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The Greenville News

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Redistricting bill debated in SC Senate

Bella Carpentier

Greenville News

USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

A bill to establish new congressional voting maps is moving through the South Carolina Senate, despite massive outcry from the public.

The Senate judiciary committee advanced a bill in a 15-7 vote on May 20 to establish new congressional district lines, while pushing congressional primaries until August. The House fully

passed the bill early in the morning on May 20, and it now heads to the full Senate for further consideration.

The South Carolina General Assembly is in a special session called by Gov. Henry McMaster, where lawmakers are quickly moving forward with a bill to redraw the state's congressional lines. The first day of the special session was Friday, May 15, and the bill has already passed the House and Senate committee.

Lawmakers' redistricting timeline is tight, since early voting for the June 9

primary races starts on Tuesday, May 26. The redistricting bill would move the congressional primary, where voters will choose which Republican and Democratic candidates will appear on the Nov. 3 ballot, to Aug. 18.

Conway Belangia, the executive director of the South Carolina State Election Commission, spoke about how the legislation would impact elections. During previous meetings, Belangia estimated the cost of a special primary election and runoff to be about \$3.5 million.

He now puts the cost between \$5.3 and \$6 million.

Candidates for Congress will have to refile for candidacy if the redistricting bill passes, and the new filing period would be June 1-June 5. Belangia also said any vote in congressional races noted on absentee ballots would be negated if the bill passes, and the election commission would have to print any new ballots after the primary runoff on June 23.

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Samirra Thomas, left, older sister, and Deldras Sewell, mother of Kamel Seveion Sewell, spoke in January 2025 about his death at Frankie's Fun Park. A Greenville County judge dismissed a lawsuit on May 15 filed by the family against Greenville County in his death. PHOTOS BY KEN RUINARD/USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Claims fly as retrial of Alex Murdaugh takes shape

Michael M. DeWitt Jr.

Greenville News

USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

The pre-trial phase for a potential Alex Murdaugh murder retrial hasn't even begun, and legal opponents are already taking jabs at one another — but in the political arena and not the courtroom.

With the Palmetto State's high court vacating Murdaugh's 2023 double murder convictions and consecutive life sentences last week, the notion of putting the death penalty on the table for a retrial is sparking public debate between the chief prosecutor and Murdaugh's defense team.

Here is a play-by-play as the debate heats up "ring side" in the political ring, as both sides accuse the opponent of "injecting politics" into a legal case.

Is the death penalty on the table for Alex Murdaugh?

On May 13, the S.C. Supreme Court reversed a ruling denying convicted fraudster and formerly convicted murderer Richard "Alex" Murdaugh a new murder trial and remanded the case back to the state circuit court for a potential retrial, citing jury interference and tampering by former Colleton County Clerk of Court Becky Hill.

In the first trial, Murdaugh was convicted in March 2023 for the June 2021 killings of his wife, Maggie, and adult son, Paul, and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences.

Following the Supreme Court's reversal, S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson, whose office prosecuted the murder case and a multitude of fraud cases against Murdaugh, announced that his office would aggressively seek to retry Murdaugh as soon as possible, and on May 15, the AG's Office issued an even more aggressive statement to multiple media outlets:

"In light of the Supreme Court's decision, we're back to square one on this case, and that means all our legal options are on the table, including the death penalty," Wilson said.

During the 2023 murder trial, graphic and often horrific details of the killings were made public, as both victims were shot multiple times — the son with a shotgun and his mother

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Court rules with Greenville in Frankie's Fun Park crash

Terry Benjamin II

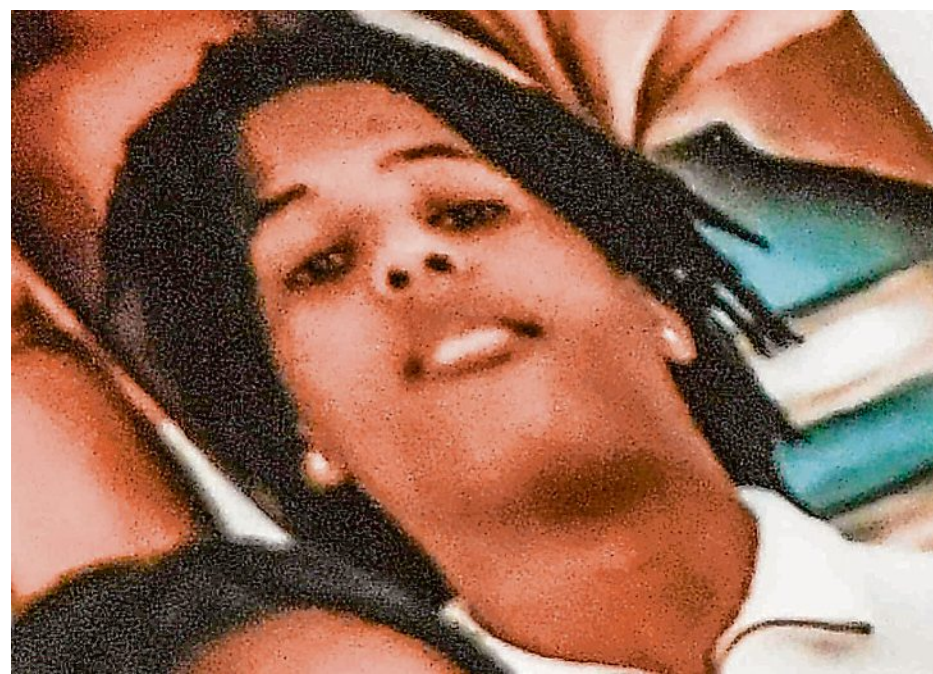
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USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

A Greenville County judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by the family of a teenager who died in a 2024 Frankie's Fun Park go-kart crash.

According to Greenville County Court documents, Greenville County Circuit Court Judge Jessica Salvini granted the county's motion to dismiss a lawsuit after four emergency workers employed by the county took personal photos of Kamel Seveion Sewell's death on Dec. 27, 2024.

Sewell, who was 17 at the time of the incident, was a park employee when the go-kart he was driving collided with an industrial-sized forklift, also driven by a park employee. Sewell was testing the track for safety hazards before the park opened.



A portrait of the late Kamel Seveion Sewell at the law office of Ryan James in Greenville.

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