

# US Politics

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## TL;DR

The federal landscape is shifting rapidly as the executive branch strips job protections from thousands of senior career officials to enforce administrative compliance. Simultaneously, a coordinated retrenchment on voting rights is sweeping the South, with the Supreme Court and state legislatures dismantling majority-Black districts to lock in partisan control ahead of the 2026 midterms. These parallel maneuvers represent a profound consolidation of power across the federal bureaucracy and the electoral map.

## Executive Bureaucracy Under Direct Presidential Control

The executive branch is rapidly centralizing control over the federal bureaucracy by stripping career civil servants of long-standing job protections. On June 3, President Donald Trump signed an executive order establishing the "Schedule Policy/Career" classification, stripping protections from 8,000 senior career federal employees [Trump's Executive Order on Civil Service]. Under this order, which affects 97% of senior-level positions, agencies have exactly seven days to conform personnel records and senior officials can now be fired without cause [Trump's Executive Order on Civil Service].

*"In order to affect the policy priorities of the administration, we need to have people willing to and capable of carrying out those directives... There were serious issues with policy resistance in the first term, and this is designed to provide an accountability tool to ensure that can be swiftly addressed." — [Trump's Executive Order on Civil Service] via Office of Personnel Management Director Scott Kapor Press Call*

*"This is a blatant attempt to corrupt the federal government by eliminating employees' due process rights so they can be fired for political reasons... Workers who once felt comfortable reporting waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement at their place of employment because they were protected from retaliation will now be afraid for their jobs if they speak out." — [Trump's Executive Order on Civil Service] via American Federation of Government Employees Statement*

This targeted reclassification of senior roles represents a calculated effort to bypass legislative and judicial checks by preemptively silencing internal dissent and ensuring absolute bureaucratic compliance. By focusing on senior-level positions, the administration can reshape policy implementation without the political fallout of a broader, mass-purge strategy.

**What to watch:** Watch how federal agencies meet the strict seven-day deadline to reclassify personnel records and whether the first wave of dismissals triggers immediate legal challenges over the civil service's statutory protections.

## Southern Redistricting and the Retrenchment of Voting Rights

Southern states are aggressively capitalizing on weakened voting rights protections to dismantle majority-minority districts and lock in partisan advantages before the next elections. Following the Supreme

Court's landmark decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*, which weakened Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, Louisiana enacted a new congressional map that eliminates a majority-Black district [Louisiana Governor Signs New Congressional Map]. Days later, the Supreme Court issued an emergency stay in *Allen v. Milligan*, reinstating an Alabama map that had been struck down by a lower federal court as a racially discriminatory gerrymander [Supreme Court Reinstates Alabama's Struck Map].

*"I purposely put more Democrats into District 2 to make the remaining districts better performing for Republicans."* — [Louisiana Governor Signs New Congressional Map] via Louisiana Legislature Debate

*"Sotomayor asserted that Alabama 'has no legitimate interest in enforcing an unconstitutional map, while vast harms will likely arise from upending the status quo, sowing chaos in Alabama, and rewarding Alabama's gamesmanship.' She emphasized that '[t]he reason the District Court found intentional discrimination even after affording such deference to the Alabama Legislature is simple: The record is crystal clear.'" — [Supreme Court Reinstates Alabama's Struck Map] via Justice Sonia Sotomayor's Dissenting Opinion*

By shielding states from lower court interventions under the guise of procedural order while greenlighting partisan gerrymandering, the judiciary is effectively delegitimizing racial voting protections. This coordinated push ensures that the battle for control of the House of Representatives is increasingly fought on maps engineered to dilute minority voting power.

**What to watch:** Watch whether other Southern states rush to redraw their congressional boundaries ahead of the midterms, citing the Supreme Court's explicit shield of state-led electoral changes.

## What surprised us

- **The Supreme Court's hypocritical application of the Purcell principle.** The Court stayed a lower court's injunction to prevent altering election rules on the eve of an election, but explicitly exempted the state government of Alabama from that very restriction—allowing them to revert to a map struck down as a racially discriminatory gerrymander [Supreme Court Reinstates Alabama's Struck Map].
- **The brazen transparency of partisan gerrymandering defenses.** In Louisiana, state legislators openly admitted to packing Democratic voters into a single district to bolster Republican performance elsewhere, confidently relying on the Supreme Court's *Rucho v. Common Cause* ruling to shield their racial dilution behind a partisan mask [Louisiana Governor Signs New Congressional Map].
- **The targeted precision of the new "Schedule Policy/Career" executive order.** Rather than reviving the sprawling "Schedule F" plan that targeted up to 200,000 workers, the administration designed a legally surgical classification aiming directly at the highest tier of the non-political workforce—GS-15 and above—to neutralize policy resistance where it actually happens [Trump's Executive Order on Civil Service].

## **Appendix: Findings**

### **Trump Signs Executive Order Stripping Civil Service Protections From 8,000 Senior Federal Workers**

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On June 3, 2026, President Donald Trump signed a sweeping executive order titled "Implementing Schedule Policy/Career in the Excepted Service." The order formalizes a new employment classification, "Schedule Policy/Career," which strips long-standing civil service job protections from approximately 8,000 high-level career federal employees across the executive branch. Agencies have been given exactly seven days to make conforming changes to the personnel records of the affected employees, OPM officials confirmed.

The new classification targets the highest tier of the non-political federal workforce, with approximately 97% of the affected positions at or above the GS-15 level. Targeted roles include agency division heads, regional directors, chief information officers (CIOs), senior human resources officials, agency deputies, high-level attorneys, senior regulation writers, and officials involved in policy development, budget allocations, or strategic planning. Under the new schedule, these senior officials can be disciplined or fired without cause, and they are barred from appealing adverse actions to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). Reclassified employees also lose eligibility for student loan repayment programs and recruitment or retention incentives.

This action represents a narrower, more legally targeted version of the controversial "Schedule F" proposal from Trump's first term, which was estimated to cover between 50,000 and 200,000 employees. Administration officials defended the move as a necessary tool to combat "policy resistance" and ensure the federal bureaucracy remains accountable to the elected president. Opponents, including federal employee unions and civil rights organizations, contend the order unconstitutionally politicizes the civil service, strips due process, and effectively dismantles the non-partisan, professional bureaucracy that has existed for generations.

#### **Sources**

- Trump moves about 8,000 federal positions to Schedule Policy/Career
- Office of Personnel Management Director Scott Kuper Press Call
- American Federation of Government Employees Statement

### **Louisiana Governor Signs New Congressional Map Erasing Majority-Black District**

## **Louisiana Governor Signs New Congressional Map Erasing Majority-Black District**

On May 29, 2026, Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry (R) signed a new congressional map into law (Senate Bill 121) that eliminates one of the state's two majority-Black U.S. House districts. The Republican-controlled legislature rushed to pass the new map in a rapid-fire response to the Supreme Court's landmark April 29, 2026 ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais*, which struck down the state's previous two-district map and significantly weakened Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA).

The newly enacted "5-1 map" reduces the number of majority-Black districts from two to one, effectively erasing the 6th Congressional District (currently represented by Democrat Cleo Fields) and converting it into a safe Republican seat. During legislative debate, Republican sponsors openly acknowledged that the map was drawn to pack Democratic voters into a single district (District 2) to bolster Republican performance across the rest of the state. They defended the map by citing the Supreme Court's 2019 ruling in *Rucho v. Common Cause*—which held that partisan gerrymandering is a nonjusticiable political question—and arguing that the map's design was driven purely by partisan, rather than racial, considerations.

This legislative maneuver is a direct consequence of the *Callais* decision, which held that court-ordered remedial maps must accommodate a state's "political goals" and made it far more difficult to challenge maps under the VRA. The Louisiana redraw, combined with the Supreme Court's June 2, 2026 order in [\[\[supreme-court-alabama-redistricting-milligan-callais\]\]](#), underscores a coordinated post-*Callais* wave across Southern states to dismantle minority-majority districts and consolidate Republican control over the U.S. House of Representatives ahead of the 2026 midterms.

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#### Sources

- Gov. Landry signs Louisiana gerrymander into law, erasing majority-Black district
- Louisiana Legislature Debate on Senate Bill 121

## Supreme Court Reinstates Alabama's Struck Congressional Map for 2026 Midterms

# Supreme Court Reinstates Alabama's Struck Congressional Map for 2026 Midterms

On June 2, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 4-page, unsigned emergency order (a stay) in *Allen v. Milligan* (along with companion cases *Allen v. Singleton* and *Allen v. Caster*), allowing Alabama to use its 2023 congressional map for the upcoming 2026 midterm elections. This map had been struck down just one week earlier, on May 26, 2026, by a three-judge federal district court that found it to be a racially discriminatory gerrymander that intentionally diluted the voting power of Black residents in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court's majority stayed the lower court's injunction, holding that the district court had misapplied the high court's recent landmark decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* (decided April 29, 2026), which gutted Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). In the stay, the majority criticized the district court for failing to presume the state legislature acted in good faith, and instead interpreting the state's legal disagreement with the court as evidence of discriminatory intent. Additionally, the majority invoked the Purcell principle—which cautions federal courts against altering election rules on the eve of an election—while explicitly exempting state governments from the same restriction.

The ruling marks a significant retreat by the federal judiciary from policing racial gerrymandering, signaling to states that they have broad latitude to enact and defend maps that dilute minority voting strength for the 2026 cycle.

Instance of [[c44609658c50d]]{why="Federal courts have abandoned the role of arbiter in partisan and racial redistricting disputes."}

#### **Sources**

- Supreme Court permits Alabama to use congressional map struck by lower court as racially discriminatory
- Justice Sonia Sotomayor's Dissenting Opinion