



A CIVICS IN REAL LIFE SERIES **THE DOCKET**

Civics is all around us. The United States Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. Through its power of judicial review, its decisions have a lasting impact on "We the People". So what is the Court hearing this session and how might the justices rule? Let's help each other expand our civic literacy.

Louisiana v. Callais & Robinson v. Callais

The Case of The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Drawing of Congressional Districts

The Facts of [Louisiana v. Callais](#) and [Robinson v. Callais](#):

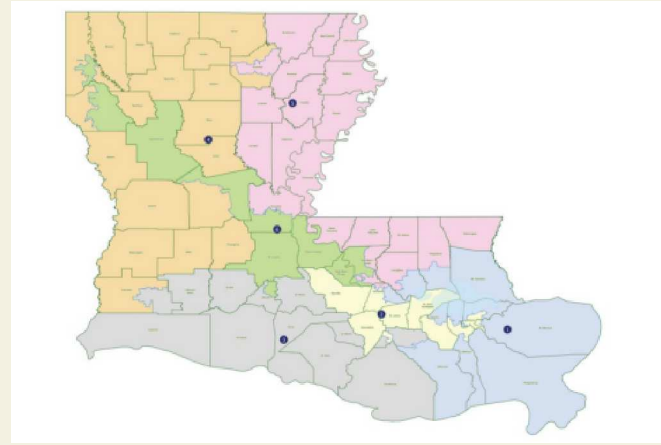
After the 2020 Census, Louisiana had to redraw its six congressional districts. The first map, called House Bill 1 (HB1), kept just one district where most voters were Black. A federal district court said this likely violated the Voting Rights Act, which protects voters from discrimination, arguing that it diluted the power of Black voters.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit agreed with the district court's decision. It gave Louisiana until January 15, 2024, to create the new map. If the state didn't do it by then, the court said it might step in and choose a map for the 2024 elections.

In response, Louisiana passed a new map, Senate Bill 8 (SB8), which added a second majority-Black district (green colored district in the congressional map).

Soon after, a group of voters challenged the new map. They argued that SB8 used race too much when drawing district lines, and that this violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. They said the district was oddly shaped and grouped together Black communities that were far apart and didn't share common interests.

Louisiana defended the map, saying it was trying to follow the court's orders and the Voting Rights Act. The state argued that it had good reasons for creating the second majority-Black district and that it tried to protect political leaders while still making a fair map.



On October 15, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court heard [oral arguments](#). The Court is being asked to address one question:

1. Does Louisiana's intentional creation of a second majority-Black congressional district violate the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution?

This question asks whether using race to draw voting districts, even to comply with the Voting Rights Act, is allowed under the Constitution.

Federal Laws, Amendments, and Supreme Court Precedents Used in this Case:

- [Voting Rights Act of 1965 \(Section 2\)](#) – Protects against voting practices that discriminate based on race, even if the discrimination isn't intentional.
- [Equal Protection Clause \(14th Amendment\)](#) – Requires states to treat all people equally under the law.
- [Fifteenth Amendment](#) – Prohibits denying the right to vote based on race.
- [Shaw v. Reno \(1993\)](#) – The Court ruled that race can't be the main reason for drawing voting districts.
- [Miller v. Johnson \(1995\)](#) – The Court warned against racial stereotyping in redistricting.
- [Allen v. Milligan \(2023\)](#) – The Court upheld the use of race in some redistricting cases to meet Voting Rights Act requirements.
- [Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard \(2023\)](#) – The Court reaffirmed that government actions using race must meet strict constitutional standards.
- [City of Boerne v. Flores \(1997\)](#) – The Court established the "congruence and proportionality" test for laws enforcing constitutional amendments.

To Think and To Do: This case explores how states balance protecting voting rights with treating all citizens equally. Given the statutes, amendments, and precedents used in this case, how do you think the U.S. Supreme Court will rule? Explain.

To Learn MORE about this case, view the [Brief of the Appellees](#), Phillip Callais and the [Brief of the Appellants](#), Louisiana and Press Robison



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