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SPORTS, 1B

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'We are not going back to 1964'

Mississippi Democrats fear familiar voter disenfranchisement

Ross Reily

Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Mississippi's Democratic Party denounced Republican plans to restructure the political system of the Magnolia State in a press conference on Thursday, April 30.

The Supreme Court threw out Louisiana's redrawn congressional map on

April 29, siding with the Trump administration and triggering an upcoming Mississippi special session on redistricting.

Mississippi now has free reign to redraw its voting district maps at all levels without having to abide by the minority voter protection clauses in the Voting Rights Act. Gov. Tate Reeves called for a special session on redistricting to take place three weeks after the court's deci-

sion, meaning legislators will come together around May 20. An actual date has not been announced.

Cheikh Taylor, Chairman of the Mississippi Democratic Party and a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives, said the restructuring harkens back to the days before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"We are not going back to 1964. We are not going back to 1965. We are not

going back to a time when intimidation, fear and power decided who got to vote and who did not," Taylor said. "Make no mistake, the images may have changed, the fight has not. Yesterday, it was dogs and firehoses. Today, it may be fear and intimidation. The goal is the same, to control participation."

For all of their unhappiness and bravado, the fact is that there is very little the Democrats can do to stop the power play from Reeves and the Mississippi

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INSIDE SCOOP

Find dinosaur bones, shark teeth and poop when fossil park opens

Brian Broom Hattiesburg American | USA TODAY NETWORK

Mississippi is known for its diverse geography with the flat land of the Delta, hills in the northeast and the pine flats to the south, but there was a time when it was vastly different and some of the animals that lived here were downright scary. • It was a time when most of the state was a part of a sea inhabited by ancient sharks, and dinosaurs roamed Northeast Mississippi where land existed.

See FOSSILS, Page 6A



Columbus city councilman Rusty Green digs for fossils in what will soon be the Dr. John "Jack" Kaye Cretaceous Fossil Park in Columbus, Mississippi.

PROVIDED BY SUSAN WILDER

TOP: Luxapallila Creek in Columbus, Mississippi, will soon be the home of the Dr. John "Jack" Kaye Cretaceous Fossil Park. RUFUS WARD/SPECIAL TO CLARION LEDGER

Stockett's new book inspired by dark time in MS history

Ross Reily

Hattiesburg American
USA TODAY NETWORK

Jackson native Kathryn Stockett said she is not a great multitasker.

After writing "The Help" 17 years ago, the Jackson Prep graduate was basically on tour for the next five years helping to promote the worldwide bestseller that turned into a movie by the same name.

Now, her second book, "The Calamity Club," is being released on May 5, and she will be back in Jackson on May 6 for a meet-and-greet at the Eudora Welty House and Garden.

Stockett, who when she is in Mississippi lives in the unincorporated community of Church Hill in Jefferson County, told the Clarion Ledger it took her a while to get back in the groove and get her confidence

back after some of the criticism she took for "The Help."

"The Help" faced blowback for what some said sanitized or overlooked racial violence of 1960s Mississippi.

"It's been a wild ride," Stockett told the Clarion Ledger. "For the first five years, I was on tour with the hard cover, then the paperback and then the movie tie-in and speaking engagements. It was a lot. If I have learned my lesson on anything, I have finally learned how to say no. After I learned that, I went back to do what I was born to do and that is write."

But she said she had a lot of false starts along the way.

"I was determined that when I wrote a second book, I would write a nice, short simple book that didn't draw the criticisms that "The Help" did," Stockett said. "Having said that, the first couple of versions of "The Calamity Club" came out pretty vanilla and bland."

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