

From the Editor.

Virginia voters are being asked to pay attention to something that may seem procedural and technical, and tempting to ignore: redistricting. But please don't – especially not Black voters.

A proposed constitutional amendment tied to congressional redistricting is moving through a high-profile legal and political fight in Virginia ahead of a planned April 21, 2026 special election, with the ballot language focused on temporarily allowing the General Assembly to adopt new congressional districts before the 2030 census process resumes.

Why should Black voters care? Because maps communicate power.

District lines shape who gets heard, which communities are kept together or split apart, and more pointedly whether Black communities have a fair opportunity to influence elections – not just in theory, but in policy outcomes. When district lines are drawn without accountability, our voices risk dilution. On the other hand, when the process is transparent and voters are engaged, representation is actualized. Now for the skeptics, please know that this is not just about party strategy.

This is about our communities, which have historically had to fight for access, fairness, and recognition, paying attention when the rules of political influence are on the table. Too often, we mobilize only at the point of crisis. Redistricting will help counter efforts to advance policies that have repeatedly harmed our communities by protecting more equitable representation and making it harder to dilute our collective voice. It is one of the places where crisis is prevented when we participate or created when we do not.

Black voters: read the amendment, follow the court decisions on the amendment, and be prepared to vote for the amendment. We know from experience that debates in the General Assembly that seem technical or procedural have real consequences in our communities when implemented. We see the effects in education, transportation, and economic policy, and who represents us in Congress. We must pay attention. The map may change, but the principle does not: representation matters.

In Black,

Alpha Woolen



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