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DEBERRY TAKES NORTH CAROLINA BALLOT-ACCESS FIGHT TO FEDERAL COURT

Independent U.S. Senate candidate pursues federal civil-rights challenge while organizing 500 verified North Carolina voters

ANNAPOLIS, MD - Durham-born Independent U.S. Senate candidate Shaunesi DeBerry has taken her fight for access to North Carolina's 2026 general-election ballot to federal court, filing a civil-rights action in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

The case, *DeBerry v. De Luca et al.*, No. 5:26-cv-00624, was filed September 1, 2026. The public federal docket identifies the action as arising under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and reflects that DeBerry has sought emergency relief and expedited consideration in connection with her ballot-access challenge.

The litigation comes as DeBerry organizes a grassroots effort to secure 500 verified signatures from registered North Carolina voters in support of ballot access. She says the dispute reaches beyond her own candidacy and raises a broader question about whether voters can meaningfully expand the choices available to them.

"Ballot access is voter access. This is not simply about whether Shaunesi DeBerry gets her name on a ballot. It is about whether North Carolinians are given meaningful choices beyond the traditional political structure. If 500 registered voters are willing to say they want another choice available to them, I believe their voices deserve to be heard."

DeBerry was born and raised in Durham and currently resides in Maryland, which she publicly disclosed when launching her campaign. Article I, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution requires a senator to be an inhabitant of the state represented "when elected." DeBerry has stated that she intends to satisfy that constitutional residency requirement by the November 3, 2026 general election while continuing to campaign from Annapolis in the interim.

Her focus on understanding complicated systems began long before the current litigation. When DeBerry's father co-signed her first apartment, he would not simply give her the keys. He handed her the 32-page lease and told her to sit down and read it first. She says that lesson - read before you sign, and understand what you are entering - followed her into adulthood.

"My father taught me early that if my name is going on something, I need to understand what I am agreeing to. That started with a 32-page apartment lease, but it became much bigger than that."

As DeBerry later encountered the criminal justice system, civil procedure, administrative proceedings and other legal processes, she became increasingly focused on reading the rules, statutes, filings and procedures for herself. She says legal competence and technological literacy have become especially important forms of self-protection because modern tools give ordinary people greater ability to educate themselves.

"Right now, being legally competent and being tech-savvy are two of the most important forms of self-protection a person can have. The information is there. The tools are there. You can self-educate. You owe yourself that much."

That philosophy grew through substantial firsthand experience. DeBerry says she successfully represented herself before a jury without an attorney and obtained a partial jury acquittal. She has pursued more than 100 appellate matters involving the highest courts of North Carolina and Maryland, challenged policies and procedures through courts in both states, and provided testimony before legislative and judicial-policy committees in Maryland.

She has also represented herself in matters involving government agencies and public institutions, recently self-litigating against the North Carolina Department of Justice and before the North Carolina Industrial Commission. DeBerry currently has federal litigation pending in multiple jurisdictions.

"I did not learn about access to justice from a policy paper. I learned it by having to represent myself, study the rules, prepare my own filings, stand before a jury without an attorney, pursue appeals, challenge government policies and procedures, and litigate against government institutions on my own. Those experiences changed how I understand due process, accountability and what meaningful access to government actually looks like for everyday people."

DeBerry does not present herself as an attorney. Instead, she says her experiences demonstrate why citizens need understandable procedures, meaningful self-help resources, technological access and the ability to comprehend the systems affecting their lives. That perspective now informs her Senate campaign's emphasis on due process, court access, government transparency and institutional accountability.

While the federal litigation proceeds, the campaign is organizing North Carolinians around a straightforward objective: 500 verified signatures. DeBerry emphasizes that supporting ballot access is not the same as promising to vote for her.

"You do not have to promise me your vote to believe I deserve the opportunity to earn it. I want North Carolinians to decide who represents them - not a system that decides which choices they get to consider before they ever reach the voting booth."

The campaign has established October 9, 2026 as its current campaign and litigation target while preparing for the November 3 general election.

DeBerry's broader campaign centers on economic mobility and everyday affordability; justice, due process and court access; families and education; government transparency and institutional accountability; technology and digital government; and civil rights and human dignity. Her campaign argues that government should not merely be accessible on paper - people should be able to understand it, use it and hold it accountable.

Shaunesi DeBerry is an Independent candidate for the United States Senate in North Carolina. Born and raised in Durham, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Management, is pursuing graduate studies in Organizational Psychology, and is a former NAACP Executive Board member. Her background includes more than two decades of experience involving telecommunications and the digital environment, entrepreneurship, organizational leadership, education and family advocacy, and civil and human-rights advocacy.

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