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The Supreme Court on Wednesday struck down Louisiana's voting map, finding that lawmakers had illegally used race when drawing up a new majority-minority district.

SCOTUS strikes down La. voting map as illegal gerrymandering

BY ABBIE VANSICKLE
NYT News Service

WASHINGTON

The Supreme Court on Wednesday struck down Louisiana's voting map, finding that lawmakers had illegally used race when drawing up a new majority-minority district.

The decision was 6-3, split along ideological lines. The conservative majority asserted that the opinion was a limited ruling that preserved a central tenet of the Voting Rights Act, but the court's liberal wing, in dissent, argued that the justices had taken the final step to dismantle the landmark civil rights law.

In the majority opinion, Justice Samuel Alito wrote that the court had kept intact the Voting Rights Act but that Louisiana lawmakers had violated the Constitution with "an unconstitutional gerrymander" by aiming to create a new district with a majority of Black voters.

Justice Elena Kagan, in dissent, countered that the practical effect of the decision would be to make it nearly impossible to use race when drawing up voting maps, writing that "the court's decision will set back the foundational right Congress granted of racial equality in electoral opportunity."

Kagan read her dissent from the bench, a rare



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move that often signals a justice's strong displeasure with a decision.

It is unclear how the decision will impact the midterm elections amid the nationwide redistricting battle that has spiraled already into multiple states.

Coming in the middle of the primary calendar, there are still multiple states, including Florida and possibly Tennessee, that could draw new maps, citing Wednesday's decision. Louisiana will likely lose one Democratic district.

Any map that eliminated majority-minority districts and was drawn in the wake of the ruling would likely be challenged in court — potentially prompting a new wave of litigation.

It marks the latest in a

series of rulings by the justices to weaken the Voting Rights Act of 1965, often considered the crown jewel of the civil rights-era laws.

For decades, lawmakers crafted congressional districts with a focus on ensuring that minority voters had the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice, often laboring under scrutiny from federal courts that aimed to protect the rights of minorities. The court has now ruled such efforts are unconstitutional, amounting to reverse discrimination. The decision could allow Republican state legislatures to eliminate around a dozen majority-minority House seats that are held by Democrats across the South, according

to a New York Times analysis.

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The case, Louisiana v. Callais, arose from a dispute over a new voting map drafted by Louisiana lawmakers after the 2020 census. Before then, only one of the state's six congressional districts was majority Black, even though Black Louisianans made up about a third of the state's population.

Two groups of Black voters sued in 2022, after state lawmakers adopted a new map that still included only one majority-Black district. They argued Louisiana had violated the Voting Rights Act by packing Black voters into one district, which had the effect of diluting the power of their votes. A federal judge agreed.

In 2024, state lawmakers tried again, this time adopting a map that included a second majority-Black district. A group of white Louisiana voters then challenged that map, claiming it was an illegal racial gerrymander. They pointed to the new district, which snakes diagonally across the state from the southeast to the northwest.

Lawmakers initially defended the map, arguing that the odd shape was the result of politics, not race. They said that lawmakers created the second district's area to protect high-profile politicians, including House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican. The court has said it is acceptable to draw maps motivated by partisan advantage.

The Supreme Court first heard the challenge to the Louisiana map in spring 2025, considering whether state lawmakers had properly balanced race and political considerations. But in June, rather than announce a decision, the justices said they would rehear it in the fall. In August, the justices announced they were expanding the case, asking the lawyers to prepare for an argument on a much broader question than they had originally considered: Whether the state's creation of a second majority-minority district violated the Constitution.

That announcement raised alarms among proponents of the Voting Rights Act, who feared that the court's conservative majority — long skeptical of the legislation — would use the case to deal a fatal blow to the law and rule its provision requiring lawmakers to consider race was unconstitutional.



ERIC ADLER The Kansas City Star

A storm with tornado-like winds on Monday, April 27, 2026, split trees on Stephen and Kelly Anne Herl's property in Spring Hill, Kansas, on West 207th Street and South Ridgeveiw Road.

After resident backlash, Johnson County city will adopt storm recovery plan

BY TAYLOR O'CONNOR
toconnor@kcstar.com

Following several weeks of storms where Spring Hill saw damage, but didn't qualify for state or federal relief funding, the small city is going to craft its own emergency plan for the future.

"I think it's nice to have a plan for something not catastrophic, as far as, you know, where it's a national level, FEMA type, emergency," Spring Hill Mayor Chad Young told The Star. "That's where we're trying to fill the gaps where we can, the best we can."

During last Thursday's City Council meeting, council members supported creating a local storm recovery plan for times when the damage doesn't qualify for state or federal assistance. While specifics weren't mapped out during the discussion, the plan would identify private contractors the city could have on-call for debris cleanup, lay out overtime policies and procedures for the Public Works and Police departments and establish a line item in the budget to fund recovery efforts.

A plan would come back for final approval at a later date.

CITY PLAN TO OFFER NO HELP SPARKED BACKLASH

Young's push for the plan came shortly after Spring Hill jumped into recovery late following storms earlier this month.

The city posted on its public Facebook page that damage wasn't "widespread" and that it wouldn't provide cleanup

assistance — prompting residents to take to the comment section to demand a change of course.

Despite not qualifying for any relief funds, the city listened to its frustrated constituents — prompting the Public Works Department to partner with private contractors and assist with tree limb and debris cleanup.

"In the future, we will be a little bit more mindful of what we say, how we say it and how we approach things," Young said during the meeting.

CREWS WERE AT WORK AFTER RECENT STORM

Crews are back out this week after more storms whipped through the city — uprooting trees and damaging more properties in the northern parts of the city, he told The Star.

The city jumped in quickly, notifying residents what streets to avoid due to downed trees and that Public Works will conduct another cleanup alongside private contractors this week.

"I think it's still a work in progress," Young said about this week's cleanup. "I think we're handling this storm better than the last one just because we have some experience under our belt with it. Having a plan in place will make it even easier next time to respond quickly."

Young said he anticipates that an emergency plan proposal will come before the City Council in late May. In the meantime, Public Works will be collecting smaller tree debris in residential areas this week. A contractor will pick up remaining, large debris starting Monday, May 4.

Comey appears in court after second indictment

BY AISHVARYA KAVI
NYT News Service

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

James Comey, the former FBI director, made his first court appearance Wednesday after being charged by a federal media post that the Justice Department branded a serious threat to President Donald Trump.

Comey, a longtime critic of Trump, appeared in federal court in Alexandria for a brief, largely procedural appearance before a judge. He was indicted Tuesday by a federal grand jury in North Carolina on two counts: making a threat against the president and transmitting a threat across state lines.

Usually, after defendants turn themselves in

to face charges in another state, they appear before a judge, who describes the counts they face and hear preliminary arguments over whether they should be detained. Comey is expected to appear in court in North Carolina at a later date.

In U.S. District Court in Virginia, Comey was seated at the defense table wearing a dark suit over a blue dress shirt, flanked by his two lawyers, Jessica Carmichael and Patrick Fitzgerald.

Comey did not speak before the magistrate judge, William E. Fitzpatrick, but nodded along as he was reminded of his rights and the charges against him. The judge addressed mainly administrative matters, including the conditions of Comey's

release, during which he referenced the last time Comey appeared at the federal court in Alexandria.

"I don't think conditions of release are necessary," Fitzpatrick said, shaking his head. His tone and manner were brusque. "They weren't necessary last time," he added, referring to the Justice Department's first bid to bring charges. "They are not necessary this time."

Fitzgerald was the only one who spoke for Comey and noted to the court that they would be claiming a "vindictive and selective prosecution." The hearing was over in under 10 minutes.

The charges against Comey stem from a social media post he shared nearly a year ago, of seashells arranged in sand to form the numbers "86 47." The phrase is often used by protesters to call for Trump, the 47th presi-

dent, to be ousted from office.

Members of the administration and Trump's defenders seized on the post from Comey, describing it as a call to kill the president. Prosecutors reiterated that argument in a three-page indictment, asserting that "a reasonable recipient who is familiar with the circumstances would interpret" the message "as a serious expression of an intent to do harm to President Trump."

Comey denied that the post's message was violent and took it down.

Last year, Comey was indicted by a grand jury in Virginia on charges of lying to Congress. He pleaded not guilty, but a federal judge dismissed the charges after ruling that the prosecutor assigned to bring the charges, Lindsey Halligan, had been appointed unlawfully.

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The Kansas City Star

Executive Editor
Andale Gross
816-234-4079 | agross@kcstar.com

Vice President, Opinion Editor
Yvette Walker
816-234-4079 | ywalker@kcstar.com

VP/Advertising
Stephanie Boggins
816-234-4069 | sboggins@kcstar.com

VP/Advertising Operations
Jane Howard
816-234-4896 | jhoward@kcstar.com

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Isiah Thomas, American basketball player (b. 1961).

Stephen Harper, prime minister of Canada (b. 1959).

Lars von Trier, Danish filmmaker (b. 1956).

Carl XVI Gustaf, king of Sweden (b. 1946).

Carl Friedrich Gauss, German mathematician (b. 1777).

Mary II, queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland (b. 1662).