

THOMAS MORE DICKINSON

JUDGE,
WOONSOCKET
PROBATE COURT
2003-2013

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ADMITTED IN
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COURT

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MEMORANDUM

April 13, 2020

*Mary Burke Patterson, et als¹. vs
Bonnet Shores Fire District*

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a brief summary of this lawsuit that has been filed in Washington County Superior Court against Bonnet Shores Fire District.

BSFD's statutory charter gives voting rights to any person who owns at least property valued of at least \$400 in value within the district. Plaintiffs allege that residence—not property ownership—should be the basis for voting rights.

BSFD's corporate charter was granted by the General Assembly, meaning that it is a statute. The Plaintiffs claim that the statute is unconstitutional. They ask the court to decide that:

- Any person legally residing within the boundaries of BSFD should have voting rights, and

- Persons owning property within BSFD but who reside elsewhere should lose their voting rights.

I have entered an appearance as counsel for BSFD in Washington County Superior Court. I will be filing an initial response to the lawsuit on or before the deadline (May 6, 2020). I will provide more detailed information as the case goes on.

¹ There are seven named plaintiffs: Mary Burke Patterson, Robert E. Patterson, Melissa Jenkins, Valerie Ann Henry, Paula Childs, David H. Stenmark, and Carol M. Stenmark.