

EXHIBIT E



IN RE CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEO RECORDING

August 21, 2025

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CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE

CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025

TRANSCRIBED BY:

JULIE THOMPSON, CET

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2

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please
3 call the roll.

4 THE SECRETARY: Allen, Alvarado-Gil,
5 Archuleta, Arreguin, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon,
6 Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo,
7 Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limon,
8 McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla,
9 Perez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-
10 Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab,
11 Weber Pierson, Wiener.

12 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: A quorum is
13 present. Would the members and our guests beyond the
14 rail and in the gallery, please rise.

15 We will be lead in prayer this morning by
16 Senator Durazo, after which, please remain standing for
17 the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

18 SENATOR DURAZO: Thank you, Madam
19 President.

20 Merciful and compassionate God, we ask you
21 to abide with us in all the needs of our lives, enable
22 our caring to be wise, our support honest, and our
23 concerns thoughtful.

24 May our loves as well as our fears be
25 accurate. May our spirits be so open to your guidance

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1 that we will become faithfully daring, expectantly
2 patient and responsibly hopeful with each other and with
3 your people in our neighborhoods, our state, and our
4 nation. We ask this in your name. Amen.

5 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Members, please
6 join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

7 (Pledge of Allegiance)

8 Majority Leader, you are recognized at
9 your desk.

10 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you, Madam
11 President. We'll be calling a Democratic caucus in the
12 Maddie Lounge immediately.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Seyarto,
14 you are recognized.

15 SENATOR SEYARTO: The Republicans will
16 caucus as well.

17 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senate will recess
18 for caucus.

19 (Recess taken for caucus)

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Members of Senate
21 will now reconvene. We are back at privileges of the
22 floor. There are none.

23 Messages from the Governor will be deemed
24 read. Messages from the Assembly will be deemed read.
25 Reports of committees will be deemed read and amendments

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1 adopted.

2 Members, just a reminder, pursuant to our
3 rules, we may not debate more than two times on one
4 measure on the same day.

5 We will now move to motions, resolutions
6 and notices.

7 Senator Gonzalez, you are recognized at
8 your desk.

9 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you, Madam
10 President. I move that Senate Rule 29.10(d) be suspended
11 as it relates to Senate Bill 2AT.

12 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: This is not
13 debatable.

14 Senator Jones, you are recognized.

15 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Madam
16 President. I object to the motion and ask for a roll
17 call vote.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

19 Senator Jones is asking for a no vote.
20 Senator Gonzalez is asking for an aye vote.

21 Secretary, please call the roll.

22 THE SECRETARY: Allen.

23 Alvarado-Gil.

24 Archuleta

25 Aye.

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5

1 Arreguin.
2 Aye.
3 Ashby.
4 Aye.
5 Becker.
6 Aye.
7 Blakespear.
8 Aye.
9 Cabaldon.
10 Aye.
11 Caballero.
12 Cervantes.
13 Aye.
14 Choi.
15 No.
16 Cortese.
17 Aye.
18 Dahle.
19 No.
20 Durazo.
21 Aye.
22 Gonzalez.
23 Aye.
24 Grayson.
25 Aye.

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6

1 Grove.
2 Hurtado.
3 Aye.
4 Jones.
5 No.
6 Laird.
7 Aye.
8 Limon.
9 Aye.
10 McGuire.
11 Aye.
12 McNerney.
13 Aye.
14 Menjivar.
15 Aye.
16 Niello.
17 No.
18 Ochoa Bogh.
19 No.
20 Padilla.
21 Perez.
22 Reyes.
23 Richardson.
24 Aye.
25 Rubio.

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| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Seyarto. |
| 2 | No. |
| 3 | Smallwood-Cuevas. |
| 4 | Aye. |
| 5 | Stern. |
| 6 | Aye. |
| 7 | Strickland. |
| 8 | No. |
| 9 | Umberg. |
| 10 | Aye. |
| 11 | Valladares. |
| 12 | No. |
| 13 | Wahab. |
| 14 | Aye. |
| 15 | Weber Pierson. |
| 16 | Aye. |
| 17 | Wiener. |
| 18 | Aye. |
| 19 | SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please |
| 20 | call the absent members. |
| 21 | THE SECRETARY: Allen. |
| 22 | Aye. |
| 23 | Alvarado-Gil. |
| 24 | Caballero. |
| 25 | Aye. |

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1 Grove.
2 No.
3 Padilla.
4 Aye.
5 Perez.
6 Aye.
7 Reyes.
8 Rubio.
9 Aye.
10 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please
11 call the absent members.
12 Alvarado-Gil.
13 Reyes.
14 Aye.
15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes, 30. Noes 0.
16 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: 9.
17 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: 9. Sorry. That
18 measure carries.
19 Senator Gonzalez, you are recognized.
20 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you, Madam
21 President. I move that Senate Rule 19 be suspended as it
22 relates to Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8.
23 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: This is not
24 debatable.
25 Senator Seyarto, you are recognized.

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1 SENATOR SEYARTO: Thank you, Madam
2 President. In an effort to minimize our lawlessness and
3 rule breaking, we simply ask for a no vote on this.
4 Thank you.

5 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

6 Senator Seyarto is asking for a no vote.
7 Senator Gonzalez is asking for an aye vote.

8 Secretary, please call the roll.

9 THE SECRETARY: Allen.

10 Aye.

11 Alvarado-Gil.

12 Archuleta.

13 Aye.

14 Arreguin.

15 Aye.

16 Ashby.

17 Aye.

18 Becker.

19 Aye.

20 Blakespear.

21 Aye.

22 Cabaldon.

23 Aye.

24 Caballero.

25 Aye.

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10

1 Cervantes.
2 Aye.
3 Choi.
4 No.
5 Cortese.
6 Aye.
7 Dahle.
8 No.
9 Durazo.
10 Aye.
11 Gonzalez.
12 Aye.
13 Grayson.
14 Aye.
15 Grove.
16 No.
17 Hurtado.
18 Aye.
19 Jones.
20 No.
21 Laird.
22 Aye.
23 Limon.
24 Aye.
25 McGuire.

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11

1 Aye.
2 McNerney.
3 Aye.
4 Menjivar.
5 Aye.
6 Niello.
7 No.
8 Ochoa Bogh.
9 No.
10 Padilla.
11 Aye.
12 Perez.
13 Aye.
14 Reyes.
15 Aye.
16 Richardson.
17 Aye.
18 Rubio.
19 Aye.
20 Seyarto.
21 No.
22 Smallwood-Cuevas.
23 Aye.
24 Stern.
25 Aye.

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12

Strickland.

No.

Umburg.

Aye.

Valladares.

No.

Wahab.

Aye.

Weber Pierson.

Aye.

Wiener.

Aye.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes, 30. Noes,

9. The rules are suspended.

Senator Gonzalez, you are recognized at
your desk.

SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you, Madam
President. There is a resolution at the desk requesting
that Joint Rule 10.5 be suspended as it relates to
Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, can you
please read the resolution?

THE SECRETARY: Resolve that Joint Rule
10.5 be dispensed with.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: This is also

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1 non-debatable.

2 Senator Seyarto, you are recognized at
3 your desk.

4 SENATOR SEYARTO: Thank you, Madam
5 President. I'd like to make a substitute motion that ACA
6 8, because of its costs, be referred to the Committee on
7 Appropriations for a full hearing and vote since it was
8 not done before.

9 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator, I
10 apologize, but your motion is not in order. It does need
11 to be approved by the Rules Committee.

12 SENATOR SEYARTO: I wish to appeal that
13 ruling. It should be.

14 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: We will now appeal
15 vote to appeal the ruling of the chair. I put the
16 question to the body. Shall the ruling of the Chair be
17 upheld?

18 Secretary, please read -- call the roll.

19 Senator Seyarto is asking for a no vote.
20 I am asking for an aye vote.

21 THE SECRETARY: Allen.

22 Aye.

23 Alvarado-Gil.

24 Archuleta.

25 Aye.

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14

1 Arreguin.
2 Aye.
3 Ashby.
4 Aye.
5 Becker.
6 Aye.
7 Blakespear.
8 Aye.
9 Cabaldon.
10 Caballero.
11 Aye.
12 Cervantes.
13 Aye.
14 Choi.
15 No.
16 Cortese.
17 Aye.
18 Dahle.
19 No.
20 Durazo.
21 Aye.
22 Gonzalez.
23 Aye.
24 Grayson.
25 Aye.

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15

1 Grove.
2 No.
3 Hurtado.
4 Aye.
5 Jones.
6 No.
7 Laird.
8 Aye.
9 Limon.
10 Aye.
11 McGuire.
12 Aye.
13 McNerney.
14 Aye.
15 Menjivar.
16 Aye.
17 Niello.
18 No.
19 Ochoa Bogh.
20 No.
21 Padilla.
22 Aye.
23 Perez.
24 Aye.
25 Reyes.

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16

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Aye. |
| 2 | Richardson. |
| 3 | Aye. |
| 4 | Rubio. |
| 5 | Aye. |
| 6 | Seyarto. |
| 7 | No. |
| 8 | Smallwood-Cuevas. |
| 9 | Aye. |
| 10 | Stern. |
| 11 | Aye. |
| 12 | Strickland. |
| 13 | No. |
| 14 | Umberg. |
| 15 | Aye. |
| 16 | Valladares. |
| 17 | No. |
| 18 | Wahab. |
| 19 | Aye. |
| 20 | Weber Pierson. |
| 21 | Aye. |
| 22 | Wiener. |
| 23 | Aye. |
| 24 | SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please |
| 25 | call the absent members. |

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1 THE SECRETARY: Alvarado-Gil.
2 Cabaldon.
3 Aye.
4 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes, 30. Noes,
5 9. The ruling stands.
6 We'll go back to the motion that was made
7 by Senator Gonzalez.
8 Secretary, please call the roll.
9 THE SECRETARY: Allen.
10 Aye.
11 Alvarado-Gil.
12 Archuleta.
13 Aye.
14 Arreguin.
15 Aye.
16 Ashby.
17 Aye.
18 Becker.
19 Aye.
20 Blakespear.
21 Aye.
22 Cabaldon.
23 Aye.
24 Caballero.
25 Aye.

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18

1 Cervantes.
2 Aye.
3 Choi.
4 No.
5 Cortese.
6 Aye.
7 Dahle.
8 No.
9 Durazo.
10 Aye.
11 Gonzalez.
12 Aye.
13 Grayson.
14 Aye.
15 Grove.
16 No.
17 Hurtado.
18 Aye.
19 Jones.
20 Laird.
21 Aye.
22 Limon.
23 Aye.
24 McGuire.
25 Aye.

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19

1 McNerney.
2 Aye.
3 Menjivar.
4 Aye.
5 Niello.
6 No.
7 Ochoa Bogh.
8 No.
9 Padilla.
10 Aye.
11 Perez.
12 Aye.
13 Reyes.
14 Aye.
15 Richardson.
16 Aye.
17 Rubio.
18 Aye.
19 Seyarto.
20 No.
21 Smallwood-Cuevas.
22 Aye.
23 Stern.
24 Aye.
25 Strickland.

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20

No.

Umberg.

Aye.

Valladares.

No.

Wahab.

Aye.

Weber Pierson.

Aye.

Wiener.

Aye.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes --

THE SECRETARY: Jones, no.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes, 30. Noes,

9. Joint rules are suspended.

Senator Valladares, you are recognized.

SENATOR VALLADARES: Thank you, Madam

President. I move to remove AB 1214 from the from the
consent file at the request of the author.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: The desk will
note.

Not seeing any other members wishing to
remove anything from the consent file, we will now move
to consideration of the daily file. We will begin with
second reading file.

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Secretary, please read.

THE SECRETARY: Assembly Bill 42 with
amendments, 1255 with amendments, 1003 with amendments,
696 with amendments.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Second reading
will be deemed read. We will now move to assembly third
reading file item 226 AB 604 by Senator Gonzalez.

Secretary, please read.

THE SECRETARY: Assembly Bill 604 by
Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry. An act relating to
redistricting and declaring the urgency thereof to take
effect immediately.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Gonzalez,
you are recognized.

SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you, Madam
President and Senators. I rise today as a proud joint
author to present AB 604, which is a reasonable and
rational response to the anti-Democratic actions of the
Republican party as they attempt to rig our congressional
elections.

AB 604 contains the census block data that
will define the temporary congressional districts that we
are being forced to adopt through the actions of the
President and his complicit party leaders.

Just yesterday, the Texas House passed an

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1 aggressively partisan map giving President Trump the
2 gerrymander he requested to produce five new Republican
3 seats in the U.S. House next year. These undemocratic
4 actions are a betrayal to the values of our great nation
5 and to the people we all swore to represent, defend, and
6 protect.

7 Unlike Texas' actions, the decision to
8 approve the temporary maps outlined in this bill will
9 ultimately be in the hands of California voters. This
10 bill gives voters a choice. A choice to keep the current
11 districts or adopt maps to counter the actions of MAGA
12 extremists in Texas who are obediently working to tip the
13 scales for President Trump.

14 Despite the minority party's hypocrisy and
15 their attempts to confuse the narrative with sound bites
16 and tweets, the truth is clear that the maps are based on
17 the work, comments, and hearings of the Independent
18 Citizens Redistricting Commission, which is a bipartisan
19 commission.

20 In hearings over the last few days, I was
21 actually very shocked to learn of the minority party's
22 well-timed epiphany that independent redistricting
23 commissions are actually beneficial to voters and
24 democracy. Well, what do you know?

25 This timely awakening of the Republican

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1 Party is actually very surprising given that members of
2 the party have voted against redistricting bills and
3 reform bills for independent redistricting on at least 30
4 different occasions over the last 14 years in this state.

5 I'm hopeful that my colleagues across the
6 aisle will use their newfound enthusiasm for
7 redistricting reform to reach out to their colleagues and
8 to the President in D.C. If you have his number in your
9 phone book, please call him and demand that they adopt
10 these commissions nationwide and stop the President's
11 illegal gerrymandering efforts so we can shelf the bill
12 and get back to serving our constituents and the daily
13 needs that they have.

14 As this body is now on the same page on
15 the value of the Independent Redistricting Commission, I
16 think it's important to highlight how the temporary maps
17 described in this bill are grounded in the Commission's
18 work. The adjustments in the maps are as follows.

19 Again, they were supported by maps and
20 testimony submitted by the public, commissioner
21 testimony, and draft or completed commission maps. They
22 also include eight districts that will be identical to
23 the lines drawn by the Commission. And as I mentioned
24 over and over again in committee, over 76 percent of
25 Californians will actually be in their same congressional

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1 district; 58 percent of the maps in this bill are changed
2 by less than 20 percent, and 37 percent are changed by
3 less than 10 percent.

4 The redistricting commission that
5 completed the work and the maps that are rooted in this
6 work was comprised of five Republicans, five Democrats
7 and four no party preference individuals who did the hard
8 work to create over 76 percent of the maps you see in
9 this bill, demonstrating the real independence and non-
10 partisanship that informed the original maps and guided
11 these temporary maps.

12 Members, the greatest consequence for us
13 today is inaction. Today, the decks are stacked against
14 us, so what we have to do is fight back. We know that
15 right now President Trump is gutting vital programs and
16 increasing economic uncertainty and chaos to some of our
17 most vulnerable Californians.

18 Medicaid cut \$1 trillion over the next
19 decade with California at risk of losing 28 billion in
20 federal funding. That puts 3.4 million Californians at
21 risk. 3.1 families will lose SNAP food assistance
22 benefits, mostly children. Billions will be cut from
23 classrooms and institutes of higher learning. UCLA is
24 being ransomed by President Trump now for \$1 billion.

25 This is what we're talking about here.

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1 California stands to lose so much more. Over 7.8 billion
2 in lost tax revenue due to the Trump tax tariffs. And
3 the list goes on and on, and our communities absolutely
4 deserve better.

5 What do we do? Just sit back and do
6 nothing? Or do we fight back and provide some chance for
7 our Californians to see themselves in this democracy?

8 And while the minority party will continue
9 to misdirect and misinform the public today, with
10 dramatic ties and cries about transparency, process, and
11 rushed timelines, the truth is that they hold the power
12 to stop all of this. It's very clear. You all hold the
13 power to stop this today.

14 And again, actions do have consequences
15 and if the Republican party truly wanted to stop these
16 temporary maps, again, you have the power to do so. And
17 by voting against this today, that means you are
18 unwilling to stand up against a dictator, a leader that
19 has taken so much from our most vulnerable constituents,
20 regardless if they live in Republican or Democratic
21 districts.

22 Again, I will close by sharing that AB 604
23 is a temporary solution that provides California voters
24 with the final say so that we don't tip the scales and
25 allow this unchecked power to continue. This is how we

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1 fight back and protect our democracy. I respectfully
2 request an aye vote on this bill.

3 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

4 Senator Blakespear, you are recognized.

5 SENATOR BLAKESPEAR: Thank you, Madam
6 President.

7 Members, we could debate many details here
8 today, but here's the bottom line. Republicans are
9 trying to cheat to win congressional midterm elections
10 under their unpopular President, and Democrats are
11 fighting back. This is about trying to level the
12 national playing field so we can have something close to
13 fair elections for Congress in 2026, period. Full stop.

14 Republicans are trying to corrupt
15 democracy; Democrats are trying to honor it. Republicans
16 can say what they want, but their party started this
17 madness, racing to gerrymander in Texas and other
18 Republican controlled states to stack the deck for
19 themselves in next year's election.

20 Yes. It is lamentable that we are pausing
21 California's superior process for drawing districts
22 through a nonpartisan citizen commission that was started
23 17 years ago, but that was a different political time,
24 under different political circumstances; and it was a
25 different electorate. We're giving the voters a choice

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1 to be politically relevant. It would be naive and
2 foolish to stick to an old model, an old set of rules,
3 when Texas and likely other Republican states are
4 rewriting the rules to rig the game.

5 The Trump Administration has made clear in
6 all of its actions that it believes might makes right,
7 that it has no respect for the U.S. Constitution, the
8 separation of powers, the courts, or the democratic
9 process. Corrupting our elections is the first step
10 toward fake elections. Donald Trump is trying to remake
11 America in Russia's image. Total control, no dissent, no
12 democracy, fake news and fake elections.

13 What did we learn at the outset of the
14 second World War? That aggressors and bullies take
15 whatever you give them. There is no appeasing them. The
16 only way to counter aggressors and bullies and wannabe
17 autocrats like Donald Trump is to challenge them and to
18 fight them straight up.

19 There are many decent people in this
20 chamber, both Democrats and Republicans. All of us are
21 committed to serving constituents and doing what's best
22 for California. We do have our disagreements on policy
23 and on politics, and we work through them as best we can
24 to serve the people who elected us. But today's debate
25 is not about California politics. It's about national

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1 politics. It's about owning up to the realities of the
2 national political landscape and a Republican President
3 who will stop at nothing to consolidate power, including
4 corrupting congressional midterm elections. And we in
5 California cannot stand idly by and do nothing.

6 And with that, I am proud to be a strong
7 aye for this measure.

8 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

9 Senator Strickland, you are recognized at
10 your desk.

11 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Questions for the
12 author.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
14 take a question?

15 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Absolutely.

16 SENATOR STRICKLAND: It was stated that
17 Governor Newsom announced that this legislation and
18 ballot measure has the explicit goal of electing more
19 Democrats in response to Texas redistricting. Would you,
20 therefore, agree with Governor Newsom that the
21 predominant purpose why we're here today of this
22 constitutional amendment is to redraw these maps to elect
23 more members of the Democratic party to the House of
24 Representatives?

25 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through the President,

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1 thank you, Madam President.

2 Thank you for the question. I would say
3 again, Texas started this. It is very clear. And when
4 our democracy is at stake, as been mentioned, when there
5 are millions of people in California that will be kicked
6 off of Medicaid and kicked off of SNAP benefits because
7 of your party's control, we absolutely have to react.
8 And that means doing this bill today, AB 604. And that
9 means ensuring that the voters of California in November
10 have a say. They will have a say ultimately.

11 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Okay. So it sounds
12 like the answer is yes.

13 Another question for the author.

14 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.
15 Excuse me.

16 Will the author take another question?

17 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

19 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Did you use the 2020
20 census to draw these maps?

21 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Through the President,
22 thank you for the question again. Over 76 percent of the
23 maps that you see here today are based off of the 2020
24 Redistricting Commission, which is a bipartisan
25 commission that we all like to praise. And I'm hopeful

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1 that at the end of this that we actually get your side of
2 the aisle to support a nationwide independent
3 redistricting commission plan. Provisions of that are
4 included in the ACA 8 which will be taken up later today.
5 And that is the hope is that we can do that.

6 But yes, absolutely, over 77 percent.
7 There's minor tweaks to this bill, as has been mentioned
8 -- or to the to the previous maps, as has been mentioned.

9 SENATOR STRICKLAND: So it sounds like the
10 answer is yes, they used the 2020 census. Because I
11 found it interesting. I'll get to that later.

12 Another question for the author.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
14 take the third question?

15 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

16 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Under current law the
17 Legislature cannot draw the lines, but it's been reported
18 this week that the Legislature draw the lines, but no
19 member of either body of the Senate or Assembly has said
20 they participated in drawing these lines.

21 One, did you draw these lines or had any
22 influence on these lines? And two, what member of the
23 Legislature participated in drawing these lines?

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

25 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you. Again, the

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1 Legislature has the constitutional right to send an
2 amendment to the voters, which we will be doing later
3 today. And the voters will have the ultimate say. The
4 maps have been online since Friday evening. A very
5 public process, which -- and the Assembly and the Senate
6 both had portals. Thank you to the election chairs, the
7 good senator from Riverside as well as the good Assembly
8 member from the central coast providing a ton -- the maps
9 online on Friday and soliciting thousands -- thousands of
10 responses, which folks can do even today.

11 And in fact what was stated in the
12 committee as well is that the voters now will have over
13 70 days to actually, before they make a vote -- hit the
14 ballot box on November 4th, will have over 70 days to
15 view these maps, which is incredible. It's actually many
16 times more than the current redistricting process we have
17 through the Independent Redistricting Commission which
18 only allows 14 days. So that is the current process as
19 it stands now.

20 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Okay. Thank you for
21 an answer because under the current constitution no
22 member is allowed to adjust these lines. So my next --

23 A question for the author.

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
25 take a fourth question?

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1 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

2 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Who has seen these
3 maps in the Legislature before they were introduced in
4 the Legislature and when did you see them the first time?

5 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Again, Friday they were
6 all available publicly online. The Assembly, the Senate
7 provided opportunity for the public to see these maps.
8 And you have what we have now. There were slight tweaks
9 made in amendments this past Monday, which we all
10 debated, and now we're in the midst of continuing to view
11 those maps and solicit input from the public. And again,
12 ultimately, the California voters will vote on this.

13 SENATOR STRICKLAND: A follow-up question
14 on that same. So is your testimony or your statement
15 here today that no member of the Legislature saw these
16 maps before they were public?

17 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Again, I will reiterate
18 that these maps were available publicly on Friday and we
19 had the ability, all of us, to solicit our residents and
20 provide additional -- they had the ability to provide
21 additional input. And so that's what we're doing today.

22 And what we're not talking about,
23 unfortunately, is the fact that, you know, Texas has
24 continuously gerrymandered mid-cycle. Texas has, every
25 single year since 1965, violated the Voting Rights Act,

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1 every single time. We're going down a rabbit hole here
2 on transparency and all of the procedural matters. But
3 what's not included here is the reaction that Texas,
4 your colleagues in Texas, have continuously violated the
5 Voting Rights Act, have continuously mid-cycle
6 gerrymandered. It's unfortunate.

7 SENATOR STRICKLAND: So on my own time, it
8 sounds like the statements today is that no member of
9 this Legislature saw these maps before they were public.
10 And we all know that's not true and I'm encouraging the
11 media to follow up with every member of the Legislature
12 because under current constitution, not one member in
13 this body, on either house, is allowed to adjust a map.
14 And it was reported that there was different members that
15 adjusted these maps. And if you wanted to do it
16 correctly, you should have gone to the people of
17 California, get the authority, and then draw the maps.

18 So any member here -- let's be crystal
19 clear, and I'm asking the media to follow up. Any member
20 here that adjusted these maps violated the constitution
21 today and is again -- evasive answers that we know that
22 now, it just shows that there's no transparency because
23 no one can answer one member on this floor that had
24 participated in drawing these maps.

25 You say it's the Legislature. You're the

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1 author, but you didn't have any participation in these
2 maps. Again, that's not transparency and I'm urging The
3 media to follow up with each and every one of these
4 members as this moves forward -- if you get the
5 two-thirds vote, which I believe you will -- to ask these
6 questions.

7 Now, if I had the power, as was stated --
8 and by the way, I don't know one member of the Texas
9 Legislature. Not one. I was elected here in California,
10 not Texas. And it was stated in the opening, "You have
11 the power to shut this down." If I had the power to stop
12 this, I would stop it. I'm telling the media right now,
13 if the Republicans in California had the power to stop
14 this, we would stop this today. And they are
15 misrepresenting what is the actual truth moving forward.

16 Redistricting commission -- let's make it
17 clear. The nonpartisan redistricting commission --

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Excuse me.
19 Senator Strickland, if you can please address the body
20 and not the media when you're speaking.

21 SENATOR STRICKLAND: I'm looking around my
22 other colleagues. I could look around my whole --

23 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Excuse me, Senator
24 Strickland.

25 SENATOR STRICKLAND: I'm only allowed to

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1 look forward?

2 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Please look at me
3 while you are making your address. Thank you.

4 SENATOR STRICKLAND: That's a new rule
5 that I haven't heard of before.

6 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: I would appreciate
7 if you comply.

8 SENATOR STRICKLAND: I've been here over a
9 decade.

10 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Everything is
11 through the presiding officer. Thank you.

12 SENATOR STRICKLAND: It is through the
13 presiding officer.

14 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Exactly. So you
15 can direct your comments to me or if you have a question,
16 you can direct it --

17 SENATOR STRICKLAND: So let's be clear --

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Excuse me.

19 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Okay.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: If you have a
21 question, you can direct it to that member. But if
22 you're speaking, please direct it to the presiding
23 officer. Thank you.

24 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Thank you.

25 Let's be clear. It was stated in the

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1 opening that the Nonpartisan Redistricting Commission
2 drew these lines and these maps. That's a false. They
3 might have took it as a blueprint, but the Nonpartisan
4 Redistricting Commission did not draw these maps as it
5 was stated in the opening. Again, people are trying to
6 be misled of what this actually is.

7 Members, this week's actions demonstrate
8 why we need a Nonpartisan Citizens' Redistricting
9 Commission, and why it was passed in the first place.

10 For my colleagues on the other side, who I
11 deeply respect, sometimes I believe you think the ends
12 justify the means. Let's go through what happened this
13 week with no transparency, no input from the community
14 across the state to draw these maps. And these maps were
15 drawn behind closed doors with the Governor and, what I
16 understand, legislative leadership. No one admits that
17 they had any participation in these maps. They just came
18 out with thin air.

19 But again, let's look what happened this
20 week in terms of transparency. You violated your own
21 rule, the 30 day rule, to push this through. No one will
22 admit that they drew these maps.

23 And to the media, I'm saying you need to
24 move forward as this moves forward, to the famous line,
25 what did they know, and when did they know it? Which

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1 lawmakers saw these maps and had influence on these maps?
2 Who paid for these maps? And the lack of transparency
3 keeps going on and on and on.

4 Let's see what we have here today,
5 currently, before you go to the voters in November. What
6 we have here today is the gold standard for redistricting
7 nationally. It should be the national model and not
8 thrown out. It's something that we should brag about
9 here in the state of California. The fact that the
10 people pick the lines, not the politicians.

11 We have full transparency. In fact, we
12 have hundreds -- hundreds of hearings throughout the
13 state of California, in every corner of the state of
14 California, so citizens can participate in the drawing of
15 these maps that keep communities together of whole cities
16 and counties. And the lines are drawn in public in front
17 of everybody, in front of the world.

18 Members, fair districts lead to fair
19 representation, and if you pass this bill moving forward,
20 and if it passes in November, which I don't believe it
21 will, but if it does, what you're striving for is
22 predetermined elections, meaning that there won't be one
23 competitive race for Congress in California for the next
24 three cycles. Members, that's not good for Democrats,
25 Independents, and Republicans. You're taking the voice

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1 away from Californians in terms of having fair
2 representation and earning the trust of your voters. Not
3 having a predetermined election.

4 Here in California, we have a system where
5 citizens pick the representatives and not politicians
6 picking the citizens. That's what you want to throw
7 away. And what I heard from many of my colleagues on the
8 other side, this is going to be temporary. From my
9 experience, and I have over a decade of experience here,
10 nothing is temporary when you do it. Former President
11 Ronald Reagan said it best. "We have long discovered
12 that nothing lasts longer than a temporary government
13 program."

14 Even this week, the assembly elections
15 chair stated that the Democrats should do what we're
16 doing here today in 2030. It was quoted already. So
17 when you say to the people of California, this is
18 temporary, my experience is nothing's temporary here. I
19 don't believe one second that this will be temporary and
20 neither should the people of California.

21 Now, I do have a Joint Resolution 10.
22 It's not up yet. I put it across the desk. But it says
23 we should have nonpartisan redistricting districts and
24 make it a model nationwide.

25 I do believe it is wrong for Texas to do

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1 this. I do believe it's wrong for Illinois to do this.
2 I do believe it's wrong for every other state where the
3 politicians pick their citizens. It is wrong. Both on
4 the Democrat and Republican side. We should be promoting
5 what we do here in California, not throwing it away. And
6 that's what you're going to do if this is successful.
7 You're going to take what is the national model for
8 redistricting and putting power in the people, and you're
9 going to take it back to put in the power of the
10 politicians; so you don't have to really earn the vote of
11 your constituents because the election will be
12 predetermined.

13 I also support Congressman Kevin Kiley's
14 legislation that bans mid-decade redistricting
15 nationwide. Members, I heard that Speaker Pelosi and
16 other Democrats from the DCCC from California were here.
17 What would be more constructive is that you jump on board
18 to Kevin Kiley's bill, pass it on the national level, and
19 therefore, we won't have mid-decade redistricting.

20 So members, again, going back to the
21 census 2020, there's been massive population shifts since
22 2020. And when you look at these maps, for example, Los
23 Angeles has lost representation in the last five years,
24 but under these maps, they pick up a seat. The Inland
25 Empire has gained population over the last five years,

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1 but they lose a seat.

2 And it's very clear in federal law that
3 these districts have to be equal in representation. So
4 if you use the 2020 census, as was stated here before us,
5 this will be thrown out by courts because it is very
6 crystal clear that the deviation that you have when you
7 draw congressional districts is very, very small.

8 And members, you know this is wrong. You
9 know what you're doing today is wrong. You know it's not
10 good for democracy in California. And you weren't
11 elected by anybody. You weren't elected by the people of
12 Illinois. You weren't elected by the people of Texas.
13 You weren't elected by the people of New York or North
14 Carolina. You were elected by the people of California,
15 and you were elected to defend the constitution. The
16 Constitution -- again, I believe my colleagues, whether
17 you knew it or not, violated the oath of the constitution
18 that you swore to.

19 And I do believe -- I understand, but the
20 ends don't justify the means. You know this is bad for
21 Independents, Democrats, and Republicans throughout the
22 State of California. I want you to look deep inside your
23 soul and you know this is wrong moving forward. You know
24 this is not good for democracy in California, and I'm
25 urging your no vote. Thank you.

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1 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you.

2 Madam President, may I respond?

3 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: So would you like
4 to respond in your close?

5 SENATOR GONZALEZ: I can do that too, but
6 I just wanted to make sure that it was known, if I may,
7 just to refute some of the misinformation that had been
8 put out.

9 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Can you hold on
10 for just one moment?

11 SENATOR STRICKLAND: You're going to
12 respond to every speaker?

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Gonzalez,
14 unless someone has asked you a specific question, which
15 there was not a question, we're going to have you use
16 those in your close.

17 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Okay.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Niello,
19 you are recognized at your desk.

20 SENATOR NIELLO: Thank you, Madam
21 President.

22 Members, I hope you will indulge me for a
23 moment for a bit of digression into some political
24 history. No misdirection, just the facts, ma'am. In
25 2008, Proposition 11 was put on the ballot to establish

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1 the commission for redistricting for state legislators,
2 and I think also the BOE. And my friend from West
3 Sacramento was correct in the -- I think the assembly
4 elections committee yesterday when he said that that bill
5 barely passed. It was definitely a squeaker. Maybe less
6 than 1 percent over 50 percent. That's correct. There
7 is a rest of the story, though, which I'll get to in a
8 moment.

9 Importantly, one main opponent to that
10 Proposition was the California State Democratic Party.
11 Well, what do you know? Now, fast forward, 2010.
12 Proposition 20 was placed on the ballot to perhaps
13 correct an incompleteness of the previous Proposition 11 to
14 add congressional districts to the commission's
15 responsibility. That's what we're talking about here,
16 congressional districts. Not what Proposition 11 did,
17 only state offices, but congressional districts.

18 Now, the rest of the story. That
19 proposition passed overwhelmingly. Over 60 percent of
20 the vote. Interestingly, there was very little
21 opposition to that proposition. Now, this is important.
22 There was a reason for that. What is the easiest way to
23 defeat a proposition? That's where misdirection comes
24 in. Confusion.

25 There was also, on that ballot,

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1 Proposition 27, which proposed to completely abolish the
2 redistricting commission. Get rid of it. Not maintain
3 it, which we're talking about supposedly here, but get
4 rid of it. The ostensible proponent for that in the
5 literature was UCLA professor and former chair of the
6 Fair Political Practices Commission, Daniel Lowenstein.
7 But he said the real sponsors were democratic members of
8 Congress.

9 Well, what do you know? The contributors
10 to that campaign, which ranged from 5000 to \$225,000,
11 were Judy Chu, Anna Ashu, Zoe Lofgren, Nancy Pelosi,
12 Doris Matsui. Our own colleague here from San Pedro who
13 was in Congress at the time, Linda Sanchez, and Adam
14 Schiff, as well as a number of others who are no longer
15 in Congress.

16 The confusion didn't work. What was the
17 result of that competing measure? It was defeated by
18 almost an exact mirror image by which Proposition 20
19 passed. It was defeated with 60 percent saying no. So
20 now comes a convenient opportunity, very convenient
21 opportunity. Governor Newsom wants five more democratic
22 congressional seats.

23 And Democrats see an opportunity for
24 California taxpayers to pay for what they could not get
25 with Proposition 27 in 2010. It has, after all, been

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1 reported that the DCC has been involved with the current
2 effort.

3 A quarter billion dollars, or whatever the
4 amount is to fund this partisan effort to thwart the will
5 of the voters, is absolutely unacceptable. Members just
6 history, not misdirection. Those are just the facts,
7 ma'am. I urge a no vote.

8 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

9 Senator Grayson, you are recognized at
10 your desk.

11 SENATOR GRAYSON: Thank you, Madam
12 President. I do have a question to the author.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
14 take a question?

15 SENATOR GRAYSON: Thank you very much.
16 First, I have two questions. I'll just ask them both and
17 then answer all in one. The first one is the actions
18 taken by Texas, are they permanent or temporary? And
19 does Texas practice midcycle redistricting?

20 And then -- so that was a two part
21 question on the first one. And the second question is,
22 for redistricting bills, I believe there was some
23 reference made to that. Could there be -- could the
24 author elaborate on what was talked about as far as some
25 redistricting bills that had been opposed?

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

2 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you for the
3 question. And yes, first question, Texas' actions --
4 their action yesterday is actually permanent. There is
5 no temporary aspect to the gerrymandering they just
6 approved yesterday through their House midcycle.
7 Redistricting is a constant and there's no input for
8 Texas voters to weigh in. Very opposite from what we're
9 doing here. Ours is temporary until 2030. And of
10 course, we are letting the voters decide whether to do
11 this midcycle or not, which we are doing through a
12 constitutional amendment. So we are absolutely doing
13 that.

14 On the second piece, thank you for your
15 question on redistricting. Now, as mentioned, just as of
16 last year, there have been over 30 bills last year and up
17 until going back to about 2014, where a number of bills
18 had been presented in this body to support an independent
19 redistricting commission in various parts of the State of
20 California, in places like San Luis Obispo, and
21 Sacramento and Orange County, Riverside, Fresno, Kern.
22 And all of those bills and efforts to establish an
23 independent citizens' redistricting committee in all
24 parts of the state of California had been voted no by my
25 colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

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1 And so I'm not understanding what they're
2 saying in terms of wanting now an opportunity to have an
3 independent redistricting commission be the end all say
4 all while we're sitting here getting attacked by
5 President Trump on our democracy.

6 SENATOR GRAYSON: Thank you for that
7 additional information. If I may, through the chair,
8 would this -- and this is just a hypothetical question on
9 my part or maybe not. Would this measure impact any
10 other districts outside of congressional districts? The
11 answer is no.

12 And another question is who will
13 ultimately -- ultimately have the final say on this
14 matter? And the answer is the voters of the state of
15 California.

16 Senators, I rise in support of this
17 measure. Throughout my life and throughout my career, I
18 have been guided by some very simple and basic values.
19 First and foremost among them, fairness and respect with
20 commitment to be fair and respectful of my neighbors and
21 also to respect the rule of law.

22 This is an impactful day, especially for
23 all of us here in California, which is why the mid-decade
24 redistricting efforts being conducted by other states
25 certainly appear to undermine these values in pursuit of

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1 power, simply for the sake of power.

2 And what is most troubling to me is that
3 these efforts appear to be equivalent of changing the
4 rules of a game after it has started. Imagine a football
5 game that is tied at halftime and one team comes out for
6 the second half declaring that for the rest of the game
7 their touchdowns are worth twice as many points. Is that
8 just. Is that justice? Is this not the situation we
9 face here where a number of states have decided to change
10 the rules of redistricting to at halftime?

11 Senators, we are literally at halftime in
12 this redistricting match that we now find ourselves in; 5
13 years into a 10-year cycle facing the same situation as
14 the hypothetical football game that was just described.
15 Fairness would dictate that either all the touchdowns are
16 worth twice as many points or none of the touchdowns are
17 worth twice as many points. Justice would dictate that
18 we all abide by the same rules regardless of the game,
19 which is exactly why we're here today. Thank you.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

21 Senator Choi, you are recognized.

22 SENATOR CHOI: Thank you, Madam and the
23 Members.

24 I rise today in strong opposition to this
25 proposal for special election to redraw our congressional

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1 districts in California. Many points have been raised,
2 and Texas has been described as a bad actor. Very
3 interesting. And then also the regulations on the sports
4 and halftime changing the rules. I would like to apply
5 these two points. If Texas was a bad actor, are you
6 supposed to follow the bad actor? If somebody runs
7 through a red light or kills somebody, you do the same
8 thing? I mean that's exactly what we are trying to do.
9 And as a model for Texas, it's a model we now follow
10 whatever Texas does. If you say that that action is
11 wrong, just let's don't do that. Isn't it more common
12 sense?

13 Now many points in this direction we can
14 argue about but let me focus on this measures in another
15 sense, not urgent item. It is not necessary. It is
16 certainly not affordable. Let me focus on the financial
17 aspect of that. In California, we have projected to face
18 \$12 billion of deficit in the coming year. You all know
19 that. Every dollar matters. Yet this proposal would
20 drain an estimated a quarter billion dollars of general
21 budget just to conduct a special election. This is money
22 we do not have and the money that could be put to far
23 better use.

24 Think about what a quarter billion dollars
25 can do or represents. It could finance tens of thousands

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1 of childcare slots for working families. It could
2 support financial aid for thousands of college students
3 struggling with tuition. It could keep after school
4 programs and mental health services available for our
5 children. It can fund public safety and wildfire
6 prevention programs at a time when California depend on
7 them most.

8 In order to help close the \$12 billion
9 state budget deficit, the supermajority decided to cut
10 California Peer-Run Warm Line in Orange County. A key
11 program that has provided a free 24/7 mental health
12 service to millions of residents. That was only \$5
13 million. I was hoping that you would agree to that, but
14 it was cut off. And here a quarter billion dollars is
15 just pocket money to spend on this unnecessary special
16 election special election and special redrawing in the
17 mid-decade.

18 As a result of Orange County, where I
19 represent the county warm line program, has a laid off 127
20 staff members and is now facing to end operations
21 completely. Think about the victims, the customers who
22 have used this warm line and then also unburdened all the
23 burdens that the 911 system is getting. And we know that
24 the 911 system right now is -- answer so late because of
25 a shortage of people with the shortage of staffing in 911

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1 answering service.

2 Instead of funding critical programs like
3 this, we are being asked to throw these dollars away on a
4 political maneuvering. This is not about the fairness.
5 This is not about the people. And this is certainly not
6 about protecting democracy that you all say that we must
7 keep the democracy fairness of fairness. This is a
8 partisan power grab, and it comes at the expense of
9 Californians we are here to serve.

10 So I ask you, my colleagues, will we tell
11 Californians that their childcare, their education, their
12 healthcare, their public safety programs don't matter as
13 much as a rushed and unnecessary special election
14 redrawing? Or we will stand with them and say no to this
15 reckless use of taxpayer dollars.

16 Senators and colleagues, let us show some
17 fiscal responsibility and common sense. Please vote for
18 no on this wasteful proposal. Thank you.

19 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

20 Senator Laird, you are recognized.

21 SENATOR LAIRD: Thank you, Madam
22 President.

23 In 2021, a particularly egregious
24 gerrymander was done in my district in San Luis Obispo
25 County. It was for the board of supervisors' districts,

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1 and it was proposed by one party. A party that was
2 losing registration was no longer the party with the
3 greatest plurality in that county and they passed a map
4 suggested by one political committee to egregiously
5 gerrymander that county. Under the census, minor tweaks
6 to the existing districts would have been in order.
7 Instead, it was jam the Democrats into one district, make
8 the other four districts in a way that they likely could
9 go the other way, and preserve a majority that didn't
10 exist in the electorate at large.

11 And it was gross. There were some people
12 that would vote in three -- every two years for three
13 cycles for supervisor. There were some that were the
14 opposite. There were -- thousands of people would have
15 two supervisors at once. Thousands more would have no
16 supervisor. It was a dislocation that was off the
17 charts.

18 And so what happened? I introduced, last
19 year, Senate Bill 977 to say we would have independent
20 redistricting for San Luis Obispo County. We would have
21 the commission. That egregious line drawing would never
22 happen again for that county.

23 And then what happened in this body? In
24 this body, nine senators thought that was just fine.
25 That that egregious redistricting that would have been

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1 rectified by commission is what they voted against. And
2 it was said "Just the facts," on one speech, and then
3 there were all the names that were given about those
4 facts. Well, let me say in just the facts, it was
5 senators from Jackson, Bieber, Bakersfield, San Diego,
6 Sacramento, Yucaipa, and Murrieta that said, "We are fine
7 with egregious gerrymandering. We do not want a
8 commission. We do not want fairness in redistricting."
9 Let's be clear about that.

10 So when it was said, "What is known and
11 when did we know it?" in 2024 we knew that was an
12 egregious redistricting and nine Senators said it was
13 just fine with them. It was said fair districts lead to
14 fair representation, but nine Senators said not in San
15 Luis Obispo County. It was said that politicians should
16 not pick their voters but was fine for nine Senators in
17 San Luis Obispo County. It was said that we are
18 witnessing a partisan power grab. We witnessed one there
19 and it was fine for nine Senators in San Luis Obispo
20 County.

21 So let's just call that what it is. We
22 have born again commission lovers here. They had a
23 chance to have the fair redistricting in different parts
24 of the state, and it was rejected. And so I just think
25 it's fair to expose that level of partisanship because

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1 that's what's going on. And I think now we have a
2 national crisis and we are responding and I asked for an
3 aye vote on AB 604.

4 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

5 Senator Grove, you are recognized at your
6 desk.

7 SENATOR GROVE: Thank you, Madam
8 President.

9 Colleagues, I rise in opposition of this
10 redistricting package, all three bills that are coming
11 before us today to redraw congressional lines. The move
12 undermines the will of the people and the voters of this
13 state. I don't wholeheartedly agree with the actual
14 commission, the people that are on the board of the
15 commission. But I don't agree that legislators should be
16 able to draw their own lines either. And I'm a
17 legislator, and I don't think I should be able to draw my
18 own lines. I think the people should be able to pick the
19 people they want to have them represented, and it should
20 be that a standard across the United States.

21 I listened to your comments, and I really
22 wasn't going to speak, but I listened to all the comments
23 and it's all about transparency, and this has been
24 transparent. Colleagues, this bill -- this bill was put
25 in print on Monday. We had a hearing on Tuesday. On

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1 Tuesday, when the hearing took place, both election
2 chairs in the Assembly and the Senate could not answer
3 one question. Who drew the lines? The Assembly
4 elections chair said it was a collaboration. The
5 Assembly elections chair said it was leadership.
6 Leadership? What leadership? Give us a name.

7 The individual who was providing technical
8 assistance in that committee would not answer any
9 questions about who they were, who they represented, who
10 was paying them. It's a public process and you're asking
11 from the dais, "Who do you represent?"

12 "I'd rather not answer that question."

13 "Who's paying you?"

14 "I'd rather not answer that question."

15 I mean, this is a public process where we
16 got no answers and you're talking about transparency.
17 They were asked, "Who drew the lines?" and in the
18 Assembly, the response was, "It was a group of
19 leadership. It was the same state Legislature." And the
20 response was, "We're in the state Legislature, and we
21 didn't participate in that process." And they said,
22 well, "You're not in leadership." So then it fell on
23 leadership.

24 I watched the interview on our own
25 elections chair here in the Senate. "Who drew the

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1 lines?"

2 "Well, the Rules Committee."

3 I'm the Vice Chair of Rules. We did not
4 participate, that I know of, of drawing any lines. My
5 colleague from Santa Cruz sits on rules. He did not
6 participate in drawing any lines. It was not the Rules
7 Committee. They also said that the Rules Committee
8 placed this information and the maps on the website. We
9 didn't do that. I went back through the last three
10 hearings. We did not vote to do that.

11 No one is being truthful and transparent
12 when we're just trying to ask questions. Who drew the
13 lines? Did you know about the lines before it was -- you
14 know, did you have input? And I know that's just a
15 simple thing and it's just one thing that needs to be
16 brought up. But if we're going to talk about
17 transparency, this process put in print on Monday where
18 lines were already drawn when the bill was put in process
19 with no public comment because the first public comment
20 went up on Tuesday during the hearing and the maps were
21 already drawn. And it's supposed to be a public process.
22 That's not what we're doing here and we're better than
23 that.

24 And I know the rhetoric on the other side
25 is about Texas. Let's talk about Texas for just one

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1 second. Texas was sued by the Elias Group. The Elias
2 Group --

3 Permission to read?

4 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Permission
5 granted.

6 SENATOR GROVE: "The Elias Group is a
7 mission driven firm committed to helping Democrats win
8 citizens' votes and progressives make change." That's
9 the Elias Group. The Elias Group won a lawsuit against
10 Texas. Like it or not, constitution says we have three
11 branches of government, the executive branch, the
12 judicial branch, and the legislative branch. The
13 judicial branch ordered the State of Texas to redraw
14 their lines. The State of Texas complied with the
15 judicial order -- the judge's order. That's it.

16 Now, because of the way the lawsuit was
17 structured, Texas did take it in a way that, you know,
18 nobody really expected it to happen, but they did. The
19 bottom line is, is that the response that California is
20 having because of a lawsuit from a Democrat activist
21 lawyer group in D.C. and then California jumps on this
22 bandwagon. We are not involved in that lawsuit. We are
23 not involved in Texas legislation. Contrary to my
24 colleague's statement, he knows no Texas legislators, I
25 know several.

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1 They're under a judicial order to redraw
2 the lines. For us to engage in that process, I think
3 sends a bad message across the nation because that old
4 adage, "So goes California, so goes the nation." There
5 is no doubt in my mind that other states will look at
6 what we are doing to offset Texas, which is a judicial
7 directive, a judgment against Texas to redraw those
8 lines.

9 And looking at what we're doing -- and
10 again, their policy is different. Legislators can redraw
11 those lines. Our policy is separate. It's a
12 constitutional amendment where we have a citizens
13 redistricting committee and we as legislators can't draw
14 the lines. And no one in this body will answer the
15 question, including the author that's presenting or the
16 presenter this morning, the majority floor leader. It
17 was asked by my colleague three different ways, "Who drew
18 the lines?" and there's still no response. Why is that
19 such a hard question?

20 If you look at what's happening, it's
21 going -- "So goes California, so goes the nation." And
22 I'm telling you, you guys have not thought this all the
23 way through because you don't have the votes. You just
24 don't have the leeway that we do on our side of the wild
25 from a national experience.

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1 Pritzker can't help you. He's got 3
2 Republicans out of 17. Massachusetts has zero. New
3 York, very few. This is not going to go well for your
4 side of the aisle coming the midterm elections and I just
5 don't think that you've thought that through.

6 I can tell you that, you know, if people
7 did participate on the lines and you can make an
8 assumption that you have forever congressional seats here
9 in the state of California, and you're making those
10 decisions because of the congressional lines that are
11 going to benefit you for the rest of your life, it still
12 doesn't help the voters in California, all of the people
13 that we represent.

14 We have serious problems to solve in this
15 state. have a potential of refineries closing. We've
16 got a potential of cement businesses going out of
17 business. We've got LA wildfires where only four permits
18 have been issued. We don't need to get involved in this
19 nonsense. The people of the state of California voted in
20 a citizens' redistricting commission. I didn't like that
21 idea either. I did vote against it. But that's what we
22 have. And unless that is changed in a process that is
23 not like this -- if you want to work on this next year,
24 and I realize that probably run out of time for the
25 elections.

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1 But the bottom line is that this bill was
2 put in print on Monday. The people of the state of
3 California had Tuesday and one committee hearing to
4 comment on it. That's not transparency. And in that
5 committee hearing, no one would answer those questions.
6 That's not transparency and that's not the way this body
7 should operate.

8 I've been here since 2010. I came in in
9 the Tea Party district, and I was that rant and raving
10 individual on the Assembly floor that got my mic shut off
11 several times. I get it. But there is a collegiality,
12 whether you agree with policy or not, that you have on
13 this floor and that we have to be 1 of 40, right? 40
14 Representatives of the state of California.

15 And I'm just telling you that the way this
16 is put together is not right for the voters, it's not
17 right for California, and this thing is going to backfire
18 on you. So, next year when all this goes down, I want
19 you guys to say, just like you're saying right now,
20 "Gosh, Groves has been screaming from the rooftops for 10
21 years regarding our oil and gas prices going up and the
22 avenues that we're taking." And next year, you're going
23 to go, "Wow, Grove was saying this is going to backfire
24 us." Mark my words, they will pick up almost 25 mid-
25 state congressional seats.

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1 The way this process is working is not
2 good for us, our party, your party, or the people of this
3 nation in this state. I support Kevin Kiley's bill that
4 says no midterm redistricting -- no midterm
5 redistricting, and that we should abide on the census
6 every 10 years just like it's set in place.

7 Respectfully ask for a no vote based on
8 the voters in this state and across our nation for this
9 redistricting passage that has zero transparency. Zero
10 transparency. And even if you did have a hearing, you
11 won't answer anybody's questions.

12 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

13 Senator Valladares, you are recognized.

14 SENATOR VALLADARES: Thank you, Madam
15 President.

16 And I too want to raise my mic in
17 opposition. So I want to raise an issue that I think has
18 been overlooked in this process, and that is communities
19 of interest. Our Constitution is really clear. When we
20 draw districts, we're supposed to keep communities
21 together. Cities, neighborhoods, agricultural regions,
22 aerospace hubs, working class communities, watersheds,
23 school districts. These are groups of people with shared
24 and social interests who deserve to have fair and
25 effective representation. What we're not supposed to do

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1 is draw maps around politicians, incumbents, political
2 parties, or the partisan advantage or disadvantage of
3 voters, yet that is exactly what these maps do.

4 To echo a lot of the sentiments from my
5 colleagues on my side of the aisle, this process has been
6 secretive from the very beginning. We don't know who
7 drew these lines, or rather, it's difficult for those who
8 were involved to name names, really at this point, but we
9 all know it was politicians. It was consultants and D.C.
10 insiders that are going to all benefit from these maps.

11 And the result, the result is truly
12 unmistakable. Communities of interest were ignored, they
13 were divided, and they were sacrificed for political
14 gain. Take Modoc County. Farmers and ranchers, people
15 who feed the world. They are now lumped in with wealthy
16 Bay Area neighborhoods whose daily realities couldn't be
17 further apart. Look at Lodi, an agriculture community
18 split three ways. Some bundled into Sacramento suburbs,
19 others into Bay Area commuter towns. Instead of one
20 strong voice in Congress, their representation is now
21 diluted and divided.

22 In my own district, the Antelope Valley,
23 an isolated region with shared concerns of aerospace and
24 defense. It's the nation's backbone for defense, for
25 innovation. It's where America's most advanced aircraft

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1 and space technologies are designed, built, and tested.
2 It's carved into five different congressional districts.
3 This means no single representative is fully going to be
4 accountable to the needs of my community in the Antelope
5 Valley.

6 And let's talk about Sonoma County,
7 chopped into three districts, silencing the ability of
8 that community to speak with one voice. This isn't just
9 bad mapping. This scheme is bad governance. The voters
10 of California created an independent redistricting
11 commission precisely to prevent this kind of power grab.
12 They voted for fairness, transparency, and independence.

13 The Constitution says maps are not to be
14 drawn for politicians, for incumbents, or for parties.
15 But here we are with maps engineered in secret, rushed
16 forward, and designed to benefit a few select few. This
17 is in clear conflict of interest, and it undermines
18 public trust and our elections. It tells voters that
19 their voices matter less than political insiders and it
20 confirms every fear they already have about Sacramento.

21 Colleagues, this isn't about Democrats or
22 Republicans. In my district, I represent more Democrats
23 than I do Republicans. I want every single voter to be
24 represented fairly. This is about the constitution.
25 This is about transparency. It's about whether the

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1 people of California get what they voted for, a fair and
2 open process. Not maps drawn in back rooms for political
3 convenience.

4 The people of California deserve better.
5 They deserve fair maps. They deserve good government,
6 and they deserve leaders who will honor California's
7 constitution, not undermine it. I cannot support this
8 plan. And I think it's ironic to hear, in response to my
9 colleague from Santa Cruz, how history is repeating
10 itself. How right now we're seeing that across the
11 nation and even in California, that Democrats have lost
12 2.1 million voters and Republicans have picked up 2.4
13 million. And further makes me question this paragraph.
14 Is history repeating itself?

15 I urge you to vote to uphold the
16 constitution of California today. I urge you to be the
17 voice -- to be the voice that your constituents elected
18 you to be. To uphold their rights, their voices,
19 respectfully ask for a no vote.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

21 Senator Umberg, you are recognized.

22 SENATOR UMBERG: Well, thank you, Madam
23 President.

24 Let me speak to some self-evident,
25 irrefutable proofs. Truth number one is that all 39

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1 members of the California State Senate sitting here today
2 are here because they want to improve the lives of
3 Californians. Irrespective of whether they have a D or
4 an R behind their name, they're here to improve the lives
5 of Californians.

6 Truth number two, we would not be here but
7 for the President of the United States ordering Texas to
8 create five new seats. And why? Why? Because he's
9 concerned about the Congress potentially being a check on
10 his power.

11 Truth number three. Truth number three is
12 that the \$811 million that the President has asked to be
13 taken from California K-12 education, to include after
14 school programs that were referenced by my colleague from
15 Irvine, that that diminishes the quality of life of
16 Californians.

17 Next truth, the billion dollars right now
18 that is attempted to be extorted from UCLA diminishes the
19 quality of life of Californians.

20 Next truth. The 57,861 individuals
21 detained by masked agents, many unknown, that diminishes
22 the quality of life in California and in particular, the
23 47,000 plus who have not had a conviction for anything
24 other than being of a certain race and having a certain
25 occupation. That is the only criteria that was used to

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1 detain those 47,000 individuals. That diminishes the
2 quality of life in California.

3 The \$164 billion taken over the next 10
4 years in terms of health care, that diminishes the
5 quality of life here in California. And in terms of the
6 cost-benefit analysis, whatever it costs for this
7 election, if we can save but a small portion of the
8 amounts that the President wishes to remove, to take, to
9 punish California, it is a cost-benefit analysis that we
10 should engage in.

11 Now, James Madison in Federalist 47 said
12 look, here's what we do is we as our government, we
13 create a government with checks and balances, and the
14 Congress is supposed to be a check on the executive, a
15 check on the -- but this Congress has been absolutely
16 supine in terms of being a check, including the nine
17 members of the Republican delegation from California have
18 basically decided to disarm.

19 Now, what is the response? The response
20 is to actually respond to what the President's trying to
21 do. Again, we wouldn't be here but for that.

22 Now, let me also commend and congratulate
23 those of the Republican party who have stood up to the
24 President. I heard my colleague from Huntington Beach
25 today talk about Texas, say that what they're doing is

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1 wrong. That's hard. That's hard, and much harder for
2 Republicans to say that than Democrats. Same thing with
3 my colleague from Irvine who condemned what the
4 President's doing in Texas. The same thing with Kevin
5 Kiley who's saying, "Look, we should not be doing
6 midterm, mid-decade reapportionment."

7 The same thing with Carl DeMaio, and
8 you're never going to hear these words spoken again, is
9 that I commend Carl DeMaio for citing his disdain for
10 what's going on in Texas. But that is not sufficient.
11 And by the way, I appreciate the humility of my
12 colleagues here too. That's not a trait that's common to
13 most of us who are elected. But their humility in saying
14 that they have no influence. They have no influence on
15 the President. They have no influence on Texas.

16 Well, I invite them to join with me in the
17 letter that I circulated asking the Governor of Texas
18 cease and desist, to stand down. If he stands down, we
19 will stand down. The 9 members of the Republican
20 delegation in the Congress are larger than 23 states in
21 this union. Those 9 members, plus our colleagues here in
22 the California Legislature, they have a very strong
23 voice, and I urge them to use that voice. I'll go to
24 Austin with them. I urge them to basically make sure
25 that this crisis is averted.

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1 If this crisis is not averted, then we in
2 California must stand up. We in California must stand up
3 for the quality of life of Californians as we see it
4 being assaulted. We must stand up and vote aye on AB
5 604. Thank you.

6 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

7 Senator Durazo, you are recognized.

8 SENATOR DURAZO: Thank you, Madam
9 President.

10 Good morning, colleagues. Today's vote is
11 not about us. Today's vote is not about politicians.
12 Today's vote is about people. Working people living
13 ordinary lives. Today's vote is about whether Texas and
14 Trump have the right to water down what is right for the
15 people who elect us.

16 California's average hourly wage is \$7 an
17 hour more than Texans make. Our minimum wage is \$9 more
18 than theirs. And before any of you knee jerk to "Yeah,
19 but everything is more expensive in California," consider
20 the facts for working people beyond wages. Texas
21 families pay \$4,300 out of pocket for health insurance.
22 Californians pay \$1,100 less. 16.6 percent of Texans
23 don't have any health insurance at all. But only 6
24 percent of Californians are without it. Retirees in
25 Texas scrape by with \$600 less than California retirees.

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1 Texas utility bills are about the same as Californians.

2 And the median home price in Texas capital city of Austin
3 is the same as Sacramento.

4 This issue and our vote today is about our
5 right to live in a California that Californians control.
6 Texas and Trump want to water down that right. That's
7 what's at stake. 40 years ago, Texas state government
8 came up with a famous anti-litter campaign slogan.

9 "Don't mess with Texas." You know what? We aren't
10 stupid. Don't mess with us either. Thank you.

11 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Seyarto,
12 you are recognized.

13 SENATOR SEYARTO: Thank you, Madam Chair
14 and -- or Madam President.

15 So today, members, I stand before you and
16 this is going to be no surprise. I do not support what
17 we are doing. There's a lot of reasons not to support
18 this and I'm going to list a couple of them but I'm going
19 to talk in chief about one thing in particular.

20 For one thing, I know we've been belittled
21 for trying to bring it up or pretending that it's
22 something that's not, but this does lack transparency.
23 This effort is a week old for us, for the people out
24 there that got to see, maybe if they knew to get on the
25 thing. The reason it lacks transparency is because there

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1 hasn't been an opportunity for the public to be able to
2 get engaged enough to look and see what these three bills
3 that we're going to be doing are doing.

4 A lot of the public -- there's a lot of
5 people out there, they don't even know what a senator is.
6 But they do pay attention, eventually, and that's why
7 there's a 31-day waiting period usually before we can do
8 these. But we've done what we always do with our super
9 majority. We've waived that. Let's get rid of that. So
10 yeah, there is a lack of transparency in this.

11 And then the second thing that I want to
12 say is it also lacks integrity. You know, sometimes I'll
13 ask a question that I know the answer to. You know why?
14 Because I want somebody to either tell me the answer and
15 I'll go, good, they're being honest with me. Or I'll
16 watch them evade the answer when I know they're smart
17 enough to -- and they know the answer, and they just
18 won't do it. They're evading the question.

19 And, you know, when I see that happen, to
20 me, that lacks integrity. We asked questions in the
21 committee that were pretty easy. We know -- we know the
22 answers to some of this. But they're kind of rumors, so
23 you're just kind of trying to get the affirmation of what
24 the answer is to who drew these. Was it a consultant?
25 Was it staff? Was it a consultant to one of our

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1 legislative offices? Because none of those are eligible
2 under our constitution in California to be drawing maps.

3 And yet somehow, this map dropped out of
4 the sky. Because I can tell you when we're told the
5 Legislature drew the map -- that was one of the answers.
6 The Legislature. The Legislature is not a human being.
7 That's like saying the car drew the map. The car decided
8 where to go. It did not. It's not a thing. I mean, it
9 is a thing, but it's not a living thing. It can't think
10 on its own.

11 So, we didn't get the answers that we
12 wanted in our committee, and I was told "You already got
13 the answer." No, I've asked the question, I just never
14 got the answer. But I knew the answer, and I didn't get
15 the answer, which means people are being evasive, which,
16 in this body and what we do up here, that lacks
17 integrity. It also flies in the face of the wishes of
18 voters to make drawing of districts the sole
19 responsibility of the Citizens' Redistricting Commission.

20 And the last thing I'll mention on this
21 particular, reasons why we shouldn't even be doing this,
22 as you know -- and I'm glad people brought this up.
23 During the past few sessions, numerous bills have been
24 introduced and passed by the Legislature, demanding that
25 the citizen redistricting commissions be formed in

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1 counties that do not have them. And the reason given by
2 my colleague in Riverside -- and I remember her speech.
3 The reason given was to preserve democracy. And yet,
4 today we're told, "Hey, you know what? 30 of you voted
5 against those redistricting."

6 You know why? You know why I voted
7 against those redistricting efforts? Number one, I'm
8 kind of a local control guy. I think counties, cities,
9 they need to weigh in on how they operate. But more than
10 that, it's because all of those reflected what a super
11 majority will do when they're passing a bill. They set
12 it up for their party to be successful in the
13 redistricting effort. So what they did was they created
14 a partisan makeup ahead of time. They created partisan
15 results from a partisan commission.

16 So heck yeah, I am voting no on that. You
17 want an independent? Don't tell us what the makeup is of
18 it other than we have to find independent people to be
19 able to be on a commission like that. If you're going to
20 tell me it has to be this many Democrats and then two
21 Republicans and the Republican votes don't count, we're
22 not going to vote for that. That's why. That's why we
23 voted against that. It's not because we are against the
24 concept of an independent redistricting commission. It
25 is because we are against the ability of a super majority

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1 to put things in -- poison pills in there, to make it not
2 so independent. So please, enough with that.

3 But those are just a few reasons we have
4 to scrap this plan and move on to dealing with the real
5 problems in California. Because guess what -- and you
6 guys should be really proud of this -- we have a lot of
7 real problems in California, and they are not getting
8 solved. We have water problems, energy problems. We
9 have affordability problems. We have housing problems.
10 None of those are being solved, while we sit here trying
11 to debate about what Texas did.

12 And I want to mention this. I do know
13 Texas legislator. Congressman Carter, really nice dude.
14 He really is. But you know what? I'm not going to call
15 him and tell him, "Congressman Carter, this is Senator
16 Seyarto, I need you to stand down." You know why?
17 Because they have different rules than we have. That's
18 their process. They don't have a constitution that says
19 this is the process. Their process is, hey, if they're
20 going to do it that way, they're going to do it that way.
21 It's not for us to call them and tell them, "No. You
22 have to do this because otherwise, California" -- I think
23 my colleague from Bakersfield laid it out really well
24 what's going to happen. You want to bite your nose to
25 spite your face? Hey, whatever.

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1 But here, you know, earlier we had some
2 percentages, and I was thinking, man, if I start talking
3 percentages, people are going to go to sleep. But since
4 somebody already brought up percentages, I'm going to
5 speak my percentages. Because what this deals with is
6 this other issue I always hear from this body, and that's
7 proportionality. Hey, when we're talking about crime
8 stats, well, that's not in proportion to this.

9 So let's talk about proportionality. And
10 here are some numbers. 46 percent of registered voters
11 in this state are Democrats. Yes. That's a pretty
12 dominant number. 25 percent of registered voters are
13 Republican. But here's a little something. 29 percent
14 are declined to states, no party preference, or other,
15 which means they're registered as another party.

16 But you know what? The representation in
17 the Legislature for the Republicans, yes, it's very, very
18 proportional. We're 25 percent registered and we got 25
19 percent membership. You know who isn't is the decline to
20 states and the no party preference. And one of the
21 reasons that that's important to remember as we go
22 forward and talk about the congressional seats is because
23 those folks don't like the Democrats, the Democratic
24 platform, and they don't like the Republican platform.
25 They are in the middle.

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1 But you know what? They can't win a seat.
2 They can't go out there and win an election. So it's up
3 to us to try to make sure that we're representing them.
4 And the only way to do that is to understand that half of
5 them usually break to the right and half of them break to
6 the left, which would mean six more seats for the Dems
7 and six more seats for the Republicans.

8 An appropriate makeup for this body, if it
9 were fair, is 24 Democrats, 16 Republicans. That way we
10 would not have a super majority. And that also reflects
11 the voting trends in California. We vote 60-40 on
12 constitutional offices and things like that, right. And
13 that's exactly what that breakdown is.

14 But let's look at what we're -- in the
15 Legislature, it's 75 percent Dem. In other words, every
16 single one of those people that are in the middle are
17 actually represented by Democrats. And you know what?
18 In this state -- sorry to break the news -- that means
19 it's represented by progressive Democrats. And that is
20 exactly what they don't like.

21 So let's move on to the Congress,
22 congressional seats. We have 52 of them. So let's talk
23 about democracy. 52 seats. You know how many are
24 Republican seats? 9. We already have 43 percent.
25 That's 83 percent is -- 83 percent of our population, our

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1 voters in this state, are represented in the
2 congressional level by Democrats. That means zero --
3 zero people in the middle have representation other than
4 from a Democrat.

5 And then, when you look at what we want to
6 do, we want to push that number to 92 percent. Already,
7 we got 17 percent -- we have 8 percent of Republicans at
8 that point being represented by Democrats. That's your
9 democracy is Democrats represent 93 percent of our
10 population in Congress? You guys, that's absurd. That
11 is absurd.

12 So this effort to save the nation at the
13 expense of democracy in California, it doesn't make
14 sense. And you know what? I have more confidence in you
15 guys. I know you're smart enough to know that. And I
16 know some of you don't like this bill and I know some of
17 you would really like not to have to vote for it. But
18 that's how it works in California. We've got a super
19 majority. With the super majority comes a lot of power.
20 And with that power comes no power for the other side.

21 So, this notion that somehow the 10
22 Republicans are going to spring to this position of
23 influence and power over all of the other states is
24 absurd. We can't get anything done here and you know it.
25 So this effort is reckless. This effort is ridiculous,

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1 and it needs to be abandoned so we can start working on
2 the real problems that California has. And maybe, just
3 maybe, we can start working together to make some real
4 bipartisan solutions. Not just one Republican vote on
5 one of the bills. That's not bipartisan.

6 So I urge a no vote on this. I urge us to
7 move on. And so thank you for indulging me today and
8 allowing me to explore and talk about the real issues
9 with democracy in California, not Texas. Thank you.

10 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

11 Senator Becker, you are recognized.

12 SENATOR BECKER: Thank you. Thank you for
13 allowing me to speak on this important topic. And my
14 colleague who just spoke said that he was not going to
15 call the folks in Texas. Well, the folks in Texas called
16 us. They called us and they said, "You are our 911
17 call." And I got to tell you, I had chills. I mean, it
18 was an incredible moment, and I have such respect for
19 them. They said, "You are our 911 call. We are calling
20 you in California. We need your help."

21 And, friends, I'm a history major, and
22 history teaches us that we must stand up to bullies. I
23 love the point by my colleague from Encinitas. We must
24 stand up to bullies or face incalculable damage. And
25 that is what we're doing here today. We are standing up.

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1 When the bully and chief in the White House called up the
2 Governor of Texas, he said, "Find me five seats," the
3 Governor of Texas said, "Yes, sir."

4 And so now it's our chance to stand up.
5 And to my friends on the other side of the aisle, and
6 usually, you know, we are very cordial here, but I've
7 heard a lot of hypocrisy. If you want to fight for
8 independent redistricting, then fight for independent
9 redistricting. I know many of you have been to the White
10 House. Go to the White House. Call the White House.
11 Call out the White House and tell them you want
12 independent redistricting. Tell them to back off, and we
13 will back off, but we will not unilaterally disarm.

14 So, I stand here today as a father deeply
15 concerned about the future of our country. I stand here
16 as a patriot, as the grandson of immigrants who came, who
17 came through Ellis Island.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Becker,
19 I'm sorry, can you please address your comments to me as
20 the presiding officer.

21 SENATOR BECKER: Oh, thank you. You mean
22 turn around?

23 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Yes, thank you.

24 SENATOR BECKER: Okay. I often do it this
25 way for the cameras.

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1 Thank you. I say I stand here as a father
2 deeply concerned for the future of my children. I stand
3 here as a grandson of immigrants who came through Ellis
4 Island through the Statue of Liberty. And I stand here
5 as an elected official serving the people. And today, I
6 stand up for democracy. And it's been said that
7 democracy is not a spectator sport, and we need every
8 American engaged now.

9 It's like when you go to the Airport and
10 they say, "If you see something, say something." So we
11 need every American. I need my Republican colleagues.
12 We need our Republican legislators in Congress. If you
13 see the President doing something wrong, you need to call
14 it out. And this is wrong. We know what he's doing is
15 wrong. And we know that we must stand up. And
16 California is standing up. It's about time. I've never
17 been prouder of our state. And we need each American to
18 act as though democracy depends on them because we know
19 ultimately, it does. Thank you.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

21 Senator Ochoa Bogh, you are recognized.

22 SENATOR OCHOA BOGH: Thank you, Madam
23 President.

24 California deserves a redistricting
25 process that is fair, transparent, and free from

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1 political gatemanship. It was mentioned the fact that as
2 Republicans, we haven't supported such measures in the
3 past. But unfortunately, many a times when measures are
4 placed forward in this body, because of the
5 supermajority, many of the times we're not included to
6 give feedback and input on these measures and therefore,
7 these measures don't necessarily become equitable or
8 fulfill the full intent of that bill. And it's one of
9 the reasons why we could not support the measure that was
10 mentioned earlier by my dear colleague from Santa Cruz.

11 I looked up the analysis for that
12 particular bill right after you mentioned it, and we'll
13 have conversations after the -- of the session.

14 But going back to this particular bill,
15 weakening and discarding the independent commission, even
16 temporarily, temporarily, betrays the trust of the voters
17 placed in us and undermines the integrity of our
18 democracy. California has long set the standard for fair
19 redistricting outfitted with a voter-established
20 independent commission.

21 Question of the author, ma'am?

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
23 take a question?

24 Will the author take a question?

25 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

2 SENATOR OCHOA BOGH: Through the
3 President. Does the state of Texas have an independent
4 commission on redistricting voted by the voters of Texas?

5 SENATOR GONZALEZ: They do not.

6 SENATOR OCHOA BOGH: Okay. The Citizens'
7 Redistricting Commission was created to end decades of
8 political gerrymandering. Rolling back the progress for
9 short term gains, risk undoing years of hard fought
10 reforms. Californians deserve leaders that will protect
11 the independent system voters demanded and preserve it
12 for generations to come. Unlike Texas, we have this.
13 They do not. And it falls --

14 Oh, question of the author?

15 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes.

16 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
17 take a question?

18 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Absolutely.

19 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

20 SENATOR OCHOA BOGH: Does the Texas
21 Legislature have the purview to redraw their lines?

22 SENATOR GONZALEZ: They do. They don't
23 have the purview to violate the Voting Rights Act and
24 disenfranchise their voters, but that is what they're
25 doing.

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1 SENATOR OCHOA BOGH: So as mentioned
2 earlier by my colleague from Bakersfield, the state of
3 Texas was sued and was obligated to redraw their lines.
4 Checkpoint.

5 Before the commission's creation, district
6 lines were developed in secrecy through insider deals,
7 often protecting incumbents or political insiders.
8 California voters ended that in 2008 with Proposition 11,
9 the Voters First Act, which established the Commission.
10 Two years later, Proposition 20 expanded its reach to
11 include congressional districts. Since then, the
12 commission has consistently delivered maps through open,
13 publicly reviewed processes, even successfully adapting
14 during the pandemic-delayed 2020 cycle. Earning praise
15 for transparency and efficiency.

16 If signed into law, today's proposed
17 legislative package would strip the commission's
18 authority "temporarily," granting lawmakers control over
19 congressional redistricting for the 26th, 28th, and 30th
20 election cycles. While framed by some as reactive to
21 nationwide redistricting trends, critics warn that it
22 compromises California's voter approved safeguards and
23 damages its leadership and electoral fairness.

24 This proposal undermines the voters' trust
25 since the commission was created by the voters to ensure

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1 fairness, transparency, and accountability. Repealing it
2 would feel like repudiating the voter intent. AB 604 was
3 drafted without constitutional safeguards intended to
4 promote fair and representative district maps.

5 Stated that these maps are intended to
6 elect five additional Democrat congressional seats.
7 Let's register that. This mid-cycle redistricting plan
8 undermines the state's constitution by seeking a voter
9 approved amendment that would temporarily waive the key
10 provisions of the California State Constitution's Article
11 21, allowing politicians to redraw lines for partisan
12 gain rather than adhering to established democratic
13 principles.

14 First, the plan ignores the constitutional
15 mandate that redistricting occur only in the year
16 following the year in which the national census is taken
17 under direction of Congress at the beginning of each
18 decade. By pushing for changes mid-decade outside the
19 post-census window, this proposal disrupts the every 10
20 year rhythm that's designed to ensure districts reflect
21 accurate, updated population data. This could open the
22 door to arbitrary manipulations where the political winds
23 shift.

24 Second, it waives the rigorous criteria
25 outlined in the state constitution that prioritizes

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1 geographical and social considerations to promote
2 fairness. These include requiring districts to be
3 geographically contiguous, criterion three; respecting
4 the integrity of cities, counties, neighborhoods, and
5 communities of interest by minimizing their division,
6 criterion four; and ensuring compactness where
7 practicable, criterion five.

8 And I know that it was stated that 76
9 percent of these congressional districts fit the
10 redistricting commission's criteria, meaning these, but
11 the additional and the remaining do not. Therefore
12 violating the very intent and the guidelines of the
13 Constitution.

14 The Legislature's secretive -- and
15 secretive meaning no one can divulge one where they came
16 from -- and rushed map drawing processes discards these
17 standards. And secretly meaning that no one knows how
18 they were drawn, but yet they've appeared secretly by an
19 unknown hand online. And now, they're transparent
20 because they're there, but no one knows who placed them
21 there and who drew them in the first place. Potentially
22 fracturing cohesive communities and creating convoluted
23 districts that prioritize electoral outcomes over logical
24 boundaries, as stated on this body, in this floor, today.

25 Finally, the plan flouts the

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1 Constitution's explicit prohibition against partisan
2 gerrymandering, which states that districts shall not be
3 drawn to favor or discriminate against an incumbent
4 political candidate or political party. And yet, once
5 again, on this floor, today, it was mentioned that it was
6 due to the reasoning of electing five Democrat
7 congressional districts, stated on this floor.

8 By suspending the Citizens' Redistricting
9 Commission and empowering the Legislature to redraw these
10 maps, this legislation invites blatant favoritism,
11 eroding the impartiality voters enshrined -- voters
12 enshrined in the constitution to prevent self-serving
13 power grabs.

14 Folks, this is serious. Ladies and
15 gentlemen, this is very, very serious. When we are
16 elected, we swear an oath to uphold both the U.S. and the
17 California Constitution. Regardless of what any other
18 state does, that is what we do when we stand on this
19 floor, this red carpet, and we raise our hand. Two
20 wrongs don't make it right. And when it says to join our
21 colleagues in repudiating other states for what they're
22 doing, folks, we were elected to represent the state of
23 California.

24 I had a podcast I was listening to just
25 this morning talking about whether or not term limits

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1 should exist and one of the arguments that were stated in
2 this podcast was whether or not, you know, we should have
3 term limits, and the gentleman speaking said, "Well,
4 people get what they elect and if we have an electorate
5 that is uneducated and they continue to pick someone to
6 be elected, then that's what they get."

7 If Texas has not changed their
8 constitution, if they have not created a redistricting
9 commission, then, folks, who are we to direct the
10 autonomy of the Legislature of that state? What
11 authority do we have to influence another state's
12 Legislature elected by their people? I think it's
13 humbling to think that we should do that.

14 If we have relationships, great; have
15 those conversations. But as a body, to go to another
16 state as elected and think that we have the authority to
17 tell them how to run their state, I think it's
18 ridiculous. I think it's disrespectful to them and to
19 the people who elected those to represent them. I
20 respectfully ask for a no vote.

21 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

22 Senator Caballero, you are recognized.

23 SENATOR CABALLERO: Thank you, Madam
24 President.

25 It's been interesting listening to the

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1 comments today. Senators, California didn't start this
2 fight. We've always had an amicable relationship with
3 our President. Amicable because the President
4 understands that California is a donor. A donor state to
5 this great country, and we've lived with it for years.
6 We pay more in taxes than we get back. We all know that.

7 So why come after California? Why make us
8 an example to the rest of the country by attacking our
9 immigrants, by putting tariffs that have hurt our farmers
10 and that now is going to start to hurt our residents? By
11 taking away benefits that are really important in our
12 state as we've tried to meet the needs of our country?
13 So California didn't start this fight, and my party
14 didn't start this fight either.

15 Let me be clear: I don't shy away from a
16 good competition. I love sports--soccer, football,
17 baseball. I love it all. In my family, we have our
18 favorite teams that we watch, and we follow, and that we
19 support, and I can tell you, they are raucous games when
20 we have people on different sides supporting different
21 teams. So I don't have a problem with opposition or with
22 conflict, but what I do insist on is that the game be
23 fair.

24 I do insist that everybody know what the
25 rules are at the beginning of the game and then it's not

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1 changed. We all know how the game is played. We all
2 need to expect that the refs are going to be fair, and,
3 you know, we have our arguments about whether that call
4 was right or not, but we want everybody to be treated
5 with respect and that everyone will follow the rules,
6 including the players.

7 Folks, that's not what's happening in our
8 country today. The President knows that what he's doing
9 is hurting people, and it is. It is. It's hurting every
10 day, average Americans, and that hurt is real. The
11 prices have gone up. There's uncertainty in the market.
12 It's hard to get a loan. Housing isn't selling. That's
13 not because of what we've done. That's because of the
14 pressure of tariffs and messing around with the market.

15 So the President's afraid he can't win.
16 He's afraid he can't win an election in two years to
17 ensure that he maintains control, control over everything
18 that's going on in the country. So he's taken an action
19 to rig the election. It won't be a fair competition.
20 It's playing dirty. It's cheating. It's cheating and
21 it's making sure that he continues to be in charge even
22 if the voters want change. Even if the voters want
23 change, he's rigging it.

24 It's a power grab. We didn't pick this
25 fight, but my residents have asked me to take action, to

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1 do something to relieve the pain caused by the
2 President's attack on California and on our families.
3 And some of that attack won't be felt until after the
4 midterm elections, which is really cynical.

5 Look, it didn't have to be this way. We
6 all could have worked together, all of us on this floor,
7 across party lines, to denounce and condemn the
8 President's attempt to rig the next election. We could
9 have done it together to put public pressure as leaders
10 and as elected officials to say we want a fair game, no
11 shenanigans, no cheating, no dirty games.

12 But listen, my good friends on the other
13 side of the aisle, you haven't said a peep. You've said
14 nothing to condemn the President's attacks on California
15 and on our residents. Nothing, nothing, nothing. And I
16 get it. You don't want to contradict your President, and
17 so you've taken sides. Well, I choose the people in my
18 district. I choose to defend Californians. I choose to
19 fight for a fair election. I choose to listen to the
20 people who say, "We need you to take action." So I ask
21 you for your aye vote today.

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

23 Senator Cervantes, you are recognized.

24 SENATOR CERVANTES: Thank you, Madam
25 President and members. As we know, the proposed maps in

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1 this bill are not wholly new. They build upon the
2 year-long process undertaken by the California Citizens'
3 Redistricting Commission after the 2020 census. About 75
4 percent of Californians will remain in the same district
5 that they reside in currently today.

6 These maps do a better job of avoiding
7 splitting counties and cities than those created by the
8 commission. And let me just say, how is it okay when
9 their party adopts redistricting, but when it's the other
10 party, it's a problem? Please. Spare us the hypocrisy.

11 That said, I am puzzled by the admiration
12 that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are
13 showing for independent citizens' redistricting
14 commissions. Except for our colleague from Huntington
15 Beach who has not been present for any of these bills,
16 every Republican of this Senate body has voted against
17 bills creating county citizens' redistricting
18 commissions.

19 The Legislature is entitled to propose
20 amendments to the state constitution, and unlike Texas,
21 we are taking it to the voters. We are acting now to
22 save our future. I respectfully ask for an aye vote on
23 AB 604.

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

25 Senator Jones, you are recognized.

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1 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Madam President
2 and members. A couple of fine points. First, Madam
3 President, regarding the comments from our colleague from
4 Santa Ana mentioning that if Texas goes forward with
5 their redistricting, we will continue with our
6 redistricting, my understanding is that the
7 constitutional amendment has been amended to take that
8 language out and California is moving forward regardless,
9 but I will clarify that when the ACA comes over and ask a
10 question of the author on that.

11 On this particular bill, AB 604, I do have
12 a quick question of the author, if she would be willing
13 to take it.

14 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
15 take a question?

16 SENATOR JONES: Are you familiar with or
17 can you cite for us any lawsuit in California of somebody
18 suing the redistricting commission for the lines that
19 they drew either in 2012 or 2022, arguing that those
20 lines were unconstitutional?

21 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

22 SENATOR GONZALEZ: I am not personally
23 familiar with any lawsuits.

24 SENATOR JONES: Great. Thank you.
25 Neither am I, and that's because our process isn't

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1 unconstitutional. Now, many of us had problems with the
2 lines with 2022 when they came out. Both Democrats and
3 Republicans got a little gripey about some of the lines,
4 legitimately, I believe so. But we didn't sue. We kind
5 of, you know, went with it and made the best of it that
6 we could.

7 One of the things I want to share this
8 morning is I'm very proud of my Republican colleagues for
9 their demeanor this morning and their professionalism in
10 their comments, regardless of the incendiary and
11 accusational comments of the open on this bill, AB 604,
12 and I will share that compliment with my Democrat
13 colleagues as well. I think that the debate has been
14 very professional and moving us along.

15 One of the things I'm very concerned about
16 in the debate this morning that I want to raise attention
17 to is some terms that were used this morning on the
18 floor. "Rigged," "dictator," "unchecked power."
19 "Period, full stop." That one cracks me up when you all
20 use that one because I know the Governor uses that all
21 the time. So I don't know if you're trying to get in his
22 good graces by imitating him or whatever. Period, full
23 stop. There's usually a lie behind that, by the way.

24 "Bully," autocrats."

25 Permission to read, Madam President?

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Without seeing any
2 objection, it is granted.

3 SENATOR JONES: While this was all going
4 on, a term came to mind, "projecting" or "projection."
5 So I looked it up to make sure that I had it right.
6 Projecting refers to a psychological defense mechanism
7 where an individual unconsciously attributes their own
8 unacceptable feelings, thoughts, or traits to another
9 person.

10 Why did this come up in my mind today, as
11 you've been standing on this floor, railing against
12 Republicans in Texas? Railing against Republicans in
13 Washington, D.C. for not having any courage to stand up
14 to the dictators of the Governor of Texas and the
15 President of the United States. Where's the courage for
16 the Republicans?

17 Let me ask you this. Every single year,
18 we pass off this floor and the assembly floor a handful
19 of bills that pass on unanimous votes. Unanimous. Every
20 Republican, every Democrat votes for these bills. Some
21 of these bills are authored by Democrats, and some of
22 these bills are authored by Republicans.

23 One bill in particular comes to mind is a
24 very simple bill authored by the incoming pro tem. She's
25 attempted to pass this bill -- has passed the bill four

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1 times, and it's been vetoed four times. Where is the
2 courage when a bill has unanimous votes to conduct a veto
3 override? You don't even need us for a veto override.
4 You can do it by yourselves.

5 But we've come to you over and over and
6 over and over every single year. We will support you in
7 a veto override. We will help you in a veto override on
8 a simple bill. Just pick the simplest one. Let's just
9 do it and prove that you have the courage that you're
10 accusing us of not having.

11 I will share with you there are examples
12 of Republicans in supermajority Republican states of
13 doing that exact same thing on a Republican governor. I
14 encourage you to have that courage.

15 SENATOR CORTESE: Point of order, Madam
16 President. This dialogue has nothing to do with what's
17 before us here, and I'd ask you to rule in that way and
18 ask the speaker to stick to the matter that's on the
19 floor before us. Thank you.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Point is
21 well-taken. If Senator Jones could please stick to the
22 merits of the bill before us.

23 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Madam President.
24 I appreciate our colleague standing up and recognizing
25 that my comments might be incendiary and accusational,

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1 similar to the opening remarks of the author.

2 The important thing that I think to share
3 here is I rise in strong opposition to AB 604. The
4 gas-lighting that has been -- or Gav-lighting, if you
5 prefer that term better -- that's been going on this
6 morning is just -- the mental gymnastics that you have to
7 do to come up with these arguments that you're making for
8 what we're trying to do here on the floor in the State of
9 California, it's just amazing to me how you do that.

10 And I want to share -- and again, other
11 Senators have said -- I appreciate every single one of
12 you. I count every single Senator on this floor a
13 friend, all 30 Democrats. I honor you. I admire you.
14 This is not an easy job, but sometimes we have to call it
15 like it is. We have to call balls and strikes according
16 to the gamesmanship analogies that were used earlier.

17 What's happening here is simple: Gavin
18 Newsom and Democrat politicians are trying to ram through
19 a corrupt redistricting scheme to rig California's
20 elections. This scheme is unconstitutional. It's
21 undermining both the letter and the spirit of the
22 California Constitution. It ignores the principles of
23 germane law, election integrity, twisting the rules to
24 benefit one party.

25 It tramples on the will of California

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1 voters. California voters, the same people that elected
2 all of us to office. Those voters created an independent
3 redistricting commission precisely to keep politicians
4 from drawing their own lines. And those voters, it was
5 so important to them, they put it in the Constitution.

6 This effort slices up communities,
7 connecting desperate areas and splitting apart regions
8 with common interests, violating the very standard the
9 redistricting is supposed to uphold. Democrats are
10 rushing this through under the guise of urgency. There
11 is no emergency that justifies this abuse of process. It
12 discards years of work by the Citizens Redistricting
13 Commission and replaces it with raw, partisan power
14 plays.

15 Importantly, Democrat legislators continue
16 to refuse to answer the one simple question that's been
17 asked dozens, if not hundreds of times, and I'll ask one
18 more time on this floor: who drew the maps? They claim
19 it's a transparent process, yet fail to answer the most
20 transparent question, and it comes at an outrageous cost.
21 It has been mentioned more than \$250 million for a
22 special election at a time when California is facing a
23 \$20 billion deficit, and you all are cutting vital
24 services.

25 The result is the maps that destroy

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1 representative proportionality are rigged for partisan
2 gain, not fair representation.

3 Senate Republicans are united against this
4 abuse of power. We're standing together to defend
5 Californians, to uphold our Constitution, the California
6 Constitution, and to fight for fair and honest elections.

7 And let's make two more points before I
8 close. The interesting thing is you all keep bringing up
9 Texas. Texas right now -- the Republicans in Texas right
10 now have an effort afoot to make it easier for the
11 Legislature to override -- do a veto override in Texas.
12 Republicans are trying to make it easier in Texas to
13 conduct a veto override. I'm asking you just to try.

14 Now, the other interesting thing about
15 this effort is we all know this is going to fail on the
16 ballot. This is a loser from the beginning. So what's
17 the win? What's the upside for all of us here on the
18 Senate floor to go blindly along with the Governor's plan
19 here? It's going to fail, and what's the only gain?

20 I'll tell you what the only gain is.
21 Governor Gavin Newsom is getting more headlines. He's
22 getting more name ID, and he's creating a brand across
23 the country so that he can run for President; and you're
24 helping him.

25 To my colleagues across the aisle, I

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1 strongly encourage you to stand against this self-serving
2 Governor with courage rather than acting like a march of
3 the lemmings. I urge a no vote on AB 604.

4 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you. Seeing
5 no further discussion or debate, Senator Gonzalez, would
6 you like to close?

7 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes. Thank you so
8 much, Madam President, and I do want to say to my
9 colleagues on both sides of the aisle, thank you so much
10 for this very robust debate.

11 This is exactly what democracy means and
12 what we want the public to see, the discourse, even if we
13 agree to disagree or we disagree and disagree beyond
14 measure, that is exactly what we're here for. We were
15 all elected to take an oath to defend our democracy and
16 to ensure that the folks that we support and represent
17 all can see a better quality of life, and that's why
18 we're here today.

19 And as my colleagues on the other side of
20 the aisle, except for one, I think of one missing member
21 from Jackson, you know, what I will say is, I hear you on
22 integrity. I hear you on transparency. I hear you on
23 all of that.

24 And this is where I'm really confused
25 because, with all due respect, it is very hypocritical to

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1 say that you believe in all this. But yet when you've
2 been offered the opportunity to talk about what is the
3 egregious actions by this federal government, the
4 egregious actions by Texas legislators to disenfranchise
5 voters, to additionally split counties and cities, to
6 continue to violate the Voting Rights Act, to just
7 completely ignore communities of interest and to continue
8 to safeguard the Trump presidency because guess what? It
9 doesn't just stop after 2028. Let's be real here. He
10 wants a third term.

11 So what does that mean for Californians if
12 we don't do this? Well, I'll tell you what it means. It
13 means that, again -- it means that there's going to be
14 unconcern for a ransom of a billion dollars to our UC
15 system. There's going to be silence when it comes to
16 SNAP benefits for children when are disabled. It means
17 there's going to be additional unconcern for the kids
18 that won't have afterschool programs and school lunches.

19 And it means that every budget that we put
20 out here because we've continued to put state budgets out
21 here, and everyone's talking about wildfires. If we're
22 so concerned about wildfires, why didn't the other
23 party -- why didn't you all support the wildfire package
24 relief of \$2.5 billion for Altadena and Pacific Palisades
25 residents? Why didn't you do that?

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1 So we can't sit here and talk about
2 transparency and integrity and we want democracy. And
3 all of a sudden now we have an epiphany about an
4 independent redistricting commission, and we're going to
5 stand, you know, strong for that.

6 Well, let's do that today. And today,
7 again, AB 604 is an urgency measure, contains the new
8 proposed congressional maps that will ultimately be the
9 decision of California voters on November 4th. This bill
10 will be in print for over 70 days. The maps will be
11 available for insight from our voters. And ultimately,
12 they will have the say.

13 And would remain in effect only until the
14 Citizens Redistricting Commission certifies a new map of
15 congressional districts after 2030's census maps. So
16 these maps are temporary. Again, for the elections of
17 2026, 2028, and 2030. Then the redistricting commission,
18 which is still in effect, will then take effect -- will
19 then take the helm in 2032 to continue the good work that
20 they've done.

21 Again, the hypocrisy remains. Why are you
22 so unconcerned? Why are you so unwilling? Why have you
23 remained silent during this egregious overreach when
24 Latino communities across California have been kidnapped?
25 Why?

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1 All our democracy is being dismantled, and
2 you want us as California legislators to just sit by on
3 the sidelines and do absolutely nothing. Well, that's
4 not good enough. And if you want to support my
5 Republican minority leader, if you'd like to support a
6 diversity, equity, and inclusion bill by the incoming pro
7 tem, we are happy to provide that opportunity for you to
8 do that again.

9 So again, Californians will have the final
10 say. I appreciate all the debate here. I respectfully
11 ask for an aye vote.

12 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.
13 Secretary, please call the roll.

14 THE SECRETARY: Allen?

15 Aye.

16 Alvarado-Gil.

17 Archuleta.

18 Aye.

19 Arreguin.

20 Aye.

21 Ashby.

22 Becker.

23 Aye.

24 Blakespear.

25 Aye.

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1 Cabaldon.
2 Aye.
3 Caballero.
4 Aye.
5 Cervantes.
6 Aye.
7 Choi.
8 No.
9 Cortese.
10 Aye.
11 Dahle.
12 No.
13 Durazo.
14 Aye.
15 Gonzalez.
16 Aye.
17 Grayson.
18 Aye.
19 Grove.
20 No.
21 Hurtado.
22 Aye.
23 Jones.
24 Laird.
25 Aye.

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1 Limon.
2 Aye.
3 McGuire.
4 Aye.
5 McNerney.
6 Aye.
7 Menjivar.
8 Aye.
9 Niello.
10 No.
11 Ochoa Bogh.
12 No.
13 Padilla.
14 Aye.
15 Perez.
16 Aye.
17 Reyes.
18 Aye.
19 Richardson.
20 Aye.
21 Rubio.
22 Aye.
23 Seyarto.
24 No.
25 Smallwood-Cuevas.

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1 Aye.
2 Stern.
3 Aye.
4 Strickland.
5 No.
6 Umberg.
7 Aye.
8 Valladares.
9 No.
10 Wahab.
11 Aye.
12 Weber Pierson.
13 Aye.
14 Wiener.
15 Aye.
16 SECRETARY: No.
17 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please
18 call the absent members.
19 THE SECRETARY: Alvarado-Gil.
20 Jones.
21 No.
22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes, 30. Noes,
23 9. That measure passes.
24 Members, we are now going to take a very
25 brief 20-minute recess for lunch. Stay in the building.

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1 We will come back in 20 minutes. We are now on recess.

2 (Recess taken)

3 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: The Senate will
4 now come back to session. We have a message from the
5 Assembly. Secretary, please read.

6 THE SECRETARY: Madam President, I am
7 directed to inform your honorable body that the Assembly
8 on this day adopted Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8,
9 Sue Parker, Chief Clerk of the Assembly.

10 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: We have a referral
11 for Rules. Secretary, please read.

12 THE SECRETARY: The Committee on Rules has
13 ordered the following bill to third reading. Assembly
14 Constitution Amendment 8.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: We will now move
16 to supplemental file number 1, which is file number
17 262ACA8. Secretary, please read.

18 THE SECRETARY: Assembly Constitutional
19 Amendment 8 by Assembly Member Rivas, an act relating to
20 redistricting.

21 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Pro tem
22 McGuire, you are recognized.

23 SENATOR MCGUIRE: Thank you so much, Madam
24 President, and good afternoon, members. I stand with
25 Senator Cabaldon who will complete the presentation on

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Constitutional Amendment 8.

I got to say, it does pain me a bit to say what I'm about to say. And I want to also take a moment to acknowledge Brian Jones. I have deep respect for Leader Jones, and I know this has been a tough week on all sides. And I do want to acknowledge him and say thank you for the partnership.

And I also want to say I take this very seriously. I think that all folks know I don't really care if you have an R or D behind your name. It's about representing California. And as I said last night, people don't know us if we're a Republican or Democrat. They know us as Californians, and that's what we need to remember as we make our way through this and come back next week.

I'm really honored to represent one of the most rural districts in the State of California. Third of the California coastline. There are four counties in the district of seven that voted for Kamala Harris. There are three counties in the district that supported President Trump.

What I know when I go into Weaverville or High Palm, Crescent City, or Fort Bragg in rural California, no matter if you're a Democrat or a Republican, you want a few key things for your family.

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1 You want quality healthcare. You want to
2 keep your hospital open, that rural health center open
3 for your kids and your grandparents.

4 You want a good job so you can stay in the
5 community that you love. You want to send your kid to a
6 good public school. You want to be able to live in that
7 community you love and afford a home.

8 And in rural California, you don't want to
9 use dial up internet anymore. You want to have access to
10 high-speed broadband.

11 You know, there isn't a single one of us,
12 not one, who wouldn't be here today if we hadn't put our
13 faith in the voters of California. Put our faith in
14 fellow Californians to walk into the voting booth or sit
15 at their kitchen table and do their best for all of us to
16 do the right thing.

17 And that's really what this is all about
18 today. All we're asking is allow the voters to do their
19 thing, to pass this constitutional amendment. We need to
20 put our faith in the voters to do the right thing, the
21 way we have countless times over the decades, initiative
22 after initiative. It's ultimately up to the voters.
23 There's nothing more transparent than that.

24 Now, we're here today for one reason: the
25 nefarious actions of the Republican leadership in Texas.

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1 California didn't pick this fight. This was not on our
2 bingo card six weeks ago, let alone six months ago.
3 Actions of Republicans in Texas, compounded by the
4 inaction of some Republican leaders here in California,
5 that's why we're here today. All of this could have been
6 avoided. To be able to stop this, talk to Texas. Talk
7 to our President.

8 I have been astounded this week. I've
9 seen Republican colleague after Republican colleague go
10 on television, hold press conferences, go live on the
11 social media, expressing outrage about California. But
12 what about Texas? What about Donald Trump, who started
13 all this, who started this circus?

14 You know, sometimes in life, I'm a firm
15 believer that you just got to stand for the greater good,
16 and you got to tell your boss no. You got to tell your
17 boss no.

18 Today, I hope that we can do something
19 constructive. We should do everything in our power to
20 ensure free and fair elections. But let me be very
21 clear. This action about redistricting, we all know
22 this. We talk behind the scenes. We have a beer
23 together. We go out to coffee. When I talk to folks
24 when are on the other side of the aisle, they know why
25 we're here. Can't say it publicly, but we all know why

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we're here.

And we also know that this is just the beginning. Mail-in ballots. It's now a predominant way folks votes in the United States. Mail-in ballots. Our President wants to end mail-in ballots. Make it harder to vote.

You know why he wants to be able to upend the census here? To rig it. In the United States Constitution, it says, "Count all persons." The reason why Donald Trump doesn't want to count all persons is because it hurts Republicans.

So then I hear Members of Congress, some in the Legislature, say, "I support independent redistricting." So I got three pages of votes on independent redistricting bills that have come through this Legislature over the past several years. Three pages right here. Let me just tell you what the predominant theme is. Republicans voted no. They voted no. All public votes.

Now, why is it? Why? All of a sudden, you all have seen the light? I would hope that we could do more than file frivolous lawsuits, which, by the way, within 48 hours, the Supreme Court just tossed out. I would hope that we could do more than just file bunk court action. When there are Republican leaders in this

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1 country that are having state troopers follow Democratic
2 legislators, when the Attorney General of Texas and the
3 Governor say we need the FBI to track elected members of
4 a state house, what the hell is happening and where is
5 the outrage?

6 You're outraged that California is
7 responding? The only reason -- the only reason we are
8 here today is because of Texas.

9 And by the way, two nights ago on live
10 television, state troopers drug out a Democratic female
11 legislator out of the bathroom. Out of the bathroom
12 because she did not have a pass to go.

13 And I hear about how unfair California is.
14 Can you imagine if the Democratic majority said to the
15 California Highway Patrol, "Follow Republican leaders in
16 the Assembly and the Senate"? Yet today, nothing about
17 that. Nothing. Fake outrage about what California is
18 doing.

19 You know, we've seen this story play out
20 in history. And hypocrisy today won't save your hide
21 tomorrow when the secret police and the Mar-a-Lago goons
22 find a reason to come after you. We are in a flashpoint
23 in history if we do not stand up, if we do not shout out.
24 This has to stop.

25 I've always supported independent

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1 redistricting. I've supported independent redistricting
2 on the local level here in California. I support
3 national redistricting. Sounds like now that it may be a
4 bipartisan bill.

5 What I do not support, what we cannot
6 support in California, is unilateral disarmament when the
7 fairness of the 2026 elections is being threatened. And
8 yes. Donald Trump wants to rig the damn election. Other
9 states want to play games. California is the only state
10 committed to fairness whose potential redistricting goes
11 away the minute others drop theirs. In Texas, it's
12 permanent.

13 One of our colleagues in the Assembly said
14 the other day, "When I go to a restaurant, I don't have
15 to meet the chef." You all saw that. Senators, I also
16 don't believe we need to meet the chef, but we do need to
17 meet this moment. And the stakes are so high, and I want
18 to end it right here.

19 Here's what's at stake. Millions of
20 Californians are going to lose their health care next
21 year. Millions. Tens of millions of Americans are going
22 to lose their health care next year because of Donald
23 Trump.

24 I've never seen a President come after
25 fire aid and assistance like this President has

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1 threatening to be able to cancel cleanup and recovery
2 because he doesn't like our Governor or doesn't like the
3 politics of the state.

4 I never thought I had to explain to my
5 four-and-a-half-year-old who saw on a friend's television
6 why someone was being thrown in a moving van. This is
7 what we're fighting for today.

8 One of the main reasons I believe that we
9 should be voting for this constitutional amendment will
10 be waiting for me this evening at our kitchen table to
11 tell me about his first week in school.

12 As much as some want to say this is about
13 politics, this vote today is about people. It's about
14 standing strong for people who are under assault by an
15 authoritarian who's coming for our jugular. All we have
16 now, the only choice, is to fight. This is a cynical
17 ploy, and it's just the start. First, they come for the
18 districts. Then they come for your ballots. Next, it
19 will be your family.

20 Today's vote is about the future. It's
21 about fairness. It's about trusting voters. I would
22 respectfully ask for an aye vote, and I yield my time to
23 Senator Cabaldon.

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Cabaldon,
25 you are recognized.

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1 SENATOR CABALDON: Thank you, Madam
2 President.

3 This bill, this package of bills has been
4 among the three most heavily reported bills in the
5 California and in the country. The notion --

6 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Cabaldon,
7 can you address the presiding officer, please?

8 SENATOR CABALDON: For a point?

9 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Can you address
10 the presiding officer, please?

11 Oh, I usually stand there. Okay. All
12 right. Thank you, Madam President.

13 This package of bills has been among the
14 most heavily reported. It's widely known across the
15 State of California that this effort is underway, which
16 is odd, because when I talk to my own constituents and I
17 mentioned the word "redistricting," a glazed look goes
18 over their eye.

19 Very few Californians spend their time or
20 their worries or their concerns or their hopes thinking
21 about redistricting. They are thinking about food on the
22 table, and rent, and public safety, and their ability to
23 walk free on the streets of this state.

24 But I hear about it constantly in my own
25 district, and I hear about it in places that you might

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1 not expect. And it reminds me of one of my favorite
2 parts of the year -- and I know I share this with many of
3 my colleagues from both parties -- Little League opening
4 day.

5 The parade goes down the neighborhood on
6 Meadow Road, turns the corner. We all end up at Memorial
7 Park for the first day of the Little League season. And
8 once the ceremony is over, the certificates have been
9 presented, then the teams go onto the field.

10 And you sit -- for me as a mayor, now as a
11 Senator. You sit with the parents, ready to watch the
12 game. And the first inning comes up, and the other team
13 keeps striking out. And the second inning, they've
14 stricken out every time. When they pitch, sometimes they
15 intentionally hit our players, and you're starting to get
16 a little worried.

17 By the fifth inning though, something
18 weird happens. You see that on their side -- on the
19 other team's players, the first base is now been taken
20 over by one of the dad's. One of the mom's is subbed in
21 at second base. Another mom is at shortstop. Another
22 dad is at third base and another at catcher.

23 And you look at the field. You say, this
24 is not -- this is Little League. Where are the kids at?
25 You can't just sub in five adults to play a Little League

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1 game. That's not fair. It's also not safe. What you've
2 created is a Little League I would never be a part of.

3 We don't sit in the stands in that moment
4 and argue with each other, you know what I'm going to do
5 about this? I'm going to go to the next Little League
6 board meeting in two months to complain because what we
7 really need is a policy that prevents this from
8 happening. You don't pen a harshly worded letter to the
9 other team.

10 You stand up. You do something. In that
11 moment, most likely, what most Americans would do is
12 we're sending five of our parents out there. We're
13 pulling our kids off the field. We are taking action to
14 ensure that that cheating, that endangerment, does not
15 happen.

16 If, when the Olympics are at the Rose Bowl
17 here in California -- I'm sorry -- yeah -- the Rose Bowl
18 in California and the soccer team come on the field and
19 we're playing against Russia, and they sub in five
20 people, five additional players onto their team, you can
21 be damn right we'll be calling for our team to be doing
22 the same. We won't be waiting to file a complaint after
23 the game is over that we lost because someone cheated
24 right in front of our eyes, right in broad daylight.

25 That's why Californians every day, more

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1 and more Californians are like, I don't know that much
2 about redistricting, but this ain't right. This cannot
3 happen, and California cannot stand for it. That's what
4 this is all about.

5 And so what's different here is it's not a
6 trophy that's on the line. What is on the line is
7 everything that we've heard described by the pro tem and
8 others on this floor. The HR 1 cuts, the massive cuts
9 that will hit California, but many of them that won't
10 take place until after the congressional election. So we
11 have a shot to stop them from happening. What's on the
12 line is our freedom on the street and the terrorism
13 that's happening with ICE. The attacks on UCLA, on our
14 very elections, and reproductive freedom across the
15 board, we have a chance to do something about it.

16 Because right now, everyone at the Little
17 League game is always asking me, "What can I do as an
18 American? What can I do to prevent the erasure of our
19 democracy, the decline of our institutions and our
20 protections?"

21 Now, until we have to both fix the rules,
22 we do have to go to that Little League meeting, and
23 that's exactly what ACA 8 does. It's first provision is
24 California calls upon the Congress of the United States
25 to place a constitutional amendment before all of the

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1 states for a national independent redistricting system.

2 That is number one in ACA 8. And so we are doing that.

3 And we must also get on the field and protect our kids
4 and our families and our communities.

5 Now, it's ironic because we stand here
6 today, 99 years after the very first redistricting
7 initiative went on the ballot here in the California.
8 Redistricting is one of the most contested ballot
9 initiatives over and over and over again that
10 Californians typically face. And we've been doing it now
11 for a century.

12 And that ballot measure, which created an
13 independent Citizens Commission in Redistricting was
14 rejected almost two to one. When it was proposed again a
15 decade and a half later, it was rejected by 10 points.
16 It was rejected and rejected and rejected and rejected
17 and rejected.

18 In the 1980s, it was rejected four times,
19 four times. And then in the 2000s, it was rejected right
20 before it barely passed.

21 And so when we talk about that the voters
22 have enshrined this in the constitution as something that
23 can never change, the voters have been changing their
24 minds about redistricting almost since the admission of
25 this state into the union.

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1 And in fact, in 2008 when the voters
2 passed the initiative that the senator from Fair Oaks
3 noted, there were two other ballot measures on that 2008
4 ballot that are noteworthy here.

5 One was the voters' overwhelming support
6 for high-speed rail, which we've heard previously on this
7 floor. Senators from the other side of the aisle,
8 Republican senators saying we should toss that out. We
9 should throw that one out. But this one that passed by
10 less is somehow divinely inspired and can never be
11 changed by the voters themselves.

12 The second measure that was on that ballot
13 was Proposition 8, the infamous Proposition 8, which said
14 that we were amending the Constitution to prevent folks
15 from marrying the person that they loved, marriage
16 equality. That's what happened in 2008 by a larger
17 margin through this commission. And yet, last year, the
18 voters of California overwhelmingly reversed that
19 decision.

20 Democracy is an everchanging progress.
21 It's a book that we are writing together, and the only
22 ones that can tell us to respect the will of the voters
23 are the voters. And the only way we can know what their
24 will is in this critical time for the preservation of our
25 democracy is by passing this constitution to let the

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1 voters decide.

2 I want to speak briefly to the notion of
3 this mid-decade redistricting that we've heard about
4 repeatedly this morning as well and the outrage over the
5 idea that we might do redistricting in the middle of the
6 decade, as though this were the first time this idea's
7 been considered.

8 Republicans and their agents submitted
9 mid-decade redistricting initiatives nearly every single
10 year in the 1980s, and then again in the 90s, and the
11 2000s. The outrage -- the hypocritical outrage here is
12 palpable. The only folks who proposed mid-decade
13 redistricting before today have been the Republicans of
14 California. And so the outrage that this is
15 unconstitutional, how can it be unconstitutional to ask
16 the voters of California if they choose to, if they
17 decide to, if they elect to amend the Constitution to
18 accomplish this?

19 And also, Texas did not consider the 2020
20 census data or any updates. In fact, the Chairman of the
21 Election Committee in Texas said, "Well, I don't have
22 that census data. I haven't looked at it."

23 This process, on the other hand, has
24 examined every available data source. That census from
25 2020 and all the data since, all of the testimony in

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1 relevant areas in California where the lines are changing
2 to look to see what did regular people say about their
3 communities of interest to the Redistricting Commission.

4 And then finally, the notion that this is
5 expensive. Another example of fake outrage because we
6 heard no outrage about the cost -- the annual petitions
7 to the Secretary of State for a recall of the Governor or
8 someone else. Every single year, we've had these
9 petitions submitted with zero, dead silence, about the
10 cost of that election, which is exactly the same as the
11 cost is this.

12 So please spare me the sanctimony about
13 the cost of the election when you've remained silent
14 every single time that another recall election has been
15 proposed.

16 Now, I also represent Sonoma County, just
17 as a response to the senator from Santa Clarita, and many
18 other communities that have constantly been shifted from
19 district to district over time. And Sonoma County will
20 be doing just fine under this map. I can speak to my
21 constituents. We can handle -- we can handle having
22 three members of Congress. It's a feature, not a bug.

23 But let's not think that today's
24 redistricting map, it comes from a commission that did
25 outstanding work, but it ain't -- it's not from some

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1 divine text, right. Let's go up to one of the closest
2 districts from here. Maybe stop in Citrus Heights at the
3 Jolly Cone and just head up the freeway. You've now met
4 about five percent of the voters in this congressional
5 district.

6 Head up the Highway 50 a little bit.
7 You'll end up in Folsom. Maybe stop at the auto malls or
8 maybe the old town. Then head over to Roseville and to
9 Rocklin and Placer County. You've now met half the
10 voters -- over half the voters of this district.

11 But you got to keep on going. Because in
12 that district, you got to keep driving on Highway 80 up
13 all the way to almost Mount Lassen. And then you have to
14 turn around, get back on the freeway, get back on 12
15 freeways in order to get to Death Valley, Death Valley.

16 So please, don't tell me about, you know,
17 splitting Lodi, which is a fan community of mine just
18 nearby here in three when the current map places hundreds
19 of thousands of people in Sacramento County, steps away
20 from this building, in the same congressional district as
21 Death Valley itself.

22 And so these maps represent a step forward
23 for representation. They respect communities of
24 interest. They fully comply with the Voting Rights Act.

25 But most importantly, they meet the moment

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1 that we are here because of Trump, and we're
2 here -- President Trump, and we're here because of what
3 Texas is doing, seeking to cheat and steal the game. We
4 are doing this not in response to Texas alone but to
5 parry Texas, to neutralize and to nullify their illegal
6 actions to cheat this congressional election and undo the
7 will of the voters in 2026.

8 California, we are the fourth largest
9 economy. We are the most populous state in the country.
10 It is our duty to America to be the last line of defense,
11 and I ask for an aye vote on ACA 8.

12 Thank you, Madam President.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

14 Senator Valladares, you are recognized.

15 SENATOR VALLADARES: Thank you, Madam
16 President. And I do believe I have amendments at the
17 desk.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please
19 read the amendments.

20 THE SECRETARY: Amendments by Senator
21 Valladares, set one.

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: You may proceed.

23 SENATOR VALLADARES: Thank you. Members,
24 ladies and gentlemen of the Senate. I rise to present
25 important amendments to ACA 8.

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1 If this body insists on moving forward
2 with stripping power away from the voter-approved
3 redistricting commission, then the very least that we can
4 do is we owe Californians meaningful safeguards against
5 corruption.

6 This amendment simply provides that any
7 legislator that votes yes on ACA 8 will be prohibited
8 from running for elected office for 10 years. That is
9 not a radical idea. It merely extends to members of this
10 Legislature the same 10-year moratorium that already
11 applies to the citizen volunteers who serve on the
12 independent redistricting commission.

13 The people of California demanded ironclad
14 guarantees that those who draw district lines never place
15 personal ambition above the voters. If this is good
16 enough for the citizens who volunteer their time, it
17 should be good enough for politicians seeking to reclaim
18 power. Let's be clear, you cannot demand that ordinary
19 citizens give up the right to run for office for a decade
20 and then exempt politicians from the same rule. That
21 would be hypocrisy.

22 If you truly believe that ACA 8 is about
23 fairness, if you truly believe that this isn't about
24 creating career opportunities for members of this body or
25 those who influence these maps, then you should have no

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1 problem supporting this amendment. Because if everything
2 is above board here, then what do you have to object to?

3 Sixty percent of Californians voted to
4 give redistricting power to an independent commission
5 because they were tired of tortured lines drawn to serve
6 those in power. The current process is transparent.
7 It's independent, and it's accountable to the people.
8 They said clearly, we do not want politicians drawing
9 their own lines.

10 Today, this body risks turning its back on
11 that mandate. But if we're going to press forward, then
12 we must at least bind ourselves to the same ethical
13 standards that we demand of our citizens. This amendment
14 is a test, a test of whether or not this body values
15 integrity over expediency, fairness over partisanship,
16 and accountability over ambition. I respectfully ask for
17 your aye vote.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

19 Senate Gonzalez -- Senator Gonzalez,
20 you're recognized.

21 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you, Madam
22 President, members. Again, ACA 8 is very clear. It's in
23 response to what colleagues in Texas are doing, and this
24 is absolutely egregious. I'm wondering where the outcry
25 is against the Texas officials that are continuously

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1 disenfranchising voters in Texas. And it also requests

2 --

3 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Excuse me. Point
4 of order.

5 SENATOR VALLADARES: If the majority
6 leader could please speak to Germanists of the
7 amendments.

8 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Your point is well
9 taken. Can you please limit your comments to the
10 amendments that we are hearing at this moment?

11 SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yes. And I am
12 absolutely going to do that. And so, ACA 8 also
13 represents a reasonable and rational response to this
14 overreach. And the amendments specifically, what I will
15 say is I would love an outcry for the fact that there is
16 going to be -- if we're going to talk about corruption
17 and transparency, why aren't we talking about the fact
18 that President Trump has already said he wanted to run
19 for a third term, a third term, and become the next king
20 of the United States of America?

21 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Again --

22 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Point of order.

23 SENATOR GONZALEZ: So, I will ask that --

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.
25 Excuse me. Just a moment.

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What is your point of order?

SENATOR STRICKLAND: The speaker is not addressing the amendments directly before us in this body. I believe the amendments have no -- nothing written about the President of the United States. So --

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

Just a moment, please.

SENATOR GONZALEZ: Yeah.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Gonzalez, the amendments that we have before us are dealing with whether or not the members of the Legislature will be able to run as a candidate for 10 years. Your comments must stick to the amendments that we are voting on or that have been --

SENATOR GONZALEZ: Thank you.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: -- presenting before us. Thank you.

SENATOR GONZALEZ: I think the floor is yours.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Valladares, would you like to respond?

SENATOR VALLADARES: Thank you. Again, to clarify, this is a really simple amendment. It is three lines. This is about fairness. This is about holding ourselves, elected members of a Legislature, to the same

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standards that we require of our Citizen Redistricting
Commission. Again, if this ACA is to really be about
fairness, then you should have no problem supporting this
amendment.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

Senator Gonzalez, you are recognized.

SENATOR GONZALEZ: Madam President, I ask
that we lay the amendments on the table asking for an aye
vote.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Gonzalez
has requested that we lay the amendments on the table.
This is not debatable. Senator Gonzalez is asking for an
aye vote. Senator Valladares is asking for a no vote.

Secretary, please call the roll.

THE SECRETARY: Allen.

Aye.

Alvarado-Gil.

Archuleta.

Aye.

Arreguin.

Aye.

Ashby.

Aye.

Becker.

Aye.

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1 Blakespear.
2 Aye.
3 Cabaldon.
4 Aye.
5 Caballero.
6 Aye.
7 Cervantes.
8 Aye.
9 Choi.
10 No.
11 Cortese.
12 Aye.
13 Dahle.
14 No.
15 Durazo.
16 Aye.
17 Gonzalez.
18 Aye.
19 Grayson.
20 Aye.
21 Grove.
22 No.
23 Hurtado.
24 Aye.
25 Jones.

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1 No.
2 Laird.
3 Aye.
4 Limon.
5 Aye.
6 McGuire.
7 Aye.
8 McNerney.
9 Aye.
10 Menjivar.
11 Aye.
12 Niello.
13 No.
14 Ochoa Bogh.
15 No.
16 Padilla.
17 Aye.
18 Perez.
19 Aye.
20 Reyes.
21 Aye.
22 Richardson.
23 Aye.
24 Rubio.
25 Aye.

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Seyarto.

No.

Smallwood-Cuevas.

Aye.

Stern.

Aye.

Strickland.

No.

Umberg.

Aye.

Valladares.

No.

Wahab.

Aye.

Weber Pierson.

Aye.

Wiener.

Aye.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes 30, noes 9.

The amendments are laid at the table. We will continue
our debate.

Senator Wiener, you are recognized.

SENATOR WIENER: Thank you very much,
Madam President. Because this is really about California
punching back against Donald Trump. Donald Trump has

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1 been punching down at everyone for a long time, punching
2 down at states, punching down at trans kids, punching
3 down at immigrants. We are punching back to protect our
4 democracy against this fascism.

5 This is about California checking Donald
6 Trump. And -- and I wanted to say with respect to Trump,
7 there was some reference to corruption before. I hope if
8 people are going to talk about corruption, we can talk
9 about the corruption in the White House, that Donald
10 Trump is accepting all sorts of bribes, these scam meme
11 coins that people use to funnel cash to him. The -- the
12 plane that he received from the Qatari government, the
13 bribe that he received from Paramount to settle that
14 bogus defamation lawsuit. So let's talk about that
15 corruption.

16 And we're seeing corruption here as well
17 in terms of Donald Trump trying to seize control of our
18 government in perpetuity. And that's what's happening in
19 Texas and what we are responding to. So, when I say that
20 California is checking Donald Trump, it's because not
21 that many institutions are actually stepping up to check
22 this aspiring dictator. The Republicans in Congress are
23 not checking him. They just give him whatever the heck
24 he asks for.

25 The Republicans in Congress voted to kick

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1 their own constituents off of healthcare and food
2 assistance and to close hospitals in their own district
3 at the request of Donald Trump.

4 The Supreme Court is not checking him.
5 The Supreme Court basically rubber stamps whatever the
6 heck Donald Trump wants to do, whether it's illegally
7 deport immigrants or tear down the government illegally;
8 the Supreme Court just rubber stamps it.

9 It's not red states because Donald Trump
10 called up the Governor of Texas and said, hey, I want
11 five more seats in Congress. Can you do a scam
12 redistricting? And instead of saying, you know what,
13 Mr. President, like mind your own business. We're going
14 to handle our own stuff here in Texas, the Governor of
15 Texas just said, yes, sir. Whatever you want, sir.
16 We'll do whatever you need, sir.

17 Universities aren't doing it. They're
18 caving in one after the other, adopting his MAGA
19 policies. Most recently, even Harvard, which it was so
20 depressing. Harvard was standing up, and then even
21 Harvard caved in.

22 It's not the media. Some media are
23 standing up like the AP, which is still banned from a lot
24 of things because it refuses to say the Gulf of America,
25 but other media are even paying bribes to this President.

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1 So California is not going to do that. We are going to
2 check this fascist overreaches. We're going to check
3 him. We're not going to back down.

4 We are the fourth-largest economy in the
5 world. We are the largest state by far. We have the
6 wherewithal to be able to fight back and punch back
7 against this despicable human being who is trying to tear
8 down so much of what is good in this country. And Trump
9 knows that we have the ability to punch back and that we
10 will punch back.

11 And that's why he is targeting California
12 so severely. Why he is demanding a billion dollars in
13 extortion from UCLA. Otherwise, he'll kill off
14 Alzheimer's and cancer research at UCLA. He's doing it
15 by targeting, especially Southern California, with these
16 horrific immigration raids, grabbing people from their
17 front yards, and from bus stops, and from work sites --

18 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Point of order.

19 SENATOR WIENER: -- and disappearing them.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.

21 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Point of order.

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.

23 What is your point of order?

24 SENATOR STRICKLAND: I deeply respect my
25 colleague from San Francisco and his passion about a lot

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of different issues throughout the state of California.

But I would encourage this body to talk about the bill that's before us. And I gave a lot of leeway before my point of order, but it seems like it's going into a lot of different issues. And I would hope that my --

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you so much, Senator Strickland. You've stated your point of order. Just a moment.

SENATOR WIENER: Madam President, it's directly relevant.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you so much for -- for waiting. We have allowed during this debate for people to give outside context on both sides to their arguments for whether or not they support or oppose the measure that is before us. And therefore, your point is not well taken.

Senator Wiener, you may continue. Thank you.

SENATOR WIENER: Thank you very much. Madam President.

In addition to targeting UCLA, in addition to these horrific fascist secret police immigration raids, he is directly targeting California with his unconstitutional plan to upend the census and to do a new scam census so that he can move even more seats out of

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1 California and other states that don't support his
2 fascism.

3 So on so many levels, he is targeting
4 California, and he is targeting so much that is good
5 about this country. And California is not going to take
6 it sitting down. We are going to punch back. And that's
7 what we are doing today.

8 I wanted to say one final thing. I
9 supported the creation of the Independent Redistricting
10 Commission. I have been an admirer of the work of this
11 Commission, and I understand that there are some folks,
12 people I know and respect, who want us to keep the
13 Independent Redistricting Commission, and we are keeping
14 it.

15 But we also have to be clear that this is
16 about so much more than whether we are taking a
17 particular approach to redistricting. That all becomes
18 irrelevant if we lose our democracy because we have a
19 fascist who freezes himself in power and continues to
20 tear down people's access to healthcare and destroy civil
21 rights for so many communities, and destroy our ability
22 to engage in scientific research.

23 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Wiener,
24 let's --

25 SENATOR WIENER: Yes.

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: -- go back to the
2 -- the bill before us.

3 SENATOR WIENER: Yes.

4 And so it's about the bill. It's about
5 the Independent Redistricting Commission. And so as much
6 as we all want to have the best redistricting possible,
7 this is the right approach right now in response to what
8 Texas is doing and what this President is trying to do to
9 our country. And I respectfully ask for an aye vote.

10 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

11 Senator Reyes, you are recognized.

12 SENATOR REYES: Thank you, Madam
13 President.

14 My mother has often told me, and I'll say
15 in Spanish (Spanish). My mother says, if it is unjust,
16 it is incorrect. And if it is incorrect, it is your
17 responsibility to correct it. Not because it affects
18 you, but it's because it affects others and because it
19 affects society.

20 The actions of this administration have
21 terrorized our communities. Sometimes it is direct, and
22 sometimes it is not only direct in our -- in our
23 districts, but also throughout California. In San
24 Bernardino County alone, 155,000 children rely on SNAP,
25 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. They're going

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1 to -- many of them are going to lose this. That is an
2 injustice.

3 We are seeing armed masked men stopping
4 and kidnapping people right off the street, putting them
5 in unmarked cars, and sending them to unknown countries.
6 Just last week, we had a young man who was stopped by
7 these unmasked -- or by these masked armed men. He
8 wouldn't roll down his window. He asked them to identify
9 themselves, asked for a warrant. They could not provide
10 anything. They broke his windows. He immediately fled.
11 They fired at his vehicle. And on his way home, he
12 called 911 and asked San Bernardino PD to please come and
13 help.

14 We've lost due process, which is a
15 fundamental right of Americans. We have lost it under
16 this administration. The fear in our country is
17 unacceptable, especially for our children who are no
18 longer going to school. We have -- we have
19 superintendents now concerned in sending the teachers out
20 to welcome the students to make sure the students feel
21 that they are protected in their schools.

22 This Trump big, ugly bill has taken \$1
23 trillion that was for Medicaid. In every one of our
24 counties, every one of our districts, our people, our
25 people, our constituents are losing their benefits. And

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1 who benefited under that big, ugly bill? Billionaires.
2 They can write off their jets now under this bill in
3 addition to so many other things.

4 Because of the President's failure, he
5 went to Texas, as has been talked about. He went to
6 Republican states to do what failures do best when they
7 don't get their way - cheat, found a way to cheat. He's
8 cheating because he knows that he will have to fairly
9 answer to the consequences of his actions, and to the
10 American people, who will wholeheartedly reject him.

11 This is why we're here on the floor, to
12 hold him and others accountable. And to show that when
13 you pick a fight with California, California will fight
14 back. It's been mentioned so many times, we didn't start
15 this fight, but we cannot back away from it.
16 Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures.

17 That is why we are doing this the right
18 way. We are taking this fight to the voters to ask them
19 to join us in offsetting the partisan, hostile acts of
20 the Trump administration.

21 If California truly leads a nation, as is
22 often said on this floor, then it has to be us that shows
23 the rest of the country, democracy is what is at stake.
24 We are witnessing injustices under this President and
25 this administration. These injustices are incorrect, and

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we have a responsibility to correct what is wrong.

If it is unjust, it is incorrect. We are here to protect democracy. And I've got to tell you that we take this responsibility -- I take this responsibility very seriously. And I am so proud to have returned to this floor at this time to exercise my right to join with my colleagues in exercising this responsibility and to correct something that is so wrong and so unjust. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.
Senator Strickland, you are recognized.

SENATOR STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. President, members. I would like to bring it back to the bill that's before us instead of rehash the Presidential campaign. And I also -- I want to point out on the open of this debate, Mr. Leader, who I have deep respect for, said we had fake outrage.

I'm here to say there's nothing fake about our outrage on our side of the aisle. I hear a lot of different terminologies being used by the other side. The word "authoritarian" came up very, very frequently. Well, it's authoritarian to have a predetermined election, and that's exactly what will happen if we pass and the people pass ACA 8. We will have predetermined elections where there's no competition in California, and

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that is authoritarian.

1 I do trust the voters of California. And
2 a lot of the members here say, well, why don't you just
3 trust the voters of California, because they get to
4 decide the final say in November? I do trust the voters.
5 However, I don't trust the truth in advertising. We need
6 to have truth in advertising. And when you look at
7 what's going to be called the title and summary with the
8 Attorney General, the first lines are going to be, do you
9 want to keep the non-partisan Citizens Redistricting
10 Commission?

11 Members, you know, that's not true. You
12 know, that's not truth in advertising. And I'm glad one
13 of my colleagues called out the high-speed rail because
14 at the time when that came forward, I said there was no
15 truth in advertising to that bill. Because they said it
16 won't be \$33 billion, and it won't go from San Francisco
17 to Los Angeles.

18 SENATOR CORTESE: Point of order.

19 SENATOR STRICKLAND: By the way --

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.

21 SENATOR STRICKLAND: -- I'm responding --

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.

23 Just a moment.

24 SENATOR STRICKLAND: -- to --

25

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.

2 What is your point of order?

3 SENATOR CORTESE: Point of order. There's
4 nothing on the floor before us today that has anything to
5 do with high-speed rail and the arguments that a
6 colleague from Huntington Beach has made in the past
7 about high-speed rail. And I just ask that he stick to
8 the matters on the floor. Thank you.

9 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Madam President, I'm
10 responding to a member.

11 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Just a moment.
12 Just a moment.

13 SENATOR STRICKLAND: It's truth in
14 advertising.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you. So
16 seeing that a senator did mention high-speed rail
17 earlier, we are going to allow for latitude to allow
18 Senator Strickland to include those in his remarks.
19 However, please try to keep your remarks as close to --

20 SENATOR STRICKLAND: I will.

21 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: -- the measure
22 that we are debating as close as possible. Thank you.

23 SENATOR STRICKLAND: Thank you, Madam
24 President.

25 Again, I have faith in the California

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1 people and the California voters, but when they're misled
2 in terms of what they're actually voting for, like the
3 high-speed rail and like what's before us here today,
4 when you're telling the people of California, you're
5 preserving the non-partisan Citizens Redistricting
6 Commission, you're not being truthful to the people of
7 California.

8 And again, we've done this without
9 transparency. We haven't done it in the light of day,
10 but again, I firmly believe when it comes down to it, the
11 people of California -- if this bill moves forward, the
12 people of California will fight to preserve what is the
13 non-partisan Citizens Redistricting Commission, a gold
14 standard, because they don't want the authoritarian
15 politics to have predetermined elections.

16 They want to have a voice, and they will
17 not have a voice in California if this bill moves
18 forward. And instead of people in Congress earning the
19 votes of their citizens, the elections will be
20 predetermined. And I can't think of anything more
21 authoritarian than having predetermined elections. And
22 for that reason, I urge a no vote on ACA.

23 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

24 Senator Padilla, you're recognized.

25 SENATOR PADILLA: Thank you very much,

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Madam President and colleagues. I rise in support.

You know, to be honest, Madam President, I'm reminded of a famous line from a classical movie we're all familiar with, The Wizard of Oz. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.

The question before the Senate on this amendment is first whether we should adopt its content, what it does, and whether we should submit it to the voters of California for their good judgment to decide whether or not to adopt it and to put it into operation. But really, Madam President, this is a conversation about the why and not the what.

I think we know the what, what a contrast it presents. Sitting President of the United States phones up the Governor of Texas with their time-honored tradition of gerrymandering and being in court defending that they don't violate the Voting Rights Act, disenfranchising voters, doing it their way, which they're entitled to do. But in this case, having a sitting President ask that they do it now, mid-census, with an eye towards the next midterm elections for representation in the United States House of Representatives.

And so here we are with this question in response to that, but doing it slightly differently. Not

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1 because a President called us up and said, can you find
2 me some more districts? But putting the question before
3 the people enfranchising and empowering the voters of
4 California to make this critical decision and paying them
5 the respect and honesty as to the why.

6 And we should think about the why. Why is
7 it important in the midterms for the US House of
8 Representatives that there be an even exchange of debate
9 and ideas, and opportunity for the people of this country
10 to decide what that house looks like instead of giving
11 greater weight to one point of view before the game is
12 even played and diminishing the voices of another point
13 of view? The why is pretty obvious. It's to continue
14 the trajectory and the policies of regression, and
15 reduction, and undoing that we are witnessing in this
16 time at a level we've never seen in modern American
17 history.

18 That's why it's important to balance the
19 equation so that all voices in our congressional midterms
20 have an opportunity to be heard. Not for its own sake,
21 but because of what is at stake.

22 There was a young democratic President in
23 January of 1961 named John Kennedy, who talked about
24 being part of a generation of leaders, new leaders that
25 were not and were unwilling to witness or permit the slow

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1 undoing of the basic human rights for which this nation
2 has always been committed here at home and around the
3 world.

4 And two decades later, a Republican
5 President named Ronald Reagan, upon taking his oath,
6 talked incredibly and articulately well about the fact
7 that freedom and the dignity of the individual must be
8 and has been more available and assured here in this
9 country than in any other place on earth.

10 The question is really about the why. Why
11 did President Trump ask Texas to act? Why is it
12 important that they rigged the game before it's played?
13 It's not for its own sake. It's for what they want to
14 continue to do, the slow undoing. The slow undoing that
15 we've witnessed in the undoing of individual liberties
16 and protections, ignoring courts of law. The snatching
17 of persons by unidentified masked agents off the streets,
18 something people haven't seen since behind the Iron
19 Curtain during the Cold War in the most oppressive states
20 in the world, pushing millions out of the social safety
21 net. Those who can least afford it, and those who are
22 most vulnerable.

23 The undoing that is the biggest tax
24 giveaway in American history to the wealthiest Americans
25 at the expense of the most vulnerable. The retreating

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1 from American leadership abroad in the world. The
2 failure to defend territorial integrity, sovereignty, and
3 democracy. To stand for something that we pledge
4 allegiance to every day, the slow undoing.

5 And the question today, colleagues, are we
6 -- are we part of a new generation of leaders in 2025 who
7 are unwilling to witness or permit that continued slow
8 undoing of everything we hold dear? Are we going to be
9 part of a generation of leaders that are determined to be
10 sure that the freedom and dignity of the individual must
11 be available and assured here in America, more so than in
12 any other place on earth? That's what this debate is
13 really about. We must be that generation of leaders.
14 And I respectfully ask for aye vote.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.
16 Senator Rubio, you are recognized.

17 SENATOR RUBIO: Thank you, Madam
18 President, ladies and gentlemen of the Senate.

19 Today, I rise first and foremost as a
20 teacher, just thinking about what this moment means to my
21 students, as a former council member, just thinking of
22 how this moment is going to impact my community, and as a
23 formerly elected city clerk who ran elections, what this
24 means to democracy. And I rise in strong support of ACA
25 8, and now, of course, as a state senator, caring very

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1 much about what happens in this beautiful state to the
2 beautiful people of California.

3 But I want to be clear. I've been hearing
4 over and over from my colleagues their outrage about the
5 money that's being spent in this election. And really, I
6 think the outrage is hollow. One of the things that
7 keeps running through my mind constantly is that, you
8 know, we have a President, Donald Trump, who has wasted
9 millions and millions of dollars, of our tax dollars, in
10 his own luxury, and we haven't heard any outrage about
11 that spending.

12 He has spent millions of dollars
13 retrofitting a private jet that he received from a
14 foreign country no less. He is currently spending
15 millions of dollars on a grand ballroom so that he can
16 continue to have his lavish parties. And he continues to
17 spend money gold-plating a White House that was meant to
18 be white.

19 And yet we have so many of our seniors
20 whose lives are being threatened, healthcare being cut
21 back, and their Social Security also threatened. We have
22 our students, our children, our community members who now
23 are going to be impacted by the cutbacks in SNAP and food
24 assistance. And it always happens to the most
25 vulnerable. But let's not talk about the millions in

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that ballroom that's going to have gold plating.

And then we don't think about the millions that were spent deploying our military on American soil on Americans. While college students are not going to be able to afford to go to college because their grants were frozen. I don't remember the outrage over those tax dollars, and never mind that his children and himself continue to make billions. He didn't divest, and I believe he has continued to violate the Emoluments Clause. Again, where is the outrage? They're making billions.

The truth is that the outrage is not over the spending. It's about accountability. It's about democracy itself. And that is why ACA 8 matters so much because we need to give Californians the power to decide if it matters to them as well. And I believe that the way this is set up, it does. We're giving Californians the power to decide in November for themselves if this is fair, and it's in the hands of the voters.

And if we don't protect democracy now, then when? When it's gone and history is looking back? History will look back on us. Future generations will look back on us, and I think this is the right time to do the right thing.

Government should always be about service

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1 and not self-indulgence, as we have seen from our
2 President. It's about feeding children, not feeding
3 egos, as we have seen from the President. It's about
4 protecting seniors, not protecting golf outings, as we
5 have seen from the President.

6 ACA 8 is our chance to say enough, to put
7 power back where it belongs, and that is in the hands of
8 our Californian people.

9 The maps are already online. They will be
10 printed on official voter guides. Voters will have
11 plenty of time to review them and cast their vote. The
12 people will decide. All Californians will decide, and it
13 doesn't matter what side you're on. So with that, I
14 respectfully ask for your aye vote. Thank you.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

16 Senator Smallwood-Cuevas, you are
17 recognized.

18 SENATOR SMALLWOOD-CUEVAS: Thank you,
19 Madam President and colleagues. I rise in strong support
20 of ACA 8.

21 Today's conversation just reminded me of
22 something that my grandmother said, and that is, if you
23 don't know your history, your children will be doomed to
24 repeat it. When our people marched across the Edmund
25 Pettus Bridge, facing dogs, and fire hoses, and the

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1 terror of Jim Crow and racial violence, we were not only
2 demanding the right to vote for ourselves, we were
3 expanding the promise of democracy for the nation. And
4 out of that sacrifice came the Voting Rights Act of 1965,
5 the most important civil rights law in our history.

6 And yet every year since the act was
7 passed, Texas has found ways to violate it. A reminder
8 that progress is never permanent, and vigilance is always
9 required. And Californians know, and what today's vote
10 on ACA 8 is about, is that this fight is not over. The
11 same forces that tried to stop us in Selma are still
12 working today to silence our voices through voter
13 suppression and this Texas gerrymandering.

14 In fact, we must honor the Voting Rights
15 Act, not just with memory but with action. And we must
16 protect the right to vote and ensure that we are
17 strengthening all communities of interest, ensuring
18 people who have saved our democracy can never be shut out
19 again. ACA 8 is about one thing - defending our
20 democracy from being rigged by a tyrant.

21 Texas and other Republican-led states are
22 rushing through a mid-decade redistricting scheme
23 designed to steal seats in Congress. In Texas, what this
24 looks like is that black Texans will lose much of their
25 power, being reduced to about a fifth of what their power

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1 was before this gross attack. This is not just a power
2 grab. It is a direct attack on communities of interest,
3 on young voters, and on anyone who stands for equity, and
4 justice, and due process of law.

5 Californians, we understand that we cannot
6 sit back while these extremists tilt the balance of power
7 under this hand of Donald Trump and unchecked control of
8 Congress. We cannot let this happen. And ACA 8 provides
9 a safeguard. It states that if Texas gerrymanders their
10 maps, California will temporarily adjust ours to level
11 the playing field. And we understand we always need to
12 work at leveling the playing field.

13 Time and time again, when our nation's
14 future was on the line, this history of the black vote is
15 key because it's carried us forward. ACA 8 offsets
16 partisan gerrymanders in Texas. It protects vulnerable
17 communities here in California. And it's not maps alone
18 that safeguard our future. Let's remember our history,
19 and let's take a closer look at Texas history.

20 Texas once saw black political power rise
21 during reconstruction, as it had across much of the
22 country, only to be stripped away by the black codes, and
23 Jim Crow, and racial terror, poll taxes, white-only
24 primaries that cut black voter rolls in Texas from over
25 100,000 to just a few thousand. The Voting Rights Act of

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1 1965 reclaimed that. But today's gerrymandering in
2 Texas, the voter suppression, shows that Texas is now
3 sliding back, a reminder that every generation must fight
4 to keep democracy alive. And that is what we are
5 stepping up to the plate to do here in California.

6 This is bigger than what we are doing on
7 this floor, and it's bigger than what our voters will
8 have to do this November. This is about sending a clear
9 message to the nation and the world that we will not
10 allow Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans to steal
11 elections from the people. We know what happens when
12 Trump has power.

13 Many of my colleagues have described the
14 painful and cruelty of it - denying disaster relief to
15 fire victims, imposing illegal tariffs that is destroying
16 our economy and threatening hundreds of thousands, if not
17 millions, of workers. He's hurting working families by
18 rolling back over 60 years of hard-fought labor
19 protections. He's ordered the mass arrest, deportations,
20 racial profiling, and terrorizing of families and
21 children.

22 He's criminalizing diversity, dismantling
23 DEI programs that protect equity in our schools and in
24 our workplaces, and that allows us to grow and be
25 innovative by bringing new voices, and ideas, and thought

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1 partners to the table. If given unchecked control, we
2 know that Trump will roll back decades of human civil,
3 women, workers' rights.

4 ACA 8 is California, once again, standing
5 up to defend democracy, just as we have led on climate
6 resiliency, just as we have led on workers' rights, on
7 women's rights, on equity. Today, we will lead on
8 protecting free and fair elections. Let's make sure the
9 voice of California and all Californians will not be
10 silenced by partisan power grabs at the hands of a
11 dictator. And with that, I respectfully urge an aye vote
12 on ACA 8.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

14 Senator Arreguin, you are recognized.

15 SENATOR ARREGUIN: Thank you, Madam
16 President.

17 Senators, I rise in strong support of ACA
18 8, a bill that is vital to the preservation of our
19 democracy, that is under assault by President Trump.

20 And first, let me address the question of
21 whether it is legal for us to take this action today.
22 The Legislature and the voters often put constitutional
23 amendments on the ballot. And what we are doing today is
24 putting this question to the voters and giving them the
25 opportunity to decide whether to allow for the temporary

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1 implementation of these congressional boundaries if the
2 voters approve this measure.

3 In today's debate, my colleagues on the
4 other side of the aisle have failed to address what I
5 think is the elephant in the room: their party's leader,
6 President Trump, and the Republicans in Texas who are
7 gerrymandering democratic and minority -- majority
8 districts to give Trump five new Republican seats in
9 Congress. And why? The President is afraid that he
10 can't win an election in a fair fight. So he has to rig
11 the process to give his party an unfair, partisan
12 advantage. That is not fairness.

13 So we wouldn't be here today if it wasn't
14 for the President's actions, and the actions of the
15 Governor of Texas, and the Texas Legislature. I wish we
16 weren't here today, but we are.

17 And I would agree with my Republican
18 colleagues, we have a lot of important business to
19 address for our state, but this is probably just, if not
20 more important than that business that we have to take up
21 over the next few weeks because the impact of Trump and
22 the Republican Congressional majority have had in our
23 state has been so significant. So much of what has
24 impacted our state over the last eight months has been
25 directly in response to the devastating policies of this

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administration.

I've also heard concerns about the cost of this special election, but let's put this in the context of what's at stake. Potentially billions of cuts to state grants and funding by the Trump administration. Within the first month, the Trump administration tried to freeze federal funds to California. And let's also remember that we are the largest donor to the federal government. One in four taxes are paid by Californians.

Thanks to the actions of Democrats in this Legislature by providing emergency funding and the actions of our Attorney General, we unfroze \$168 billion in federal funds, approximately a third of our state's budget. We also took action to prevent 11 billion in health and human services cuts, and 7 billion in transportation cuts.

That doesn't even account for the devastating cuts that will be realized by the passage of HR 1 to our federal Medicaid budget, which will kick millions of Californians off of healthcare coverage, the cuts to SNAP, which will mean that children and families will starve in our state, the threatened cuts to education funding, and other essential programs. This will further crater our state's budget.

What's at stake is also our state's

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1 economic prosperity. This administration's trade
2 policies are having a direct impact on our state's budget
3 and are wreaking havoc on our state's economy.

4 So when we talk about budget deficits,
5 where do we think they come from? My constituents in
6 Senate District 7 in the East Bay and people across the
7 nation are outraged seeing the federal government
8 destroying their livelihoods. From dismantling our
9 safety nets, eliminating healthcare coverage, reversing
10 the progress that we've made on civil rights and on
11 environmental protections, and the kidnapping of our
12 hardworking immigrant neighbors.

13 Our constituents call on us to take
14 meaningful action during these unprecedented times. And
15 ACA 8 is that action to give voters an opportunity to
16 take a stand.

17 Now, I'm a proud supporter of independent
18 redistricting, something that our state will retain, even
19 if the voters approve this map. And I believe that all
20 states should have independent commissions, something
21 that congressional Republicans have long opposed.

22 And so as the author had mentioned, ACA 8
23 specifically calls on Congress to adopt legislation and
24 to put on before all the states a constitutional
25 amendment to allow for independent commissions

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1 nationwide. But why have Republicans in Congress opposed
2 these efforts? Why are they afraid of giving power to
3 redistrict to the people? Do they not believe in free
4 and fair elections? To me, the answer is simple.
5 Because if the people had their way, Congress would
6 actually reflect the will of the people.

7 So Trump's solution is to push our 250-
8 year experiment in democracy to the brink in order to
9 hold on to power.

10 So the question before us is a simple one.
11 Will we enable this assault on our democracy, a necessary
12 step to continue the President's attacks on immigrants,
13 the LGBTQ plus community, on reproductive rights, on
14 anyone who dares to stand against authoritarianism? Or
15 will we say enough is enough and take action to counter
16 these attacks?

17 During this critical moment, I urge you to
18 stand on the side of democracy. Colleagues, the country
19 is watching what we are doing here today, and history
20 will remember what we do. With that, I respectfully ask
21 for your aye vote on ACA 8.

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

23 Senator Cortese, you are recognized.

24 SENATOR CORTESE: Well, thank you, Madam
25 President. I rise in support of ACA 8.

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1 We are here today because our democracy is
2 under attack, as we've heard over and over and over
3 again. But what does that really mean in specifics?
4 We've seen the dangers of unchecked power. What does
5 that really mean today in this context? You know, after
6 the last national elections, the President of the United
7 States was able to consolidate power to the executive
8 branch in the House and the Senate, and he has a very
9 favorable judicial branch.

10 Most of us are taught in eighth-grade
11 civics that those three branches of government are
12 supposed to check themselves, but democracy was in play.
13 The American people voted, and we are where we are. But
14 when you talk about trusting the voters, what I've seen
15 over and over and over again in my lifetime, especially
16 my voting lifetime, is that the American people are the
17 other branch of government.

18 The American people will check and will
19 swing the pendulum back when they see the three branches
20 of government become too extreme. And that's happened.
21 And the President of the United States was surrounded by
22 his own advisors, who said that your extreme policies are
23 going to cost us the midterm elections. And when you
24 cost us the midterm elections, you cost us the
25 consolidation of power. This, as my colleague from

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1 Berkeley and others have said here today, you're going to
2 cost us unified power for the Republican Party in this
3 country, but more importantly, for our extreme policies.

4 Why? Because the one thing that can check
5 all three branches of government are the sanctity of the
6 vote, the franchise of the vote. And that's when the
7 President of the United States said, unless we can
8 disenfranchise those voters; then we've got them too.
9 And that's a decision that was made.

10 And that's why this President and this
11 administration is such a powerful threat to democracy
12 because he's no longer consolidating power among three
13 branches of government. He's disenfranchising and
14 literally taking away the right to vote for whom people
15 want to vote.

16 That's manipulation of democracy and the
17 vote, but we're doing it differently here under ACA 8.
18 Here in California we're saying, as our Governor has
19 said, we can counter what's going on in Texas. We can
20 counter what's going on in the administration. But here,
21 because of the way that we operate, we're going back to
22 the people of California. We're respecting the sanctity
23 of the vote. And we ask the voters of California, what
24 do they choose?

25 Do they choose the methodology that we

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1 have in place now for selecting our Congressional
2 representatives, or in light of what's going on in
3 Washington and Texas, do they want to change the rules?
4 They get to decide. They get to decide. And so here in
5 California, the sanctity of the vote is paramount. In
6 Washington DC, it's not. That's the difference. That's
7 why ACA is not a power grab. Quite the opposite. It's a
8 safeguard. It's a temporary safeguard.

9 In California, voters, not politicians,
10 will decide whether we should use this temporary
11 safeguard to keep the playing field level and whether we
12 should protect our democracy from a power grab by our
13 President, not just of three branches of government. ACA
14 puts the choice squarely in the hands of the people. Why
15 do we call this authoritarian overreach? Think about it
16 for a moment. This President has gone to an autonomous
17 state, Texas, a self-governing state, Texas, a
18 freestanding state, Texas, a sovereign state within the
19 United States of America, and said, you'll do what I tell
20 you to do.

21 ACA 8 is the only thing we have in our
22 toolbox to counter that. But we have tools, and we'll
23 use those tools. Thank you. And I urge your aye vote.

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

25 Senator Grove, you're recognized.

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1 SENATOR GROVE: Thank you, Madam
2 President.

3 Again, I wasn't going to speak on this
4 because I wanted to voice my opinion on the previous
5 bill, and they're all considered a package. But I do
6 want to set the record straight and make some comments
7 with some leeway from Madam President regarding some of
8 the comments that were made on the floor.

9 Again, if you look at the lawsuit between
10 Petteway versus Galveston County, the court, the three
11 branches of government that were just mentioned by my
12 good colleague, that the court ordered Texas to redraw
13 the lines. President Trump did not order Texas to redraw
14 the lines. This is an independent judge. He said,
15 redraw the lines based on a lawsuit filed by the Elias
16 Commission, which I described earlier.

17 It's absurd to stand. And again, I just
18 love my good colleague. I mean, he's only right 10
19 percent of the time, but when he is right, I agree with
20 him; but he's right -- or wrong a lot of the times. My
21 good colleague from San Francisco made the comment that
22 UCLA was being punished by a mean dictator because they
23 were being fined \$1 billion by President Trump.

24 UCLA is being fined by the President
25 because they failed to protect Jewish students. Where

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1 Jewish students were attacked, threatened, locked in
2 rooms, refused to allowed to go to class. They won a
3 \$600 million lawsuit against the university system, and
4 President Trump fined the UC -- UC system, \$1 billion for
5 not protecting Jewish students. Nobody wants to relive
6 history in the 1940s and that era, that timeframe of
7 World War II. And the President is standing up for
8 Jewish students. That's why he fined them \$1 billion.

9 So just a point of clarification to my
10 good friend and my colleague from San Francisco, and the
11 co-chair of the Jewish -- Legislative Jewish Caucus.
12 That was a justification, and we should all stand behind
13 the fact that people who hurt and harm our Jewish
14 communities should be punished in some way. And I
15 applaud the President for doing this.

16 Again, read Galveston versus -- read
17 Petteway versus Galveston County. That's what started
18 this whole thing. It was not President Trump. It was a
19 court case that required Texas to redraw the lines, which
20 triggered your response, which is going to trigger a lot
21 of other responses.

22 And as I made in my comments earlier,
23 Maryland Democrats occupy 7 out of 8 seats even though 40
24 percent of votes were Republican. Massachusetts, all 9
25 seats are Democratic despite President Trump getting 40

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percent of the vote.

It continues down the line, and this ACA to gerrymander even further, the seats that you have in California, where Republicans got 40 percent of the vote and we occupy 17 percent of the congressional seats. And to allow these maps with no other choice other than the voters to say no for this to happen, based on the rhetoric that is coming out of this body, that it's President Trump.

It's a court case. The documents are right there. I'd be glad to send it all to you. Most of you are attorneys. I barely have a high school diploma, and I was able to read that and determine where the lawsuit came from. Respectfully ask for a no vote.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

Senator Perez, you are recognized.

SENATOR PEREZ: Thank you, Madam President.

I'm proud to rise in support of ACA 8 as well as a co-author of the Election Rigging Response Act. You know, I think it's really important that we articulate why we are here today and why we are even taking up ACA 8.

Over the last several weeks, we have seen Texas Republicans, along with Governor Greg Abbott, take

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1 actions to try to redraw their maps to add an additional
2 five Republican seats. In addition to that, they have
3 threatened Texas Democrats, enforcing police force
4 against them to go searching for them, threatening to
5 utilize the FBI, and in one case, even locking a Texas
6 legislator in the chambers, refusing to allow her to
7 leave unless she signed and agreed to have 24-hour
8 surveillance.

9 We have Texas members of the Legislature,
10 democratic members that are being followed by police
11 officers in the grocery store. This is complete
12 absurdity and complete madness. And while I heard
13 clearly from my Republican colleagues that they do not
14 believe that President Donald Trump reached out to
15 Governor Greg Abbott, we have seen otherwise. That the
16 President has reached out to Texas Governor Greg Abbott
17 to ask him to deliver these five Republican seats. That
18 he's reached out to the states of Missouri, Florida,
19 Ohio, Indiana, and possibly even Kansas in order to
20 redistrict the maps so that he can turn the 2026 election
21 in his favor.

22 Now, why is this happening? That is
23 because the President has moved forward a set of policies
24 that is wildly unpopular. We have seen the cost of
25 living skyrocket. We have seen ICE raids across our

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community.

1 We had a man die in Camarillo. Mr. Alanis
2 (phonetic), who died while running from an ICE raid, fell
3 more than 30 feet to his death. Just a few days ago, a
4 man died in my district. Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez
5 was killed when he was running from an ICE raid and was
6 struck by a vehicle. This is unacceptable, and I want to
7 emphasize this, that lives are on the line. That is what
8 is on the line.

9 We are not just talking simply about
10 funding. We talk a lot about numbers in this House and
11 the millions of dollars that have been cut from
12 education, from healthcare, from food programs, the
13 millions of dollars that are being spent on additional
14 ICE raids, on surveillance, and policing of our
15 communities.

16 But what has that ultimately resulted in?
17 That has ultimately resulted in people dying. People
18 losing access to critical healthcare. Less people
19 showing up to their doctors' appointments. Less people
20 having access to healthy and nutritious food. And
21 ultimately, that is going to have an impact on the 2026
22 elections because voters know, Americans know, regardless
23 of party, they are seeing that these policies are not
24 yielding results for them. That this is an
25

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1 administration that is more interested in investing in
2 billionaires, in trillionaires, and their interest in
3 giving them huge tax breaks than everyday working people
4 like you and me, and it is utterly unacceptable.

5 Now, what we have done here today in
6 introducing ACA 8 is allow us to neutralize what is
7 happening in Texas so that we can create an additional
8 five Democratic seats to stop this mess and stop this
9 chaos.

10 But what does it also do? It protects our
11 independent redistricting commission. Something that was
12 approved by the voters, and it was not easy to get it
13 approved. It was put on the ballot several times. We
14 finally earned the support of the voters. You have both
15 Democrats and Republicans that serve on that Commission.
16 They will be redrawing the lines come 2030 again. And
17 that is important. That is critical.

18 And I want to highlight that it is
19 Democratic states that have independent redistricting
20 commissions. It is not Republican states. In fact, here
21 in the United States, the five most gerrymandered states
22 are Republican states. And we need to call that out to
23 continue to pretend as if partisan gerrymandering was
24 just something that came up, as if California created
25 this. To watch the Vice President, JD Vance, continue to

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spread this misinformation is utterly unacceptable.

What do we know? That back in 2021, when Democrats introduced a measure to ban partisan gerrymandering, it was Senate Republicans who killed it. And we could have stopped this mess then, but they have refused to allow such a measure to pass.

And we know that come 2026, voters are going to turn out, and they're going to send a message. They're going to send a message that they do not support cuts to food stamps. That they do not support cuts to Medicare programs. That they do not support ICE raids in their communities, robbing their neighbors in broad daylight and causing deaths left and right of hardworking people - farm workers, day laborers, blue collar workers that look like my father and my grandfather. That they do not support Republicans leaving session early in Congress to prevent the release of the Epstein files.

We are going to hear loud and clear come 2026, and that's what this moment is about. California is stepping up. We did not want this battle. And I want to make very clear, and folks that have worked with me know, I have been very invested in independent redistricting. We have moved measures like this forward at the local level. But unfortunately, this is a moment that requires us to respond. California didn't pick this

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1 battle, but we can end it. And that is our job here
2 today. I urge an aye vote on ACA 8, and I'm so proud to
3 be supporting and co-authoring this message. Thank you
4 so much.

5 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

6 Senator Niello, you are recognized.

7 SENATOR NIELLO: Thank you, Madam
8 President.

9 With regard to some final comments of my
10 friend from Pasadena relative to who supports and doesn't
11 support redistricting, at least in this state, I would
12 just make reference to my past historical notes when I
13 spoke to the previous bill.

14 But I have a question of the author.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the author
16 take a question?

17 SENATOR CABALDON: Yes, Madam President.

18 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

19 You may proceed.

20 SENATOR NIELLO: And in connection with
21 that, I'd like permission to read.

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Seeing no
23 objection, you may proceed.

24 SENATOR NIELLO: I am reading from Article
25 21, Redistricting of the State Constitution,

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1 Redistricting of Senate Assembly Congressional and Board
2 of Equalization Districts. This is Section 2J.

3 "If the Commission does not approve a
4 final map by at least the requisite votes or" -- and this
5 is the relevant section -- "if voters disapprove a
6 certified final map in a referendum, the Secretary of
7 State shall immediately petition the California Supreme
8 Court for an order directing the appointment of special
9 masters to adjust the boundary lines of that map in
10 accordance with the redistricting criteria and
11 requirements set forth in three other previous
12 subdivisions. Upon its approval of the master's map, the
13 court shall certify the resulting map to the Secretary of
14 State, which map shall constitute the certified final map
15 for the subject type district."

16 Now, within the allowance of ACA 8 and the
17 issues we're speaking today, it does ask the voters to
18 disapprove the certified final maps, but with other maps
19 being substituted, which is in direct conflict with that
20 specified by this constitutional requirement. So my
21 question is: how does that not make this
22 unconstitutional?

23 SENATOR CABALDON: Thank you, Madam
24 President. First let me emphasize that the Senate has
25 paid close attention to each word and each provision of

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1 the constitutional amendment in the construction of this
2 bill, along with our colleagues in the assembly but also
3 to point out what might be the obvious - that this is
4 Assembly Constitutional Amendment Number 8, and
5 therefore, its provisions already being not inconsistent
6 with the constitution will amend the constitution, and
7 they will be, by definition -- if the voters choose to
8 enact them, they will be constitutional.

9 SENATOR NIELLO: So in other words, you
10 are actually amending Article 21.

11 SENATOR CABALDON: No. So Article 21 --
12 Article 21 of the constitution will be -- remains in
13 place as a result of ACA 8. ACA 8 adds new provisions to
14 the constitution and an alternative procedure that is
15 temporary and for this one purpose and this one time, an
16 alternative that the voters have the ability through
17 their votes to enact. And the Senate has complied in
18 every respect with the entire constitution in the
19 drafting of this measure.

20 SENATOR NIELLO: So this also amends or
21 basically eliminates Section 2J.

22 SENATOR CABALDON: Now, Section 2J
23 remember --

24 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Excuse me.

25 SENATOR CABALDON: -- let us --

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Excuse me.

2 SENATOR CABALDON: Oh sorry, Madam
3 President.

4 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Will the Senator
5 take another question?

6 SENATOR CABALDON: Yes, Madam President.

7 Section 2J -- as you know, my colleague
8 from Fair Oaks, Section 2J exists in the article that
9 describes the procedure by which the commission
10 constructs the maps each -- after each decennial census.
11 And in fact, that is the first line of that article is
12 each 10 years after the census this -- the following is
13 about what is to occur.

14 This ACA 8 creates a different provision
15 of the constitution, this alternative procedure that
16 would be temporary for this one-time purpose. And so as
17 long as it's not inconsistent with other provisions of
18 the constitution, this measure gives the people the power
19 to design the proper approach for this one time temporary
20 measure. So it is not inconsistent with it. It fully
21 complies with the constitution.

22 SENATOR NIELLO: Well, thank you for that.

23 On my own time, all of the testimony here
24 by everybody that we believe we have an excellent system
25 for redistricting after each census. And we will most

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1 certainly go back to that after 2030. Nonetheless,
2 again, referring back to my little history dissertation
3 earlier today and the involvement, reported involvement
4 of the DCCC in this action that is going on that has been
5 developed behind the scenes. One has to be awfully
6 suspicious of significant changes to this process and
7 whether, indeed, the intent or the power to continue on
8 our previous track after 2030 is of great concern to me,
9 and I think should be of great concern to everybody who
10 votes in favor of this ACA and the other two bills that
11 we have, and of great concern to the voters of California
12 once this goes on the ballot.

13 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

14 Senator Wahab, you are recognized.

15 SENATOR WAHAB: Thank you.

16 I first just want to state that I try
17 really hard to represent my entire district, both
18 Republicans, Democrats, as well as independents, non-
19 voters, new immigrants, and anybody that lives in my
20 district. And I believe that is the role of when we
21 create policy, it is for the entire State of California
22 representing all people, just as when we do a census.
23 It's about all people.

24 And it was referenced about lawsuits. In
25 2023, the Supreme Court ruled in Abbott versus Perez,

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1 that Texas's redistricting plan violated the voting
2 writers -- the Voting Rights Act, mandating that voters
3 of color be placed in districts with more opportunity to
4 select their preferred candidates. And continuously we
5 have seen that Texas has been violating the Voting Rights
6 Act since 1965, and even this most recent action in
7 August of this month, of 2025, we are seeing violations
8 being made.

9 And I heard multiple times today a number
10 of things - that you know it's wrong, what's being done;
11 and there's zero transparency; and it's a power grab.
12 And I call that into question. So when President Trump
13 calls for Texas to do a partisan mid-decade redraw, which
14 handed themselves plus five GOP seats behind closed
15 doors, is that okay? Shutting down Democrats in these
16 rushed maps? Is that okay? The fact that California is
17 different. We're giving voters the final say and
18 opportunity to use their voice by voting on this effort.
19 The highest form of transparency for all voters.

20 We hear that it's unconstitutional or
21 overturning the will of the voters. And the US
22 Constitution does not forbid mid-decade redistricting.
23 In fact, California's constitution requires voter
24 approval, which is exactly what we are doing. We are
25 following the rules and going to the voters. The

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1 Commission remains in place even after this. This is a
2 temporary safeguard until 2030. And again, it's up to
3 the voters, not politicians deciding whether to authorize
4 this action; that's respecting the will of the people.
5 We are going to the voters.

6 So I've heard Democrats are hypocrites,
7 but the real hypocrisy, I will say, is claiming to
8 support housing, childcare, and healthcare, but voting no
9 consistently on funding those items. Calling themselves
10 the party of law and order but excusing President Trump's
11 attempt to overturn the 2020 election and pardoning the
12 January 6th rioters. Claiming to care about women and
13 children, but blocking the release of the Epstein files
14 of sexual abuse of children and women.

15 Call for the release of the Epstein files.
16 I want to see the Epstein files. I'm sure many of my
17 colleagues, as much as we talk about it, as much as we
18 talk about human trafficking, children, women, women of
19 color, and the abuse of power, call for the release of
20 the Epstein files. And he died under President Trump's
21 administration with a failure of cameras, dereliction of
22 duty of guards, and much more, and the other party is
23 silent.

24 And then people want to say, especially in
25 California, especially at the national level, that

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1 Governor Newsom is just raising his profile. Well, guess
2 what? America is getting engaged, and this nation is
3 just now seeing what Californians already know. When
4 others are scared to act, Governor Gavin Newsom shows the
5 courage to lead. As a woman, a daughter of immigrants, a
6 former foster youth, the actions at the federal level
7 have been a direct attack on each of us. For every
8 identity and ideal we hold dear, I'm proud to heed
9 Governor Newsom's call to defend our democracy. Finally,
10 a leader willing to boldly take on what is happening in
11 this country.

12 And so with this vote is giving the choice
13 back to the voters of California. I trust the voters and
14 for the greater good, I respectfully ask for an aye vote.
15 Thank you.

16 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

17 Seeing no further discussion or debate,
18 Senator Cabaldon, would you like to close?

19 SENATOR CABALDON: Yes. Thank you, Madam
20 President.

21 Let me first remind us of what is in ACA
22 8. The first and critical provision is a call to the
23 Congress of the United States to put an end to this
24 madness that has consumed the country, thanks to Donald
25 Trump and Texas, and submit a constitutional amendment to

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all of the states for nationwide redistricting reform.

Number two, the authorization for the people of California to approve this temporary set of maps that will allow us to fight back, push back and preserve democracy across the country. And third, to make it very clear that the Independent Registering Commission is undisturbed by this constitutional amendment, and it will be back in 2031 for the drawing of the new lines after the census as is its constitutional responsibility.

Now, we've heard said that Texas isn't meaning to do anything devious or untoward here. They're simply complying with a court order. Well, in this country, a strongly worded letter from Attorney General Pam Bondi at the urging of President Donald Trump, following up one of his phone calls, demanding that you serve up five seats on a silver platter, is not a legally binding court order that requires emergency action on this timeframe. That is a ruse that even they don't even say that in Texas, the chair of the Texas Elections Committee and the author of the new maps has made it very clear - this is a partisan map that we are doing in order to increase Republican power at the urging of President Donald Trump.

Now, in the elections committee hearing

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1 led by our outstanding elections chair from Riverside,
2 one of the witnesses, a former member of the Independent
3 Commission, said that democracy means that we -- that
4 each political party, each idea takes turns being humbled
5 at the ballot box by the people.

6 That is the essence of what democracy is,
7 that we have our policy programs, our ideas, our
8 accountability, and our results. And we go to the
9 voters, and sometimes they applaud and reelect us.
10 Sometimes they say, no, thank you. That is ultimately
11 the essence of democracy, not Article 2J, not something
12 else. It is that notion that all of us, even if we
13 actually have the key or the card key to the capitol
14 building or to the Governor's office, we have the keys.
15 Our name is on the door. That we do not own that. That
16 we serve at the likelihood that we will, at one point, be
17 humbled.

18 What's happening in Texas, what's
19 happening as a result of the proposed changes to the
20 census and mail-in balloting is an attempt to immunize,
21 to end that cycle so we will never have accountability
22 and democracy again. And you heard this in our debate
23 today as it was said that I -- you know, one of my
24 Republican colleagues said, "I have faith in the voters.
25 I have faith in the voters, absolute faith in the

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1 voters." Except, except, and let me point -- you know,
2 turn back to the ballot measure that shall not be named,
3 but except when they get it wrong because they've paid
4 too much attention to advertising, and when they get it
5 wrong because they listen to a governor, right. You
6 know, when the campaign is not exactly balanced, then we
7 can't listen to the voters in that case.

8 And fundamentally that is what's going
9 wrong with our democracy. The idea that democracy is
10 only real if it bolsters our power, if it agrees with our
11 ideology and with our issues. And so this measure
12 protects the power of the people to assure that they can
13 hold us, the Congress, and the President of the United
14 States accountable for all of the things that have been
15 said today.

16 And it is the case that millions of
17 Californians are asking themselves in the face of all of
18 these threats to democracy, to safety, to healthcare, to
19 everything: what can I do about it? The fear, the
20 resolute anger of Californians about this. And all of us
21 hear this every single day. What can I -- what are you
22 doing and what can I do? And this is our answer. We
23 Californians, California voters have the opportunity, not
24 just to raise our voices, but to cast our votes. The
25 most fundamental way of rescuing democracy is by casting

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1 our votes if this measure allows the ACA to go on the
2 ballot.

3 And it still matters because HR 1 and the
4 census changes, everything else is still pending in terms
5 of implementation. And so let us not in a year when one
6 of our residents says, "I'm not getting my Social
7 Security" and none of the helplines -- they've all been
8 turned off. DOGE fired everybody. Let us not say, well,
9 you know, what about the cost of that special election
10 when somebody says, my hospital in the rural parts of my
11 district is gone. Who's going to stand up and say, but
12 did you know that that one bill had an urgency clause in
13 it?

14 When my Navy son has been abducted off the
15 streets in LA, who of us is going to say, but the
16 amendments really weren't germane? When we lose our
17 votes, either directly through the mail or our seats in
18 Congress, which of us is going to say, well, you know,
19 the voters might have gotten it wrong if we gave them
20 their voice. When Marines and National Guard are
21 ordered, against their will, to occupy, I don't know,
22 West Sacramento, San Diego, Murrieta, any other part of
23 California as they have -- already doing in DC and as
24 they started here in California, will we say that the
25 voters just couldn't be trusted to make a hard

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1 complicated decision like this? No. This is what this
2 vote is about.

3 Let the voters make the decision. We've
4 heard them, and we are responding. And they are the
5 ultimate judges of whether this is the right way forward.
6 The voters of California are sovereign. Regardless of
7 Article J, they are sovereign. They have the authority.
8 They have the legitimacy. And with ACA they will have
9 the power to make this right.

10 Madam President, I urgent aye vote.

11 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

12 Secretary, please call the roll.

13 THE SECRETARY: Allen.

14 Aye.

15 Alvarado-Gil.

16 Archuleta.

17 Aye.

18 Arreguin.

19 Aye.

20 Ashby.

21 Aye.

22 Becker.

23 Aye.

24 Blakespear.

25 Aye.

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1 Cabaldon.
2 Aye.
3 Caballero.
4 Aye.
5 Cervantes.
6 Aye.
7 Choi.
8 No.
9 Cortese.
10 Aye.
11 Dahle.
12 No.
13 Durazo.
14 Aye.
15 Gonzalez.
16 Aye.
17 Grayson.
18 Aye.
19 Grove.
20 No.
21 Hurtado.
22 Aye.
23 Jones.
24 No.
25 Laird.

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1 Aye.
2 Limon.
3 Aye.
4 McGuire.
5 Aye.
6 McNerney.
7 Aye.
8 Menjivar.
9 Aye.
10 Niello.
11 No.
12 Ochoa Bogh.
13 No.
14 Padilla.
15 Aye.
16 Perez.
17 Aye.
18 Reyes.
19 Aye.
20 Richardson.
21 Rubio.
22 Aye.
23 Seyarto.
24 Smallwood-Cuevas.
25 Aye.

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1 Stern.
2 Aye.
3 Strickland.
4 No.
5 Umberg.
6 Aye.
7 Valladares.
8 No.
9 Wahab.
10 Aye.
11 Weber Pierson.
12 Aye.
13 Wiener.
14 Aye.
15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please
16 call the absent members
17 THE SECRETARY: Alvarado-Gil.
18 Richardson.
19 Aye.
20 Seyarto.
21 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes 30, noes 8.
22 That measure passes.
23 Members we have messages from the
24 Assembly.
25 Secretary, please read.

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1 THE SECRETARY: "Assembly chamber August
2 21, 2025. Madam President, I am directed to inform your
3 honorable body that the Assembly amended and on this day
4 passed as amended Senate Bill 280 and respectfully
5 request your honorable body to concur and send amendments
6 to Parker, Chief Clerk of the Assembly above bill order
7 to unfinished business.

8 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

9 Members, we will now move to Senate
10 supplemental file number two.

11 Secretary, please read.

12 THE SECRETARY: Senate Bill 280 by Senator
13 Cervantes in equating to elections, making an
14 appropriation, therefore, and declaring the urgency
15 thereof to take effect immediately.

16 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Senator Cervantes,
17 you are recognized.

18 SENATOR CERVANTES: Thank you, Madam
19 President and members.

20 Today I am proud to present Senate Bill
21 280, which calls for a statewide special election on
22 November 4 of this year. This special election gives
23 Californians the power to decide whether we redraw our
24 congressional districts to protect fair representation
25 through Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8.

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1 SB 280 also appropriates the funding
2 necessary for the Secretary of State and our county
3 registrars to administer this election. The bill also
4 makes the necessary statutory changes to allow the June
5 2026 statewide primary to be held on time.

6 Members, this is not politics as usual.
7 This is a rigged game. We are here because the federal
8 administration and Republicans in Congress know they are
9 losing. They see the scoreboard. They know their
10 playbook is unpopular and instead of competing fairly,
11 they are changing the rules of the game. Think about it.
12 They send mass federal agents into our community,
13 snatching people up because their skin tone looks like
14 mine.

15 They slashed healthcare from millions
16 while handing billionaires a tax break and slapping
17 working families with tariff taxes on everyday essentials
18 like coffee and bananas. They know voters will hold them
19 accountable. So what do they do? They redraw the field.

20 Just yesterday in Texas, Republicans have
21 redrawn congressional maps so that instead of voters
22 choosing their representatives, politicians get to choose
23 their voters.

24 Let's be clear, the goal is to lock in
25 power, but in California we aren't just spectators in the

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1 stand, we are stepping up to the plate. California is
2 ready to defend fairness, to defend representation, and
3 to defend democracy.

4 Now, some of our colleagues will ask: why
5 the urgency? Why the special election? Because this is
6 a five alarm fire blazing in our democracy. And if you
7 don't see that, it's because you're choosing to ignore
8 it. And let's not pretend that this timeline is unusual.

9 Republicans were more than happy to rush
10 through the failed recall of Governor Newsom in 75 days.
11 The clock ran then, and it can run now. Yes. This
12 election will cost money, but let's be clear, the price
13 tag is less than President Trump's golden White House
14 ballroom.

15 What's the cost of protecting fair play in
16 America? It's nothing compared to letting President
17 Trump cheat the country. We will not let him move the
18 goalpost. The truth is a republic where people fear
19 practicing their beliefs or worry their vote won't be
20 counted, is no republic at all. That is not a democracy.

21 On November 4th, the voters of California
22 can punch back. They can say no more to power grabs.
23 They can say no more to cheating. They can take back
24 their agency. Take it back at the ballot box. Take back
25 your power on November 4th. Take it back for California

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1 and for our country. Californians aren't going to quit
2 in the fourth quarter. We will not fold in extra innings
3 because this is our spirit; this is our fight. And when
4 the dust settles, California will remain standing. I
5 respectfully ask for aye vote on SB 280.

6 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

7 Seeing no further discussion or debate,
8 secretary, would -- Senator McNerney, would you like to
9 -- you are recognized.

10 SENATOR MCNERNEY: Madam President and
11 colleagues, I rise in strong support of SB 280 because
12 it's logical. Yes.

13 It's logical to adopt the new
14 congressional districts here in California, and here's
15 why. First, this President's policies are hurting
16 California and the country. For example, the
17 deportations are decimating our workforce and terrorizing
18 our families. The tariffs are taxes. Yes, the tariffs
19 are taxes and they're slowing our economy. Defunding our
20 universities are robbing our future. He is throwing
21 military into our cities, incredibly dangerous. He's
22 throwing millions of people off healthcare across this
23 country.

24 Now, the Republicans in Congress have not
25 and will not put any breaks on this President. He can do

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1 anything he wants. This is what dictators do. If the
2 Republicans retain the majority in 2026 in the House of
3 Representatives, the President will continue to degrade
4 our country and make us a banana republic.

5 But the Democrats can win a majority in
6 the House in 2026 and will put breaks on the President
7 unless he manages to rig the election. The President and
8 the Texas Republicans are rigging the election by having
9 adopted gerrymandered congressional districts, just
10 yesterday, to replace five Democrats with five
11 Republicans. They are trying to rig the national
12 election.

13 California is the only state in the union
14 that has the people and the will to stand up to the
15 President. This is our duty to fight fire with fire and
16 approve new congressional districts that satisfy the
17 Voting Rights Act. And unlike Texas, we will ask the
18 voters to judge the new districts. Democrats did not
19 want this fight. We did not ask for this fight, but we
20 will not run away from it. We will fight for our economy
21 and for our values.

22 Therefore, it's logical to put this
23 question of adopting new congressional maps before the
24 California voters on November 4th. California voters
25 must have the right to decide if the state should respond

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1 to the President's efforts to rig the elections. If you
2 think America needs more authoritarian government, then
3 give up these five seats. I sure don't. I ask my
4 colleagues -- no. I implore my colleagues with respect
5 to vote aye on Senate Bill 280.

6 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

7 Senator Jones, you're recognized

8 SENATOR JONES: Madam President and
9 members, I rise in opposition to SB 280.

10 This bill is an unwanted, unnecessary, and
11 expensive distraction. This measure would redirect,
12 scarce state resources and attention to an unnecessary,
13 unwanted, and expensive legislative democrat fabricated
14 distraction.

15 With the state facing a \$12 billion
16 deficit, an unemployment rate higher than any other
17 state, a housing crisis, the highest poverty and
18 homelessness rates among the states, and ongoing massive
19 crime problem, and continued fire recovery needs, the
20 last thing that this Legislature should be doing is
21 creating a massive distraction while also wasting scarce
22 taxpayer funds on an unnecessary. The special election
23 will cost alone -- are estimated at a quarter of a
24 billion dollars, a quarter of a billion dollars for this
25 unnecessary partisan power grab. I ask for a no vote.

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SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

Seeing no further discussion or debate,
Senator Cervantes, would you like to close?

SENATOR CERVANTES: Thank you, Madam
President.

On November 4th, Californians have a
choice. Let Trump cheat or punch back. Take back your
agency. Take it back at the ballot box. Take it back
for California and for the country.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

Secretary, please call the roll.

THE SECRETARY: Allen.

Aye.

Alvarado-Gil.

Archuleta.

Aye.

Arreguin.

Aye.

Ashby.

Aye.

Becker.

Aye.

Blakespear.

Aye.

Cabaldon.

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1 Aye.
2 Caballero.
3 Aye.
4 Cervantes.
5 Aye.
6 Choi.
7 No.
8 Cortese.
9 Aye.
10 Dahle.
11 No.
12 Durazo.
13 Aye.
14 Gonzalez.
15 Aye.
16 Grayson.
17 Aye.
18 Grove.
19 No.
20 Hurtado.
21 Aye.
22 Jones.
23 No.
24 Laird.
25 Aye.

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1 Limon.
2 Aye.
3 McGuire.
4 Aye.
5 McNerney.
6 Aye.
7 Menjivar.
8 Aye.
9 Niello.
10 No.
11 Ochoa Bogh.
12 No.
13 Padilla.
14 Aye.
15 Perez.
16 Aye.
17 Reyes.
18 Aye.
19 Richardson.
20 Aye.
21 Rubio.
22 Seyarto.
23 Smallwood-Cuevas.
24 Aye.
25 Stern.

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1 Aye.
2 Strickland.
3 No.
4 Umberg.
5 Aye.
6 Valladares.
7 No.
8 Wahab.
9 Aye.
10 Weber Pierson.
11 Aye.
12 Wiener.
13 Aye.
14 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Secretary, please
15 call the absent members.
16 THE SECRETARY: Alvarado-Gil.
17 Rubio.
18 Aye.
19 Seyarto.
20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes 30, noes 8 on
21 the urgency. Ayes 30, noes 8 on the amendments.
22 Assembly amendments are concurred in.
23 Members we are going to move back to
24 motions and resolutions. There are floor amendments to
25 AB 40 at the desk.

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1 Senator McGuire, are you prepared to make
2 these amendments?

3 SENATOR MCGUIRE: Thank you so much, Madam
4 President and members.

5 Amendments on AB 40 are at the desk. It's
6 clear that the State of Texas is now pulling their own
7 trigger as the State House voted last night to be able to
8 advance redistricting. We anticipate the Senate will be
9 acting tonight or tomorrow morning. And the bill will be
10 signed in the law by the end of the week. In order to
11 keep the ballot and initiative crystal clear, we're
12 moving the trigger from the ACA. But in AB 40 will
13 remain in case something miraculous happens in Texas, and
14 everyone comes to their census.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.
16 Senator Jones, you are recognized.

17 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Madam
18 President. I have come to my senses, and I object to
19 this motion and ask for a roll call vote.

20 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

21 Seeing no further discussion or debate,
22 Secretary, please call the roll.

23 THE SECRETARY: Allen.

24 Aye.

25 Alvarado-Gil.

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1 Archuleta.
2 Aye.
3 Arreguin.
4 Aye.
5 Ashby.
6 Aye.
7 Becker.
8 Aye.
9 Blakespear.
10 Aye.
11 Cabaldon.
12 Aye.
13 Caballero.
14 Aye.
15 Cervantes.
16 Aye.
17 Choi.
18 No.
19 Cortese.
20 Aye.
21 Dahle.
22 No.
23 Durazo.
24 Aye.
25 Gonzalez.

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1 Aye.
2 Grayson.
3 Aye.
4 Grove.
5 No.
6 Hurtado.
7 Aye.
8 Jones.
9 No.
10 Laird.
11 Aye.
12 Limon.
13 Aye.
14 McGuire.
15 Aye.
16 McNerney.
17 Aye.
18 Menjivar.
19 Aye.
20 Niello.
21 No.
22 Ochoa Bogh.
23 No.
24 Padilla.
25 Aye.

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1 Perez.
2 Aye.
3 Reyes.
4 Aye.
5 Richardson.
6 Aye.
7 Rubio.
8 Aye.
9 Seyarto.
10 Smallwood-Cuevas.
11 Aye.
12 Stern.
13 Aye.
14 Strickland.
15 No.
16 Umberg.
17 Aye.
18 Valladares.
19 No.
20 Wahab.
21 Aye.
22 Weber Pierson.
23 Aye.
24 Wiener.
25 Aye.

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1 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Ayes 30, noes 8.
2 The amendments are adopted.

3 There are additional floor amendments at
4 the desk. If there are no objections, they will be
5 deemed adopted. Seeing no objection, they are deemed
6 adopted.

7 Are there any other motions, resolutions?

8 Anyone else want to remove an item?

9 Senator Hurtado, you are recognized.

10 SENATOR HURTADO: Under motions and
11 resolutions. Thank you, Madam President.

12 At the request of the author, please pull
13 file item 250 AB 1069 bans off the consent calendar.
14 Thank you.

15 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: The desk will
16 note.

17 Senator Allen?

18 SENATOR ALLEN: Thank you, Madam
19 President. I'd like to request the author remove file
20 item 231 AB 290 by Bower K. Hahn (phonetic) from the
21 consent calendar for amendments.

22 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: The desk will
23 note.

24 Senator Cervantes?

25 SENATOR CERVANTES: At the request of the

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author, I'd like to pull item 1511, AB 1511.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: The desk will
note.

Senator Umberg?

SENATOR UMBERG: Thank you, Madam
President.

Please remove file item number 238 AB 515
from the consent calendar at the request of the author.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: The desk will
note.

Senator Cervantes, were you removing that
bill from the consent calendar?

SENATOR CERVANTES: Calendar, yes.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Okay. Thank you.

Okay. All right.

If there is no other business, Senator
McGuire, the desk is clear.

SENATOR MCGUIRE: First of all, Madam
President, I want to take a moment to say thank you.

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: I'm sorry, Senator
McGuire.

Senator Grove, you are recognized.

SENATOR GROVE: Thank you. I apologize
Mr. Pro tem. I had requested a point of personal
privilege. They didn't call me. I apologize deeply.

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1 Colleagues, on a lighter note after today,
2 for those of you that are Raiders fans or Saints fans,
3 Derek Carr would be here on the floor on Monday. Please
4 wear appropriate attire. Thank you.

5 Sorry Erica -- Ms. Contreras.

6 Only team colors.

7 SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

8 Now there is no other business.

9 Senator McGuire, the desk is clear.

10 SENATOR MCGUIRE: Thank you so much, Madam
11 President.

12 I want to take a moment to say thank you,
13 first and foremost to our presiding officers of the week,
14 Madam President and, of course, to Mr. Senator. Can we
15 please give them a round of applause. Thank you to the
16 good doctor and of course to Mr. Grayson who did a
17 phenomenal job as well. This has been one heck of a week
18 for presiding officers.

19 Number two, I want to take a moment to say
20 thank you to the senators who are in this chamber. We
21 had some passionate, intense, and at times spicy debate
22 today, but I think once we leave these chambers, we
23 recognize, again, we are Californians first. Yes. We're
24 going to have to fight the election rigging, but we also
25 know that we have a lot to fix. And over the next three

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1 weeks, we're going to continue to focus on where
2 California voters also want us to be - making life more
3 affordable for them and their home. Lowering the cost of
4 electricity bills, lowering the cost of housing, making
5 sure that we continue to invest in strong public schools
6 and making our communities more wildfire safe. That is
7 where I think that we can all come together as
8 Californians to be able to move this great state forward.

9 I'm incredibly appreciative of the
10 senators in this room. If you take a look at bodies like
11 this across the nation, across the world, debates like
12 this can get physical. And we are so lucky to be able to
13 live in a country where we can have these discussions,
14 have these discussions and debates and go home, still
15 holding hands together on several issues that are in
16 front of us. And I just want to say thank you to Leader
17 Jones, to the Republican Caucus, the Democratic Caucus,
18 for their incredible work. I hope that you get some rest
19 this weekend.

20 We have a long three weeks. We're going
21 to jam about six months into the next three weeks. So
22 gear up, drink some coffee. The next floor session is
23 scheduled for Monday, August 25th.

24 Madam majority leader into our floor team,
25 thank you so much as well for all of the hard work.

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We'll see you next Monday.

1

SENATOR WEBER PIERSON: Thank you.

2

The Senate is in recess until 3:30, at
which time adjournment motion will be made. We will
reconvene Monday, August 25, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

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(MEETING ADJOURNED)

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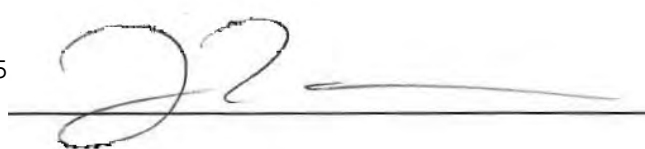
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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

I certify that the foregoing is a true and
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I do further certify that I am neither a
relative, nor employee, nor attorney of any of the
parties to this action, and that I am not financially
interested in the action.

Date: 11/1/2025

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Julie Thompson', is written over a horizontal line.

Julie Thompson, CET-1036

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