

Marshall County, Alabama Commission

9AM CT — May 11th, 2022

Thank you all for your time and attention this morning. My name is Gary Wright. I was born and raised in Alabama, and I've been a resident of Marshall County for over a decade. I am not a politician or an attorney. Like most of you here with me today, I am just a regular citizen who is deeply concerned by the recent actions of my government. But I'm also a disabled veteran, and so just like the public officials who are sitting up on the dais in front of us, I've taken a similar oath to: "*Protect and defend the United States Constitution against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.*"

So I rise today to speak before all of you, to make **one simple request** of the Marshall County Commission: **I demand a vote today to repeal the unconstitutional county picketing resolution!**

Let me begin with the preamble of our United States Constitution, which very first words state: "*We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union...*"

Even back then, our founding fathers knew that our beloved nation was not only still a work in progress, but they also knew we would always be striving towards our ultimate goals of justice and full equality for all. The founding fathers were protesters of a government that restricted their liberty, and a true democratic republic can only exist when there's freedom to dissent in public from the tyranny of our government.

Our very Declaration of Independence started with the words that I still hold sacred to this very day that say: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men (I’d say “all living beings” but they said “all men”) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*”

Because the United States Constitution was still imperfect, and is “living” document, we later had the Bill of Rights that gave us numerous amendments on our quest for a more perfect union. And it is that very Bill of Rights that Marshall County seems to so often ignore.

And one doesn’t have to read far into the Bill of Rights to see where this county has violated the constitutionally-protected rights of all of its citizens, in its desperate, last-gasp effort to silence the rare voices of dissent that still exist in our county.

The First Amendment clearly states that, “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*”

I’ve read the county Picketing Resolution very closely, and not only is it clearly unconstitutional, but when one delves into the true legislative history and the documented abuse of this resolution in court – the dark past of Alabama’s racial animus comes quite clearly into focus.

I don't have time to present that evidence today, but I'm confident enough in the evidence already on record, that in addition to a lawsuit against the county, I've named multiple defendants as individuals for their conspiracy to deprive civil rights and privileges which is enforceable pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1985(3).

I hereby state and submit for the record, that the Marshall County Picketing Resolution violates both the **First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.**

And for those who refuse to acknowledge the Supremacy Clause of the US Constitution, I hereby state and submit for the record, that the Picketing Resolution also violates the **State of Alabama Constitution under Article One, Sections Four and Twenty-five:**

Article 1 § 4 of the State of Alabama Constitution provides that “no law shall ever be passed to curtail or restrain the liberty of speech... and any person may speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.”

Article 1 § 25 of the State of Alabama Constitution provides that “citizens have a right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for the common good, and to apply to those invested with the power of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance.”

So, today I argue that regardless of the state laws that are quoted as an authority in the Resolution, that this county resolution is clearly unconstitutional under both the United States Constitution, as well as the Constitution of the State of Alabama.

To paraphrase an amicus curiae, or Friend of the Court brief that was filed in my last civil rights lawsuit against Marshall County, *“There are two paths that lie ahead, but the ultimate destination has been predetermined, and it’s now your choice which path to take.”*

I urge this commission today to take the easier, far less-expensive path of a repeal, rather than to force us to pursue this matter in federal court.

Thank you for your time, and as I’ve now exhausted all other administrative remedies, I ask this commission to please hold an immediate vote today to repeal this resolution.

Respectfully submitted this 11th day of May, 2022.

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