by Chairman Threadgill to appoint Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy to serve as the ACCG Legislative Coordinator for a 1-year term. This was seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.
2. A motion was made by Chairman Threadgill to reappoint Emmett Collins to the Board of Assessors for a 3-year term and allow the Chairman to sign the Resolution confirming the appointment. This was seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy. All were in favor.
3. A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy to reappoint David Caldwell to the Board of Elections for a 3-year term to the Board of Elections and all Board members sign the affidavit regarding the appointment. This was seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley. All were in favor.
4. A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to reappoint Burns Bryan to the Board of Elections for a 4-year term and all Board members sign the affidavit regarding the appointment. All were in favor.
5. CAFI Board for a term that expires 1-10-2022 (1-year term). Commissioner Hines stated that Mayor Donald Cuttie who had previously served on the Board would not be able to continue and she would like to make a motion to table this appointment. This was seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy. All were in favor.
6. Planning Commission for a term that expires 1-5-2022, District 2 (5-year term). Commissioner Plant made a motion to table this appointment. This was seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy. All were in favor.
7. Recreation Advisory Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, District 1 (2-year term). Special Projects Director, Theron Gay stated that L.O.S.T. would need to be negotiated and this would impact the Service Delivery Strategy. He suggested sitting down and speaking with all the cities and to hold the appointments to the Recreation Advisory Board for now. Mr. Gay advised after meeting with the cities there could be a change in the number of appointments as well as the bylaws. He stated he would hate for the Board to appoint someone and then have to ask them to step down. Mr. Gay felt it would be better to have the opportunity to negotiate L.O.S.T. and update the Service Delivery Strategy before appointments were made. Commissioner Hines asked if appointments were not made if the Recreation Advisory Board would be dissolved. Mr. Gay advised that there would be no quorum and the Advisory Board could not meet and make decisions until a later time. Mr. Gay also advised that advancements were not much farther than when the Advisory Board started 5-years prior. Commissioner Neely-Hadley advised she had no problem waiting as districts could change. Chairman Threadgill would not want to appoint at this time with L.O.S.T. negotiations coming up and then have to remove the appointment. A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to table the appointment for the Recreation

Advisory Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, District 1 (2-year term) to the second meeting in March 2022. All were in favor.

8. Recreation Advisory Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, District 2, (2-year term). A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to table this appointment until the second meeting in March 2022. All were in favor.

9. Recreation Advisory Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, District 5 (2-year term). A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to table this appointment until the second meeting in March 2022. All were in favor.

10. Recreation Advisory Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, At-Large (2-year term). A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to table this appointment to the second meeting in March 2022. All were in favor.

11. Recreation Advisory Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, School Board (2-year term). A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to table this appointment to the second meeting in March 2022. All were in favor.

12. Three Rivers RDC Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021, Non-Public member (1-year term). A motion was made by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to re-appoint Faye Perdue. All were in favor.

13. Two Rivers RC&D Board for a term that expires 12-31-2021 (1-year term). A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Plant to reappoint Tyrell Johnson with Alfred McCoy as an alternate. All were in favor.

14. Zoning Board of Appeals for a term that expires 1-5-2022 (3-year term). A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy to reappoint Mike Womack. All were in favor.

15. Elect Chairman for 2022- *Moved to #7 under New Business*

16. Elect Vice Chairman for 2022- *Moved to #8 under New Business*

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Set 2022 Meriwether County Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule and 2022 Holiday Schedule. A motion was made to accept the schedules as presented by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.

2. Annual Report for Georgia Forestry Commission, Meriwether County Unit, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. Administrator Michelle Irizarry stated the report is in the package. She also advised that Chief Ranger, Jeff Mansour would be retiring on Friday, December 31, 2021, after serving as the Chief Ranger for Meriwether County for the last 8.5 years. Mr. Mansour, according to Administrator Irizarry had been with the State of Georgia for 16 years and has enjoyed serving the citizens of Meriwether County.

3. Request from Fire/EMS to proceed with pricing for the following vehicles: 2 Utility Vehicles (new or used Pick-up or SUV will be replacement vehicles) 2 Used Pumpers (one for new station and one to replace older Manual Transmission Pumper) 2 Used Tankers with 1000 gallon or more water tank (to replace older Manual Transmission Tankers with less than 1000-gallon tank capacity). Fire Chief, Alan Smith stated the reason for requesting pricing for the 2 Utility Vehicles is to replace Deputy Chief, Mike Nelson's vehicle and also the replacement of a Dodge Charger that was totaled in a storm. Chief Smith went on to explain the reason for requesting pricing on 2 new Pumpers was to place one in the new Greenville Fire Station and have one to replace an old Pumper that has a manual transmission. He will use the two older pumpers as reserve units. Chief Smith explained he needs pricing on two used tankers with 1000 gallons or more water tank to replace the two older Manual transmission tankers with less than 1000- gallon water tanks. He stated that one of the Tankers being used is a 1969 and the other is an early 1970's model and parts cannot be found. Chief Smith explained he is just wanting permission to look and if he is able to find a good deal before he brings it back to the Board. Commissioner Hines would like a spreadsheet of each vehicle in the fleet for Public Safety. She stated this way we are ahead of the game when needing to replace. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stepped out of the room at 6:26 p.m. Commissioner Hines asked when the last time the pumper was used. Commissioner Neely-Hadley

reentered the room at 6:27 p.m. Chief Smith stated that the 1969 Model and 1970's model are currently used as frontline equipment. Chairman Threadgill requested that Chief Smith and Administrator Irizarry schedule a meeting to bring her up to date on what is needed and the inventory and equipment that is on hand. Commissioner Hines would like an inventory of all vehicles and equipment at each station. Chairman Threadgill agreed that an inventory is needed to show current equipment and vehicles in each station. A motion was made to allow the Chief to look at pricing and also meet with Administrator Irizarry by Commissioner Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy. All were in favor.

4. Approval of Redistricting Map as presented by House Representative Debbie Buckner and prepared by the Reapportionment Office with minimal changes. Chairman Threadgill asked if any of the Commissioners had comments. Commissioner Hines thanked everyone for the Work Session. She explained she would of like to have had Town Hall meetings in order to get the input of the citizens. Vice Chairman McCoy stated that it is painful to lose some of the supporters that have placed him in office and to not have the area he resides in as part of his district going forward. Commissioner Neely-Hadley stated she lost a huge base of support and that she was advised that District 1 was set by the Department of Justice years ago possibly due to the school system. Commissioner Hines stated the population drop was around 2000 people from 22,000 to 20,000 and this will be something that we will have to deal with for the next 10 years. She went on to say that her main concern was there was no Town Hall to allow an opportunity for citizen feedback. Chairman Threadgill stated for the record that a request had never been made for a Town Hall meeting and that the map has to be approved by the second week of January. He went on to advised that had a request been made for a Town Hall it would have been discussed. A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to approve the Redistricting Map Meriwether CCSB-Draft 2-HD 137-2021 as presented by House Representative Debbie Buckner and prepared by the Reapportionment Office with minimal changes. Commissioner Plant seconded the motion. In favor of the motion were Chairman Threadgill, Commissioner Plant, Vice Chairman McCoy, and Commissioner Neely Hadley. Commissioner Hines was opposed. The motion passed. Chairman Threadgill asked the reason for opposition to the motion and Commissioner Hines stated she didn't feel good about it and what she stated prior.

5. Request to add speed bumps in the 1800 block of Beulah Evans Road and Turkey Court Trail, and Bob Cat Trail. Administrator Irizarry stated there was a request from Mrs. Marcelle Womack regarding rubber speed bumps in these locations. Administrator Irizarry stated that this would be \$1,500 to \$2,000 per speed bump. Special Projects Director, Theron Gay stated that it would minimize costs to install speed humps constructed from asphalt. He advised it would cost less than \$500 and there would be speed humps installed in three locations for a total of 6. Commissioner Hines asked if the Board should wait until after the road was paved/repared before installing the speed humps. Mr. Gay advised that we already have the materials and installation would provide a margin of safety until the road is paved. Mr. Gay also stated that Mrs. Womack has been very beneficial in helping to get the road paved and will help with obtaining signatures. A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the speed hump installation. A second was made by Commissioner Hines. All were in favor.

6. Request to purchase parcel of property (Tax Parcel 164-004-001), declare surplus, and set minimum bid amount. Administrator Irizarry explained that the County already owns this piece of property through a tax sale, and it is a small drainage area that backs up to a subdivision. She requested the board declare the piece of property surplus and for bids to be accepted starting with a minimum of \$650.00. Vice Chairman McCoy stated that he is not sure why we need this piece of property as it is near a swamp. A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to declare the property surplus and set a minimum bid amount of \$650. All were in favor.

7. Elect Chairman for 2022. A motion was made by Chairman Threadgill to elect Beth Neely-Hadley as the Chairman for 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hines. All were in favor.

8. Elect Vice Chairman for 2022. A motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy to elect Bryan Threadgill as Vice Chairman for 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Plant. All were in favor.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Irizarry advised the Board that the GDOT Road Mileage had been submitted. She also advised the 2022 LMIG Application was complete. Administrator Irizarry stated COVID was again peaking and advised of precautions and social distancing. Administrator Irizarry congratulated Deputy Clerk, Allyson Stephens on obtaining two Associates of Art degrees from Point University in Business Administration and Organizational Leadership. She also advised that Mrs. Stephens will soon start school at Columbus State University to obtain her bachelor's degree in Business.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Neely-Hadley wished everyone a Happy New Year and that she was looking forward to a better year in 2022. She also advised that some cities had received money from the Public Safety Grant from the State of Georgia.

Commissioner Plant stated she was very happy about the construction ongoing on the new Fire Station in Greenville. She thanked all the Cities and the County for the extra work done and the Christmas trees being put up on the square. Commissioner Plant stated she attended the service for Mr. Leon Coverson on Sunday, and it was apparent his heart was education. She was very impressed with his life story and stated that Amy Dees who served on the State Board of Education with Mr. Coverson was in attendance. Commissioner Plant wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Hines wished everyone a Happy New Year. She advised that the Salvation Army of LaGrange, in combination with United Way and Toys for Tots provided toys to 70 children in the Luthersville area and she wanted to thank them for the work done in the community. Commissioner Hines also stated the ARPA Grant provided over \$8.4 billion dollars to the State of Georgia, and she would like to look at several projects that had been waiting on funding and look at opportunities to reach out to the State to fund these projects.

Vice Chairman McCoy wished everyone a Happy New Year and wanted to make sure that people like Mr. Leon Coverson were recognized more while they are living. He also gave a schedule of the upcoming events with the Manchester/Meriwether County Recreation Department. He advised Youth Basketball Ages 9-12 would have their first game on January 8, 2022, starting at 10:00 a.m. Youth Basketball ages 4-8 would have their first game on January 15, 2022, starting at 9:00 a.m. Old School Wrestling will return on January 15, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. and a Family Circus on January 23, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

Chairman Threadgill wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated the Omicron variant of COVID has a very high transmissibility rate and to visit the CDC website for quarantine parameters.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Michael Hill had nothing to report but stated there was a need for Executive Session to discuss Personnel and Litigation.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to go into Executive Session at 6:53 pm to discuss Personnel and Litigation. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to go out of Executive Session at 7:16 pm. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Plant to go back into Regular Session at 7:17 pm. All were in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to allow for COVID time off in 2022 for those who had not already utilized the paid time off. All were in favor.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Neely-Hadley to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 pm. All were in favor.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*
Attest: *Beverly Thomas, County Clerk*
Date: *January 12, 2022*

RETRIEVED FROM DEMOCRACYDOCKET.COM

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket record. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED)

I. (a) PLAINTIFF(S)

GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP, as an organization; JAMES C. BRAY; and JAMES C. CLEMENTS

DEFENDANT(S)

MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION; HARMON DAVID CALDWELL, MARY MCGILL, and MARK SPRADLIN, in their official capacities as members of the Meriwether County Board of Elections and Registration

(b) COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF Fulton

(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED DEFENDANT Meriwether

(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED

(c) ATTORNEYS (FIRM NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND E-MAIL ADDRESS)

Gail Podolsky
1100 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 900
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
(404) 282-7776
gail@podolsky-law.com

ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION

(PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)

- ☐ 1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLAINTIFF ☒ 3 FEDERAL QUESTION (U.S. GOVERNMENT NOT A PARTY)
☐ 2 U.S. GOVERNMENT DEFENDANT ☐ 4 DIVERSITY (INDICATE CITIZENSHIP OF PARTIES IN ITEM III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES

(PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX FOR PLAINTIFF AND ONE BOX FOR DEFENDANT)
(FOR DIVERSITY CASES ONLY)

- | PLF | DEF | PLF | DEF |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
- CITIZEN OF THIS STATE
CITIZEN OF ANOTHER STATE
CITIZEN OR SUBJECT OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY
INCORPORATED OR PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS IN THIS STATE
INCORPORATED AND PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS IN ANOTHER STATE
FOREIGN NATION

IV. ORIGIN

(PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)

- ☒ 1 ORIGINAL PROCEEDING ☐ 2 REMOVED FROM STATE COURT ☐ 3 REMANDED FROM APPELLATE COURT ☐ 4 REINSTATED OR REOPENED ☐ 5 TRANSFERRED FROM ANOTHER DISTRICT (Specify District) ☐ 6 MULTIDISTRICT LITIGATION - TRANSFER ☐ 7 APPEAL TO DISTRICT JUDGE FROM MAGISTRATE JUDGE JUDGMENT
☐ 8 MULTIDISTRICT LITIGATION - DIRECT FILE

V. CAUSE OF ACTION

(CITE THE U.S. CIVIL STATUTE UNDER WHICH YOU ARE FILING AND WRITE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF CAUSE - DO NOT CITE JURISDICTIONAL STATUTES UNLESS DIVERSITY)

This is a case alleging minority vote dilution in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 52 U.S.C. § 10301.

- ☐ YES ☒ NO Does the relief requested in the complaint or petition seek to bar or mandate statewide and/or nationwide enforcement of a state and/or federal law, including a rule, regulation, policy, or order of the executive branch or a state and/or federal agency, whether by declaratory judgment and/or any form of injunctive relief?

(IF COMPLEX, CHECK REASON BELOW)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Unusually large number of parties. | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Problems locating or preserving evidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Unusually large number of claims or defenses. | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Pending parallel investigations or actions by government. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Factual issues are exceptionally complex | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8. Multiple use of experts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Greater than normal volume of evidence. | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Need for discovery outside United States boundaries. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Extended discovery period is needed. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10. Existence of highly technical issues and proof. |

CONTINUED ON REVERSE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # _____ AMOUNT \$ _____ APPLYING IFP _____ MAG. JUDGE (IFP) _____
JUDGE _____ MAG. JUDGE _____ (Referral) NATURE OF SUIT _____ CAUSE OF ACTION _____

VI. NATURE OF SUIT (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)CONTRACT - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 150 RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENT & ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENT
- ☐ 152 RECOVERY OF DEFAULTED STUDENT LOANS (Excl. Veterans)
- ☐ 153 RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENT OF VETERAN'S BENEFITS

CONTRACT - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 110 INSURANCE
- ☐ 120 MARINE
- ☐ 130 MILLER ACT
- ☐ 140 NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT
- ☐ 151 MEDICARE ACT
- ☐ 160 STOCKHOLDERS' SUITS
- ☐ 190 OTHER CONTRACT
- ☐ 195 CONTRACT PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 196 FRANCHISE

REAL PROPERTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 210 LAND CONDEMNATION
- ☐ 220 FORECLOSURE
- ☐ 230 RENT LEASE & EJECTMENT
- ☐ 240 TORTS TO LAND
- ☐ 245 TORT PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 290 ALL OTHER REAL PROPERTY

TORTS - PERSONAL INJURY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 310 AIRPLANE
- ☐ 315 AIRPLANE PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 320 ASSAULT, LIBEL & SLANDER
- ☐ 330 FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY
- ☐ 340 MARINE
- ☐ 345 MARINE PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 350 MOTOR VEHICLE
- ☐ 355 MOTOR VEHICLE PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 360 OTHER PERSONAL INJURY
- ☐ 362 PERSONAL INJURY - MEDICAL MALPRACTICE
- ☐ 365 PERSONAL INJURY - PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 367 PERSONAL INJURY - HEALTH CARE/ PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT LIABILITY
- ☐ 368 ASBESTOS PERSONAL INJURY PRODUCT LIABILITY

TORTS - PERSONAL PROPERTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 370 OTHER FRAUD
- ☐ 371 TRUTH IN LENDING
- ☐ 380 OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE
- ☐ 385 PROPERTY DAMAGE PRODUCT LIABILITY

BANKRUPTCY - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 422 APPEAL 28 USC 158
- ☐ 423 WITHDRAWAL 28 USC 157

CIVIL RIGHTS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 440 OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS
- ☒ 441 VOTING
- ☐ 442 EMPLOYMENT
- ☐ 443 HOUSING/ ACCOMMODATIONS
- ☐ 445 AMERICANS with DISABILITIES - Employment
- ☐ 446 AMERICANS with DISABILITIES - Other
- ☐ 448 EDUCATION

IMMIGRATION - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 462 NATURALIZATION APPLICATION
- ☐ 465 OTHER IMMIGRATION ACTIONS

PRISONER PETITIONS - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 463 HABEAS CORPUS- Alien Detainee
- ☐ 510 MOTIONS TO VACATE SENTENCE
- ☐ 530 HABEAS CORPUS
- ☐ 535 HABEAS CORPUS DEATH PENALTY
- ☐ 540 MANDAMUS & OTHER
- ☐ 550 CIVIL RIGHTS - Filed Pro se
- ☐ 555 PRISON CONDITION(S) - Filed Pro se
- ☐ 560 CIVIL DETAINEE: CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT

PRISONER PETITIONS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 550 CIVIL RIGHTS - Filed by Counsel
- ☐ 555 PRISON CONDITION(S) - Filed by Counsel

FORFEITURE/PENALTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 625 DRUG RELATED SEIZURE OF PROPERTY 21 USC 881
- ☐ 690 OTHER

LABOR - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 710 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT
- ☐ 720 LABOR/MGMT. RELATIONS
- ☐ 740 RAILWAY LABOR ACT
- ☐ 751 FAMILY and MEDICAL LEAVE ACT
- ☐ 790 OTHER LABOR LITIGATION
- ☐ 791 EMPL. RET. INC. SECURITY ACT

PROPERTY RIGHTS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 820 COPYRIGHTS
- ☐ 840 TRADEMARK
- ☐ 880 DEFEND TRADE SECRETS ACT OF 2016 (DTSA)

PROPERTY RIGHTS - "8" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 830 PATENT
- ☐ 835 PATENT-ABBREVIATED NEW DRUG APPLICATIONS (ANDA) - a/k/a Hatch-Waxman cases

SOCIAL SECURITY - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 861 HIA (1395ff)
- ☐ 862 BLACK LUNG (923)
- ☐ 863 DIWC (405(g))
- ☐ 863 DIWW (405(g))
- ☐ 864 SSID TITLE XVI
- ☐ 865 RSI (405(g))

FEDERAL TAX SUITS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 870 TAXES (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)
- ☐ 871 IRS - THIRD PARTY 26 USC 7609

OTHER STATUTES - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 375 FALSE CLAIMS ACT
- ☐ 376 Qui Tam 31 USC 3729(a)
- ☐ 400 STATE REAPPORTIONMENT
- ☐ 430 BANKS AND BANKING
- ☐ 450 COMMERCE/ICC RATES/ETC.
- ☐ 460 DEPORTATION
- ☐ 470 RACKETEER INFLUENCED AND CORRUPT ORGANIZATIONS
- ☐ 480 CONSUMER CREDIT
- ☐ 485 TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT
- ☐ 490 CABLE/SATELLITE TV
- ☐ 890 OTHER STATUTORY ACTIONS
- ☐ 891 AGRICULTURAL ACTS
- ☐ 893 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS
- ☐ 895 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 899
- ☐ 899 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT / REVIEW OR APPEAL OF AGENCY DECISION
- ☐ 950 CONSTITUTIONALITY OF STATE STATUTES

OTHER STATUTES - "8" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 410 ANTITRUST
- ☐ 850 SECURITIES / COMMODITIES / EXCHANGE

OTHER STATUTES - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK

- ☐ 896 ARBITRATION (Confirm / Vacate / Order / Modify)

*** PLEASE NOTE DISCOVERY TRACK FOR EACH CASE TYPE. SEE LOCAL RULE 26.3**

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

☐ CHECK IF CLASS ACTION UNDER F.R.Civ.P. 23 DEMAND \$ _____

JURY DEMAND ☐ YES ☒ NO (CHECK YES ONLY IF DEMANDED IN COMPLAINT)

VIII. RELATED/REFILED CASE(S) IF ANY

JUDGE _____ DOCKET NO. _____

CIVIL CASES ARE DEEMED RELATED IF THE PENDING CASE INVOLVES: (CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX)

- ☐ 1. PROPERTY INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT.
- ☐ 2. SAME ISSUE OF FACT OR ARISES OUT OF THE SAME EVENT OR TRANSACTION INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT.
- ☐ 3. VALIDITY OR INFRINGEMENT OF THE SAME PATENT, COPYRIGHT OR TRADEMARK INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT.
- ☐ 4. APPEALS ARISING OUT OF THE SAME BANKRUPTCY CASE AND ANY CASE RELATED THERETO WHICH HAVE BEEN DECIDED BY THE SAME BANKRUPTCY JUDGE.
- ☐ 5. REPETITIVE CASES FILED BY PRO SE LITIGANTS.
- ☐ 6. COMPANION OR RELATED CASE TO CASE(S) BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY FILED (INCLUDE ABBREVIATED STYLE OF OTHER CASE(S)):

- ☐ 7. EITHER SAME OR ALL OF THE PARTIES AND ISSUES IN THIS CASE WERE PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED IN CASE NO. _____, WHICH WAS DISMISSED. This case ☐ IS ☐ IS NOT (check one box) SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME CASE.

October 9, 2025

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

DATE

Northern District of Georgia

GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP,
et al.

Plaintiff(s)

V.

MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AND REGISTRATION, et al.

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No.

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) Meriwether County Board of Elections and Registration
756 Woodbury Rd
Greenville, GA 30222

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

Gail Podolsky
Podolsky Law LLC
1100 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 900
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Tel: (404) 282-7776

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

PROOF OF SERVICE*(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))*

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
 was received by me on *(date)* _____.

☐ I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____; or

☐ I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
 _____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
 on *(date)* _____, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

☐ I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____, who is
 designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____; or

☐ I returned the summons unexecuted because _____; or

☐ Other *(specify)*:

My fees are \$ _____ for travel and \$ _____ for services, for a total of \$ 0.00.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.

Date: _____

Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Northern District of Georgia

GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP,
et al.

Plaintiff(s)

V.

MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AND REGISTRATION, et al.

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No.

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)* HARMON DAVID CALDWELL
in your official capacity as a member of the Meriwether County Board of Elections and
Registration
756 Woodbury Rd
Greenville, GA 30222

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

Gail Podolsky
Podolsky Law LLC
1100 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 900
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Tel: (404) 282-7776

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

PROOF OF SERVICE*(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))*

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
 was received by me on *(date)* _____ .

☐ I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

☐ I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
 _____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
 on *(date)* _____, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

☐ I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____, who is
 designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

☐ I returned the summons unexecuted because _____ ; or

☐ Other *(specify)*: _____

My fees are \$ _____ for travel and \$ _____ for services, for a total of \$ 0.00 .

I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.

Date: _____

Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Northern District of Georgia

GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP,
et al.

Plaintiff(s)

v.

MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AND REGISTRATION, et al.

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No.

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)* MARY MCGILL
in your official capacity as a member of the Meriwether County Board of Elections and
Registration
756 Woodbury Rd
Greenville, GA 30222

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

Gali Podolsky
Podolsky Law LLC
1100 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 900
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Tel: (404) 282-7776

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

PROOF OF SERVICE*(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))*

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
 was received by me on *(date)* _____.

☐ I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____; or

☐ I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
 _____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
 on *(date)* _____, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

☐ I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____, who is
 designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____; or

☐ I returned the summons unexecuted because _____; or

☐ Other *(specify)*: _____

My fees are \$ _____ for travel and \$ _____ for services, for a total of \$ 0.00.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.

Date: _____

Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Northern District of Georgia

GEORGIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP,
et al.

Plaintiff(s)

V.

MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AND REGISTRATION, et al.

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No.

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) MARK SPRADLIN
in your official capacity as a member of the Meriwether County Board of Elections and
Registration
756 Woodbury Rd
Greenville, GA 30222

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

Gail Podolsky
Podolsky Law LLC
1100 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 900
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Tel: (404) 282-7776

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. _____

PROOF OF SERVICE*(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))*

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
 was received by me on *(date)* _____.

☐ I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____; or

☐ I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
 _____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
 on *(date)* _____, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

☐ I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____, who is
 designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
 _____ on *(date)* _____; or

☐ I returned the summons unexecuted because _____; or

☐ Other *(specify)*:

My fees are \$ _____ for travel and \$ _____ for services, for a total of \$ 0.00.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.

Date: _____

Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: