

[Job Link Now](#) | [HNN808](#) | [Healthy You](#) | [Perfect Home](#) | [Tributes](#) | [Career Opportunities](#)

<p>THE 2016 NISSAN FRONTIER®</p>	<p>Starting At \$18,290 MSRP*</p> <p><small>As Shown \$35,610 MSRP 2016 Frontier SL CC 4x4 A/T LWB, other optional equipment shown, see dealer for details.</small></p>	<p>SHOP NOW</p> <p>BUILD</p> <p><small>*More Price Information</small></p>
----------------------------------	--	--



81°

Few Clouds
Hilo

[FULL FORECAST](#)

Search

Federal judges find Texas gerrymandered maps on racial lines

Published: Saturday, March 11th 2017, 4:48 pm HST
Updated: Saturday, March 11th 2017, 4:48 pm HST

By PAUL J. WEBER
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - Federal judges found more problems in Texas' voting rights laws, ruling that Republicans racially gerrymandered some congressional districts to weaken the growing electoral power of minorities, who former President Barack Obama set out to protect at the ballot box before leaving office.

The ruling late Friday by a three-judge panel in San Antonio gave Democrats hope of new, more favorably drawn maps that could turn over more seats in Congress in 2018. But the judges in their 2-1 decision didn't propose an immediate fix, and Texas could appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Republicans hold two of three congressional districts ruled newly invalid and were found to have been partly drawn with discriminatory intent. The GOP-controlled Texas Legislature approved the maps in 2011, the same year then-Gov. Rick Perry signed a voter ID law that ranks among the toughest in the U.S. Courts have since weakened that law, too.

Judges noted the "strong racial tension and heated debate about Latinos, Spanish-speaking people, undocumented immigrants and sanctuary cities" that served as the backdrop in the Legislature to Texas adopting the maps and the voter ID law. Those tensions are flaring again over President Donald Trump's executive orders on immigration, and Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott is also demanding tough crackdowns on so-called sanctuary cities.

"The record indicates not just a hostility toward Democrat districts, but a hostility to minority districts, and a willingness to use race for partisan advantage," U.S. District Judges Xavier Rodriguez and Orlando Garcia wrote in their opinion.

Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton did not immediately remark on the ruling.

An attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund welcomed Friday's ruling.

"The court's decision exposes the Texas Legislature's illegal effort to dilute the vote of Texas Latinos," said Nina Perales, the group's vice president of litigation and lead counsel in the case. "Moving forward, the ruling will help protect Latinos from manipulation of district lines in order to reduce their political clout."

Hispanics were found to have fueled Texas' dramatic growth in the 2010 census, the year before the maps were drawn, accounting for two out of every three new residents in the state. The findings of racially motivated mapmaking satisfied Democrats and minority rights groups, who are now pushing a separate federal court in Texas to determine that the voter ID law was also crafted with discriminatory intent.

Texas was forced ahead of the November election to weaken its voter ID law, which allows concealed handgun licenses but not college student IDs, after a federal appeals court found that the requirements particularly hampered minorities and the poor.

The Obama administration had brought the muscle of the U.S. Justice Department into Texas to help challenge both the maps and voter ID law. But barely a month after Trump took office, the federal government reversed course and announced it would no longer argue that Texas purposefully discriminated against minorities with its voter ID law.

It was not yet clear whether the Trump administration will also drop opposition to Texas' maps. But U.S. Circuit Judge Jerry Smith, in a blistering dissent, had strong words for Obama administration attorneys after they joined the case.

"It was obvious, from the start, that the DOJ attorneys viewed state officials and the legislative majority and their staffs as a bunch of backwoods hayseed bigots who bemoan the abolition of the poll tax and pine for the days of literacy tests and lynchings," Smith wrote. "And the DOJ lawyers saw themselves as an expeditionary landing party arriving here, just in time, to rescue the state from oppression, obviously presuming that plaintiffs' counsel were not up to the task."

The stakes in finding discriminatory intent are higher because it provides a window for opponents to argue that Texas should be forced to resume having changes to voting laws "pre-cleared" by the Justice Department or a federal court. A 2013 U.S. Supreme Court ruling did away with preclearance by striking down a key provision in the federal Voting Rights Act.

The congressional districts voided by the panel belong to Democrat Lloyd Doggett and Republicans Will Hurd and Blake Farenthold. Hurd's district, which runs from San Antonio to El Paso, has been a rare competitive swing district in Texas in recent years.

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: www.twitter.com/pauljweber

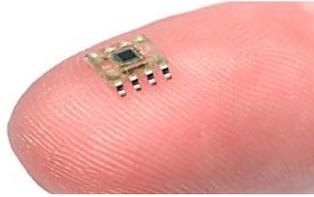
Copyright 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

RECOMMENDED STORIES

Recommended by



Seven people rescued from submerged cars in Maui flood 10pm update



Tiny Device to be in 50 Billion Products by 2020... Find Out More

Sponsored | Banyan Hill Publishing



Suspect in fatal road rage-fueled shooting had previous run-ins with law



A Lion Captures a Petrified Baboon and Does the Last Thing You'd Expect

Sponsored | Deposits



There's a Problem With the New Chip Credit Cards

Sponsored | AARP



Homeowners: Too close cruise ship towered over house



Vets could receive up to \$42k with these VA benefits

Sponsored | LendingTree



Smart Money Monday: Stop Wasting Money on Food

SPONSORED CONTENT

You Won't Believe Who Dated Donald Trump *WomensForum*

The Vitamins About To Take Over Your Makeup Drawer *Well+Good NYC*

Melania Trump Can Be Better First Lady Than Michelle Obama - Here's Why *solapolitics.com*

White House staffers using this self-destructing messaging app? *Fox Business Video*

Why liberals are so scared tell the truth about hedge funds: *InsideSources*

WE RECOMMEND

Lily Collins forgives her father, Phil Collins, in new book

US soldiers train for jungle warfare at Hawaii rainforest

Google honors man who fought WWII Japanese internment camps

Man killed; stick shift frustrated carjackers, police said

Cleaning Out Your Cast Iron Pan

Recommended by

IN THE NEWS

Can't Find Something? SEARCH FOR IT HERE SEARCH



Hawaii News Now

420 Waiakamilo Road, Suite 205
Honolulu, HI 96817
Main (808) 847-3246
News (808) 847-1112

KHNL

[FCC Public File](#)
KHNLpublicfile@hawaiinewsnow.com
[EEO Contact \(808\) 847-3246](#)
[EEO Report](#)
[Closed Captioning](#)

KGMB

[FCC Public File](#)
KGMBpublicfile@hawaiinewsnow.com
[EEO Contact \(808\) 847-3246](#)
[EEO Report](#)
[Closed Captioning](#)

[NEWS](#) [WEATHER](#) [SPORTS](#) [VIDEO](#) [SUNRISE](#) [WHAT'S ON](#) [COMMUNITY](#) [TRAFFIC](#) [ABOUT US](#)

[HAWAII NEWS NOW](#)

 All content © Copyright 2000 - 2017 Raycom Media. All Rights Reserved. For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) and [Ad Choices](#)