

For Immediate Release
October 12, 2017

Voters Ask Pennsylvania Supreme Court to Hear Redistricting Lawsuit

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Harrisburg, Pa. – Attorneys for the voters challenging Pennsylvania’s U.S. Congressional district map filed an Application for Extraordinary Relief asking the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to assume extraordinary jurisdiction of the case because it presents an issue of immediate public importance.

“The voters deserve to have this case resolved in time for the 2018 primary election so that they can actually vote for representatives who reflect their interests and needs,” said Mimi McKenzie, Legal Director of the Public Interest Law Center. “This case is vital to the health of Pennsylvania’s democracy and we will make every effort to ensure the map is struck down and a new map that complies with the constitution is created for the next election.”

“Delay in this case is effectively disenfranchisement,” said Elisabeth Theodore, an Associate with Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP. “We are urging the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to take this case now, so that in the next election Pennsylvania voters can pick their representatives and not the other way around.”

“Now that Pennsylvanians have gone through three election cycles with this map, there is overwhelming evidence of the effects of this gerrymander. One party is virtually guaranteed to win 13 of 18 seats in Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation, even when the other party wins a majority of the statewide vote,” said Daniel Jacobson, also an Associate with Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP. “We are asking Pennsylvania’s highest court to step in and hear this case before the May primary so that Pennsylvania’s voters do not suffer through another election that is pre-determined.”

The attorneys from the Public Interest Law Center and Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP represent the 18 individual petitioners, one from each U.S. Congressional District, and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania in this challenge. Filed in June in the state’s Commonwealth Court, the original complaint alleges the current U.S. Congressional map violates the Pennsylvania Constitution because it was designed to override voter preferences and create a lopsided majority in favor of Republican representatives.

The respondents named in the Application include the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Governor Tom Wolf, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Michael Turzai, President Pro Tempore Senator Joseph B. Scarnati III, President of the Pennsylvania Senate Lieutenant Governor Michael Stack, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and Commissioner of the Bureau of Commissions and Elections Jonathan Marks.

These respondents have 14 days to respond to the Application, after which, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court can make a decision or schedule an argument.

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