

Nicole Gillespie

Subject: FW: Urban Counties News, February 15, 2012: Court Hints at May 29 Primary

From: John Dahill

Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2012 2:43 PM

To: john@cuc.org

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To All Urban Counties:

Today the San Antonio federal district court overseeing the consolidated redistricting lawsuits stated there was a substantial likelihood (though not a certainty) that a unified primary would be ordered for May 29. This announcement follows yesterday's testimony from elections administrators, who told the court that May 29 was the first date a primary was feasible, and assumes the court issues interim maps no later than March 3.

Assuming maps are issued March 3, elections officials will have approximately 6 weeks to prepare voting precincts, update voter registration information, and print both voter registration cards and ballots prior to the last date overseas ballots must be mailed in order to comply with the MOVE Act. For a May 29 primary date, the MOVE deadline is April 14.

The six weeks of necessary preparation time is in line with information previously provided to the court by Urban Counties, the County Judges and Commissioners Association, and the Texas Association of Counties. We previously told the court that counties needed 6 to 10 weeks to process new maps. The issuance by the state last week of a set of proposed maps helped county elections officials firm up that time estimate.

Yesterday, the Department of Justice told the court that preclearance of new voting precincts under the Voting Rights Act could not be waived by the court. DOJ stated today that it would work to expedite all preclearance requests.

The parties in the case have been ordered to brief the court on remaining legal issues and a proposed primary schedule. We will, of course, keep you informed of developments in this matter. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

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