

fight for their voice in shaping our government, comparing those brave Texans to people such as Hussein's Presidential adviser, the King of Spades; comparing them to the Republican Guard chief of staff, the Jack of Clubs; the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the Iraqi Armed Forces chief of staff, a jack of Spades; the Secretary of the Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard, along with other Iraqi terrorists who have been responsible for the death and murder and rape of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens. Shame on Texas Republican legislators and whoever developed that cute little gimmick to compare our legislators in our country to Iraqi terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of folks in my district in central Texas are not yet aware of what would have happened had this Sunday night 52 Texas legislators not gone to Ardmore, Oklahoma, to break a quorum. This is the real story:

On Sunday, Mother's Day, when most families in my district were with their families honoring their mothers, Mr. DELAY and Mr. Craddick's forces had a different agenda that day. Their agenda was to put the final touches on a secret, unknown redistricting map that the public had never been able to see. It was going to dramatically change the 11th Congressional District in central Texas. I salute these heroes in Oklahoma for standing up to that kind of secret dealmaking that would have destroyed the 11th Congressional District as we have known it for over 100 years.

IN CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE TEXAS DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to follow my Waco, Texas, colleague. I come to the floor today to pay tribute, like my colleagues from Texas, to the very brave men and women of the legislature, those Texas heroes who have put their political lives on the line to ensure that the voting rights of all Texans will remain intact.

Again, I want to personally thank my State representatives, and of course there are 53 of them totally, but Rick Noriega, Jessica Farrar, Joe Moreno, Senfronia Thompson, Kevin Bailey, Scott Hochberg, and the other dozens of Texas heroes.

Yesterday, these Killer Ds, as they are now called, sent a letter to Texas Speaker Craddick, who I was honored to serve 13 years with in the statehouse. In this letter the members of the legislature said, "During recent interviews, you indicated you were not willing to negotiate with us regarding the issue of congressional redistricting. You stated you were concerned if you negotiated with us on this issue, we

would break a quorum every time we disagreed with you on other important issues of the day, such as our school finance, health care and homeowners insurance.

"We want to clarify this point so that your concern is addressed and no ambiguity remains. We are here because we strongly feel that congressional redistricting should only be taken up every 10 years, unless otherwise ordered to do so by the courts, and that it should not be a priority above other issues facing our State.

"If you are willing to assure us that congressional redistricting will not be taken up by the House during the remainder of this session and the special sessions to come, then we are willing to give you our word, through this letter, that we will not break a quorum on other issues during that same time, even when we disagree."

And I am sure that there will be plenty of things to disagree about.

"We had no intention to break a quorum on issues following this one, and if you need this guarantee, then this letter provides it. In our system, negotiations and compromise are often the only way to make progress and improve our State. To that end and in that spirit, we respectfully ask you to accept our offer. We hope you will respond as soon as possible today, so we can return right away."

And, again, this letter was sent yesterday.

"There is a lot of work we can do, and we would like to get that work done."

During my 20-plus years as a State legislator, 13 as a State House member and 7 as a State Senator in Texas, the thing I treasured the most was the bipartisanship that existed in both our chambers. The problems occurring in the Texas Legislature now are not what is normal. I remember in my 20 years there that we had redistricting bills, and we fought them based on Democrats and Republicans. We had election code bills, and we fought based on Democrat and Republicans. But to have redistricting overshadow the important issues facing the State of Texas, or any State for that matter, I think is frustrating.

We see sometimes that Washington politics, the partisan nature of that, has invaded our State legislatures. In all honesty, my friends on the Republican side that I have served with in the Texas Legislature both say we should sit down and talk about problems without it being such a partisan issue. Maybe we can learn something from our legislators here that say, wait a minute, we will fight over redistricting, we will fight over election codes, but when we talk about school finance, insurance reform, health care, or the State budget, you will not see us try to break a quorum in Texas.

Today, this Fort Worth Star-Telegram said, and I quote, "Once upon a time, TOM DELAY killed vermin and varmints and other disreputable crit-

ters for a living. Now he's trying to prove that he remembers how, by exterminating any remnants of bipartisanship in the Texas House."

And continuing the quote, "Little does DELAY, the U.S. House majority leader, care if he incites a blood feud in Austin; he'd just as soon suck the Democrats dry in his lust to make himself master of the universe. In his insatiable ambition to obliterate the two-party system, DELAY apparently expected the Texas House Dems to roll over on their backs like roaches on Raid and let his water boys roar undisturbed through the Capitol with a new congressional district map.

"When Texas Democratic House members hightailed it north of the Red River, it wasn't to avoid thorny problems still facing the State. It was out of exasperation that neither Mr. DELAY nor Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick would let earnest, hard-working lawmakers of both parties focus on the vital business that the legislature ought to be spending its energy on as this session winds down."

Mr. Speaker, I served with Mr. DELAY as a State legislator. I served with a lot of Members on the Democratic and Republican side, and I would hope that we could get past this partisan issue and let those folks go back and deal with the problems we have in the State of Texas. Hopefully, we will learn something from them and develop a better bipartisan spirit up here.

PARTISAN POWER GRAB IN TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SANDLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, the improper and purely partisan power grab by TOM DELAY and Washington, D.C., Republicans to redistrict Texas and destroy rural representation is an affront to the citizens and the voters of the great State of Texas.

This arrogant play is not about our State, our communities, our constituencies. This is political gluttony, selfishness. Even the Republicans' own witness in their 2000 redistricting battle has acknowledged that this plan is a partisan feeding frenzy. Listen to what the Republican witness said in a trial in 2001. The Republican expert witness, Rice University Professor John Alford, called the plan "a pro-Republican partisan gerrymandering, on top of an already pro-Republican existing plan." That is what their expert has said about the current map.

Mr. Speaker, in Texas, we say pigs get fat, hogs get slaughtered. Overreaching is apparently the word of the day. Mr. Speaker, this plan does not just destroy Democratic representation, this map destroys rural representation. This map displaces rural northeast Texas into a Dallas suburban district. Southeast Texas becomes dominated by Houston suburbs. Deep east Texas becomes a Tyler district just

east of Dallas. Waco would become a part of Fort Worth. And Abilene would be dominated by Lubbock.

In addition to arrogant politics, this is poor public policy. Urban districts and rural districts have different interests, different needs, different representations. My district has issues such as water, timber, rural health care, steel. Issues are different in urban areas. Texarkana, meet Plano. Sulfur Springs, this is Highland Park. Tatum? Houston is calling. Red River County's median income, \$28,000 a year; Collin County's median income, \$73,000 a year.

If you live in Texas, you know this plan will not work, yet the Republican powers that be in Washington continue to run roughshod over the Texas Legislature, both Democrats and Republicans.

Everyone knows this process is a sham, a joke, an embarrassment, and illegal. In fact, it is no process at all. This is an insult to the word "process." It is a naive, weak-kneed Republican-controlled statehouse letting Washington, D.C., insiders run over it. As a result, 53 principled Democrats in the statehouse stood up for the citizens of our State and said, enough. They broke the politically decreed quorum. Thank God these men and women stood up against the tyranny and heavy-handedness of the mindless majority. Thank God fierce independence still lives.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us step back and see what Republican representatives in Texas, not Republican Representatives in Washington, D.C., working their will are saying. Let us see what they say in Texas. Representative Charlie Geren, Republican, Fort Worth, said the Democrats were doing what they believed they needed to do in order to represent their constituents. "I understand what they're doing. It's just really the only tool in their toolbox," Geren said. "They're passionate about the map that's in front of us not being good for their constituents."

Representative Pat Haggerty, Republican, El Paso. "It's the smartest move they could have made," Haggerty said. "Under the circumstances, it was the only alternative they had. It's been done before. It's in the rules, and they're playing by the rules."

That is what the Republicans in Texas said. The Democrats are working hard, standing tall, standing up for their constituents and playing by the rules.

Let us stop this Tom and Gerry-mandering dead in its tracks. Let us get the State back to the issue of education, back to the issue of the budget, back to the issue of taxes, back to the issue of homeland security. Mr. Speaker, let us get the State House back to the issues of the people. That is what they expect, and that is what they deserve.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of

the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FROST addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TURNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

TEXAS REDISTRICTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to follow my colleagues from the Texas congressional delegation who have just previously spoken and also prouder to stand up here and be able to speak in behalf of some of my colleagues who are serving in the Texas House of Representatives, my constituents in the Ninth Congressional District of Texas, people like Joe Deshotel, who is a former vice president of Lamar University in Beaumont; Allan Ritter, who owns a successful lumber company in Nederland, Texas; and Craig Eiland, who is a successful attorney on Galveston Island, all honorable members of the Texas legislature, which is a citizen legislature, not a full-time legislature like our Congress is. I am so proud of them.

As we heard my colleagues say in the last few minutes, these ladies and gentlemen have stood up for principle, and it is magnificent to see their unity and their willingness to put their political lives on the line. They put Texans before their own personal political ambitions, and I am proud of them for doing the right thing. The real victims of this redistricting plan that is before Texas is not the members who hold those seats right now but it is the communities, certainly not the Members of Congress who may be here. The fight is not about Nick Lampson. It is not about the Democrats or the Republicans. It is about the people of Texas who deserve to be represented fairly and fully in Washington, D.C.

Jefferson County, Chambers County, Galveston County, the areas that I represent along the upper Texas gulf coast, have been in the same congressional district for over 3 decades. They have in common the size of their communities, the large petrochemical industry, and interests which run throughout that area, coastal and water transportation industries and a whole lot more beyond that. Splitting these counties apart and even further splitting Jefferson County and my hometown of Beaumont itself dilutes the strength of the interests and the ability of the people who live there to be represented as those citizens want

to be represented. Splitting these communities is in a sense a disenfranchisement of the people within those communities.

This fight, however, is about more than redistricting. It is about the infusion of partisanship that exists in Washington, D.C., into the Texas legislature. I am absolutely astounded to learn of some of the things that I have heard in the last several days following the action of those brave Texas legislators who chose to go across the Texas border into Oklahoma. I am astounded at the fact that my friend Craig Eiland, that State representative that I just mentioned, his wife, Melissa, who has recently had twin babies who were born prematurely and are in the hospital in Galveston, knowing that State law enforcement officials were directed by the Governor of our State and by the Speaker of our House to go and question the nurses in that hospital, wanting to know the whereabouts of State Representative Craig Eiland. And even after it was published in the newspaper that our legislators were in Ardmore, Oklahoma, they went to Craig's wife's home where Craig was not there and harassed her about his whereabouts, when their babies are in the hospital being treated.

We are seeing an abuse of power. We are seeing an abuse of Federal resources even. The fact that Federal resources, according to the newspapers in Texas, the homeland security agency had an airplane that was tracked. The airplane belonged to a cotton farmer/State legislator, citizen legislator, Pete Laney. It was through the information that our United States Federal homeland security agency gave to the State of Texas that led to the whereabouts of our legislators who were trying to send a message to the Speaker of the House and to the Governor of Texas. We used the wrong kind of resources because interestingly enough about 2 miles from here down the road stands a hotel called the Watergate, a place of historical significance and a symbol of the use of Federal law enforcement resources for private political gain. I am not sure where TOM DELAY stays when he is in Austin, but maybe someday that hotel will carry the same significance as Watergate. It might remind us all of the outrageous diversion of Federal law enforcement authorities to pursue Democratic legislators.

I am proud of these folks who stood up in Texas. When we shut out the interests of the people because of partisan politics, it is the people who are the ultimate losers. The people of Texas are not losers.

It might remind us all of the outrageous diversion of federal law enforcement authorities to pursue Democratic legislators who fled to Oklahoma

In this current time when we face the threat of terrorism, asking the Department of Justice, Homeland Security and the FBI to participate in personal politics is despicable