

‘DEFINITION OF JIM CROW’: Republican Turns the Tables on Democrats’ Redistricting Rhetoric

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While Democrats have recently branded [voter ID requirements](#) as a form of “Jim Crow,” a black Republican former delegate in Virginia is flipping the script in condemning state Democrats’ redistricting ballot initiative.

Under Virginia’s current congressional map, adopted after the 2020 census, two districts have a majority-minority voting age population. However, the Democrats’ [proposed redistricting maps](#) would dilute those populations.

A.C. Cordoza, who was the sole black Republican in the state’s House of Delegates before losing his reelection campaign in November, condemned Democrats as “completely hypocritical.”

“These are southern Democrats, who are using their power to disenfranchise African American voters, and minority voters,” he told [The Daily Signal](#) in a phone interview Thursday. “Tell me how that is not the definition of Jim Crow, and they can’t do it.”

“They just can’t, ’cause it is, and they know it is,” Cordoza, who served two terms in the House of Delegates, added.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other groups have [condemned Cordoza’s](#) Justice for Democracy PAC for sending flyers opposed to the [redistricting ballot initiative](#). The flyers state, “Just like Jim Crow, they want to silence your voice.”

Phillip Thompson, executive director of the National Black Nonpartisan Redistricting Organization, condemned the mailers as “juvenile, foolish,” as well as “tone deaf and completely cynical.”

Yet Thompson acknowledged that the new maps do indeed weaken minority voting blocs.

“The proposal maintains one distinctly black-influence district while dispersing black voters among other districts,” [he noted](#). The new maps “may solidify Democratic support but are not necessarily structured to enhance black political influence.”

Why Cordoza’s Claim Holds Water

According to the [Virginia court records](#) for the congressional maps adopted in 2021, the voting-age population in the 3rd Congressional District was 41.96% white, 45.37% black, and 7.37% Hispanic.

The 4th Congressional District also had a majority-minority voting-age population, with 45.18% white and 54.82% minority voters. The black voting-age population of 42.14% and the Hispanic voting-age population of 8.26% together form a minority-influence district that meets the requirements of the Voting Rights Act.

By contrast, the [proposed 3rd Congressional District](#) has a 45.1% white voting-age population, larger than the 41.17% black voting-age population. Combined with the 7.19% Hispanic voting-age population, the two-minority bloc still reaches less than 50% of the district’s voting-age population.

The proposed 4th Congressional District has an outright white majority voting-age population, at 50.7%. The black voting-age population (38.9%) and Hispanic voting-age population (6.04%) no longer match the white population.

While the [Supreme Court is considering](#) two cases about the racial requirements for redistricting in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the act’s requirements remain the law for now.

The NAACP’s Virginia chapter endorsed the maps as a response to Republican mid-decade redistricting efforts in Texas and other states. Those efforts came after the federal government concluded that the 2020 census overcounted the populations of Democrat-leaning states and undercounted the populations of Republican-leaning states.

“When Black communities lose the ability to elect candidates who represent our needs, our entire democracy suffers,” NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson said in a [statement endorsing the redistricting effort](#). “The NAACP will continue to fight, in Virginia and across the nation, to make sure our maps—and our democracy—reflect people.”

Yet Thompson, the leader of the black redistricting organization, noted that “most of the announced Democratic candidates for the newly established districts are white, and most of the institutional support, money and endorsements have been directed toward these candidates.”

He acknowledged that “some black Virginians have expressed frustration with the maps, questioning why at least one of the new districts was not drawn to better represent regions that could support black candidates.”

Cordoza, the Republican former delegate, picked up on that theme.

“I’d rather them just come out and say, ‘We want power, we want a power grab,’” he told The Daily Signal. “I want them to say it. We all know it.”