

Supreme Court Case Could Spark Major Voting Rights Act Reform

The Supreme Court will hear arguments next week in *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case that could set the stage for sweeping Voting Rights Act reform. At issue is whether Section 2 of the landmark 1965 law still protects voters from racial discrimination—or now compels states to racially gerrymander congressional districts.

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The case stems from Louisiana's Sixth Congressional District, drawn in 2022 to create two majority-black districts out of six, mirroring the state's 30 percent black population. A group of "non-African American voters" challenged the map, calling it an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. One federal court ordered the state to create another majority-black district, while another condemned the plan for sorting voters by race—leaving officials trapped in legal contradiction.



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Critics argue that Section 2 has been transformed "from a shield against racial discrimination into a sword that compels racial gerrymandering." After Congress amended the law in 1982, courts began applying a "results test," requiring districts to reflect racial population ratios even without proof of discrimination.

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Chief Justice John Roberts noted in *Shelby County v. Holder* that “things have changed dramatically in the South.” Indeed, minority voter registration and turnout now equal—or exceed—that of whites across most of the country.

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Supporters of *Callais* say the Court has a chance to reaffirm colorblind constitutional principles established in *Students for Fair Admissions*, which ended race-based college admissions.

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