

## North Carolina Supreme Court Orders Re-examination of Redistricting and Voter ID Cases



The North Carolina Supreme Court granted a petition for rehearing two previously decided cases, which different sides of the political spectrum welcomed. The order cited precedent and the North Carolina Rule of Appellate Procedure 31, which allows rehearings when a court overlooks or misapprehends fact or law.

Interim Chief Counsel of Voting Rights at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, Jeff Loperfido, commented on the decision, saying, "This certainly isn't the outcome we'd hoped for...but we will continue to fight for the rights of all people in North Carolina to vote freely and fairly."

North Carolina House of Representatives Speaker Tim Moore responded in support of the rehearing, "The people of North Carolina sent a message election day. They rejected the judicial activism of the outgoing majority. I am committed to fighting for the rule of law and the will of the voters. It's time for voter ID to be law, as the people have demanded."

Two cases will now be reheard: Harper v. Hall and Holmes v. Moore. In Harper, the court ruled that a proposed North Carolina redistricting map violated the state's Free Elections Clause, Equal Protection Clause, and Freedom of Speech and Assembly Clauses. Meanwhile, in Holmes, the court struck down Senate Bill 824, which required voters to present a photo ID to cast their ballot. The court ruled that the statute was motivated by a "racially discriminatory purpose" and violated the Equal Protection Clause of the North Carolina Constitution.

Justices Michael R. Morgan and Anita Earls dissented from the court's ruling claiming that it was a misapplication of the law and that the court should have denied the petition. The order noted that the majority opinion was based on applicable precedent, which allows rehearings in cases when a court overlooks or misapprehends fact or law. However, Morgan and Earls argued that "this is not such a case."

The court will hear both cases on March 14th. Until then, North Carolina's constitutionality of voter ID laws and redistricting map remain in limbo. The decision to rehear the cases could provide new insight into the court's future rulings on these issues moving forward.

Regardless of their opinion on the matter, one thing is sure: the people of North Carolina depend on their judicial system to ensure that voting rights remain intact. It is up to the court to determine the fate of these two cases and decide whether or not they will be an important factor in future discussions regarding voting and voter ID laws.

### REFERENCES:

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