



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
1156 15TH STREET, NW SUITE 915 · WASHINGTON, DC 20005 · P (202) 463-2940 · F (202) 463-2953
E-MAIL: WASHINGTONBUREAU@NAACPNET.ORG · WEB ADDRESS WWW.NAACP.ORG

ACTION ALERT

DATE: February 21, 2018
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

NAACP CALLS ON U.S. SENATE TO OPPOSE CONFIRMATION OF THOMAS FARR TO THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA *ATTORNEY FARR HAS SUPPORTED EFFORTS TO DISENFRANCHISE RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY VOTERS*

THE ISSUE:

In July, 2017 and again in January, 2018 President Trump nominated attorney Thomas A. Farr to a life-time appointment as a judge to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina. The NAACP strongly opposes this nomination; throughout his career, Mr. Farr has consistently supported and worked for efforts to intimidate, misinform, or otherwise disenfranchise African American voters.

Farr represented Jesse Helms' Senate campaigns in two of the most notoriously racist campaigns in modern American history. The racist nature of the 1984 campaign against North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt was so pronounced that judges in a North Carolina redistricting case cited it as an example of how racism continued to flourish in North Carolina politics. In 1990, Farr's partner and mentor, Thomas Ellis, helped create a racially biased and misleading ad campaign against African American Senate candidate Harvey Gantt that showed white hands crumpling a rejection letter (pink slip) with the announcer stating: "You needed that job, and you were the best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota." The 1990 Helms campaign engaged in voter suppression so egregious that President George H.W. Bush's Justice Department filed a complaint against it for intimidating black voters in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The campaign sent 125,000 postcards mostly to African-American voters in North Carolina, asserting that they were ineligible to vote and warning that voting could result in criminal prosecutions. When asked by the Senate Judiciary Committee about his involvement, Farr denied it but was later forced to admit his involvement. Mr. Farr has also defended congressional and state legislative redistricting challenges under the Voting Rights Act and the state's failure to comply with the National Voter Registration Act. Farr helped to create and then defend North Carolina's voter suppression law, which was among the most draconian in the country and imposed strict discriminatory photo ID requirements, reduced the use of early voting, and eliminated same-day / election-day registration. In striking the law down, the Fourth Circuit called it "the most restrictive voting law North Carolina has seen since the era of Jim Crow," and found that State legislators "targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision."

Thomas Farr has also demonstrated an opposition to workers' rights. He has championed weakening, or even eliminating, legal protections for employment discrimination; he repeatedly defended companies that discriminated against employees and customers. He has also fought vigorously against workers' efforts to unionize, having defended companies trying to deny recognition of unions and committing unfair labor practices.

Despite the fact that approximately 30% of the residents under the jurisdiction of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina are African American, and that the district is home to approximately half of the African Americans in North Carolina, this court has never had a judge of African descent in its 143-year history. If confirmed, Thomas Farr would not only perpetuate this sorry history of racial and ethnic exclusion, but his record indicates that he would also continue to work in opposition to the legal, constitutional, and human rights of many of the people he would be sworn to serve.

More...

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact both your Senators **and URGE THEM TO OPPOSE THE NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR TO SERVE AS A JUDGE ON THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA.** To contact your Senators, you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators' offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

**A SAMPLE LETTER
IS ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov; click on "*Find Your Senators*". Look up your Senators by state; go to their web sites for e-mail addresses.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!

THE MESSAGE

- Thomas Farr spent his entire legal career fighting civil rights, voting rights, and workers' rights. His record should be absolutely disqualifying for a federal judgeship.
- For the last three decades, Farr, who represented the campaign of the ultraconservative Senator Jesse Helms at a time when the campaign was accused of taking part in conduct designed to intimidate African American voters, has committed himself to two main missions: disenfranchising voters of color and attacking workers' rights.
- Mr. Farr helped to create and then defend North Carolina's voter suppression law, which was the most draconian in the country and imposed strict discriminatory photo ID requirements, reduced early voting, and eliminated same-day / election-day registration. In striking the law down, the Fourth Circuit called it "the most restrictive voting law North Carolina has seen since the era of Jim Crow," and found that State legislators "targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision."
- Despite the fact that approximately 30% of the residents under the jurisdiction of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina are African American, and that the district is home to approximately half of the African American population in North Carolina, this court has never had a judge of African descent in its 143-year history. If confirmed, Thomas Farr would not only perpetuate this sorry history of exclusion, but his record indicates that he would also continue to work in opposition to the legal, constitutional, and human rights of many of the people he would be sworn to serve.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!

If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

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Sample Letter

(date)

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: OPPOSE THOMAS FARR'S NOMINATION TO SERVE AS A JUDGE ON THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

Dear Senator _____;

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to oppose and to vote against the nomination of Thomas Farr to serve as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina. If confirmed Thomas Farr's record indicates that he would work in opposition to the legal, constitutional, and human rights of many of the people he would be sworn to serve.

Mr. Farr has consistently supported and worked for efforts to intimidate, misinform, or otherwise disenfranchise African American voters. He represented Jesse Helms' Senate campaigns in two of the most notoriously racist campaigns in modern American history. The racist nature of the 1984 campaign against North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt was so pronounced that judges in a North Carolina redistricting case cited it as an example of how racism continued to flourish in North Carolina politics. In 1990, Farr's partner and mentor, Thomas Ellis, helped create a racially discriminatory ad for the campaign against Harvey Gantt that showed white hands crumpling a rejection letter with the announcer stating: "You needed that job, and you were the best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota." The 1990 Helms campaign engaged in voter suppression so egregious that the Justice Department filed a complaint against it for intimidating black voters in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The campaign sent 125,000 postcards mostly to African-American voters in North Carolina, suggesting they were ineligible to vote and warning that voting could result in criminal prosecutions. Mr. Farr has also defended congressional and state legislative redistricting challenges under the Voting Rights Act and the state's failure to comply with the National Voter Registration Act. Farr helped to create and then defend North Carolina's voter suppression law, which was the most draconian in the country and imposed strict photo ID requirements, reduced early voting, and eliminated same-day registration. In striking the law down, the Fourth Circuit called it "the most restrictive voting law North Carolina has seen since the era of Jim Crow," and found that State legislators "targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision."

Thomas Farr has also demonstrated an opposition to workers' rights. He has championed weakening or eliminating legal protections for employment discrimination; he repeatedly defended companies that discriminated against employees and customers. He has also fought vigorously against workers' efforts to freely unionize, having defended companies trying to deny recognition of unions and committing unfair labor practices.

Despite the fact that approximately 30% of the residents under the jurisdiction of this court are African American, and that the district is home to approximately half of the African Americans living in North Carolina, this court has never had a judge of African descent in its 143-year history. If confirmed, Thomas Farr would not only perpetuate this sorry history of exclusion, but his record indicates that he would also continue to work in opposition to the legal, constitutional, and human rights of many of the people he would be sworn to serve.

Because Thomas Farr has built his career on disenfranchising voters of color and stripping workers' rights and protections, which raises serious questions whether he will be fair and unbiased as a judge, I strongly oppose his nomination to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina. Please join me in my opposition, and let me know if there is anything I can do to help ensure that a more balanced individual is placed in that seat.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)

Remember to contact
BOTH your Senators