



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CONTACT:

Sarah Lyons 212-962-1824 / 917-658-9885

HEARING ON GOP LAWSUIT TO CLOSE SOUTH CAROLINA

PRIMARIES TO TAKE PLACE

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2011 AT 10:00 AM

COURT GRANTS COALITION OF INDEPENDENTS, ORGANIZATIONS

AND BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS RIGHT TO INTERVENE

IN DEFENSE OF STATE'S OPEN PRIMARY SYSTEM

COALITION TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING HEARING

WHO: Attorney's for, and representatives of, a coalition of South Carolina voters, organizations and members of the Black Legislative Caucus: Harry Kresky of New York City, general counsel to IndependentVoting.org; Fletcher N. Smith of Greenville, SC; Wayne Griffin, Greer City Councilmember and Chair of the Independence Party of SC; and Allen Olson of the Columbia Tea Party.

WHAT: Hearing on the GOP lawsuit to close the South Carolina primaries and press conference immediately following.

WHERE: Clement F. Haynsworth Federal Building
300 Washington Street
Greenville, SC
Room: Main Courtroom

WHEN: Thursday, March 10, 2011
10:00 am hearing.
Press conference to follow

WHY: U.S. District Judge Michelle Childs granted motion of the coalition listed below to intervene in the lawsuit. In their motion intervenors stated:

The Attorney General of the State of South Carolina will, no doubt, effectively articulate the interests of the State in the current system of nonpartisan registration and open primaries. However, he cannot reasonably be expected to articulate the particular interest that independents and their allies have in the litigation...For the non-aligned voters represented by IndependentVoting.org, the outcome of this

litigation will determine whether or not they can continue to fully participate in the electoral process without declaring themselves to be something that they are not, that is, a Republican or a Democrat. For adherents of minor parties, the situation is similar. Under the current system they are permitted to vote in major party primaries where the candidates mostly likely to win are nominated. Under the current system of partisan registration and closed primaries, they would not. (Continued)

The coalition of intervenors also stressed their concern that, “if this lawsuit succeeds, it will further racial polarization in South Carolina as whites will increasingly gravitate to the Republican Party, while the Democratic Party will become predominately African American.”

Intervenor-Defendants include:

- Wayne Griffin and Reginald Griffin of Greer, SC; Brett Bursey of Lexington, SC; and Allen Olson of Columbia, SC. These voters consider themselves to be independents and do not wish to enroll in a major party as a condition of voting in a primary election for nomination for public office.
- The South Carolina Independence Party; the South Carolina Constitution Party; the Progressive Network Education Fund, Inc.; the Columbia Tea party, Inc.; and the Committee for a Unified Independent Party, Inc. (d/b/a IndependentVoting.org).
- The following members of the Black Legislative Caucus of the South Carolina House of Representatives: Terry Alexander (District 59), Karl B. Allen (District 25), Jerry N.Govan, Jr. (District 95), Chris Hart (District 73), Leon Howard (District 76), Joseph Jefferson, Jr. (District 102), John Richard C. King (District 49), David J.Mack, III (District 109), Harold Mitchell, Jr. (District 31), Joseph Neal (District 44), Anne Parks (District 12), Ronnie Sabb (District 101), and Robert Williams (District 62).

The intervenors are represented by attorneys Harry Kresky of New York City, general counsel to IndependentVoting.org, and Fletcher N. Smith of Greenville, SC. The lawsuit is captioned *South Carolina Republican Party, et al., v. State Of South Carolina, et al.*, CA No. 6:10-1407-JMC., and is pending in the Greenville Division of the U.S. District Court.

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