

**State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors'
and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

Exhibit AC

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REDISTRICTING TEXAS 2025

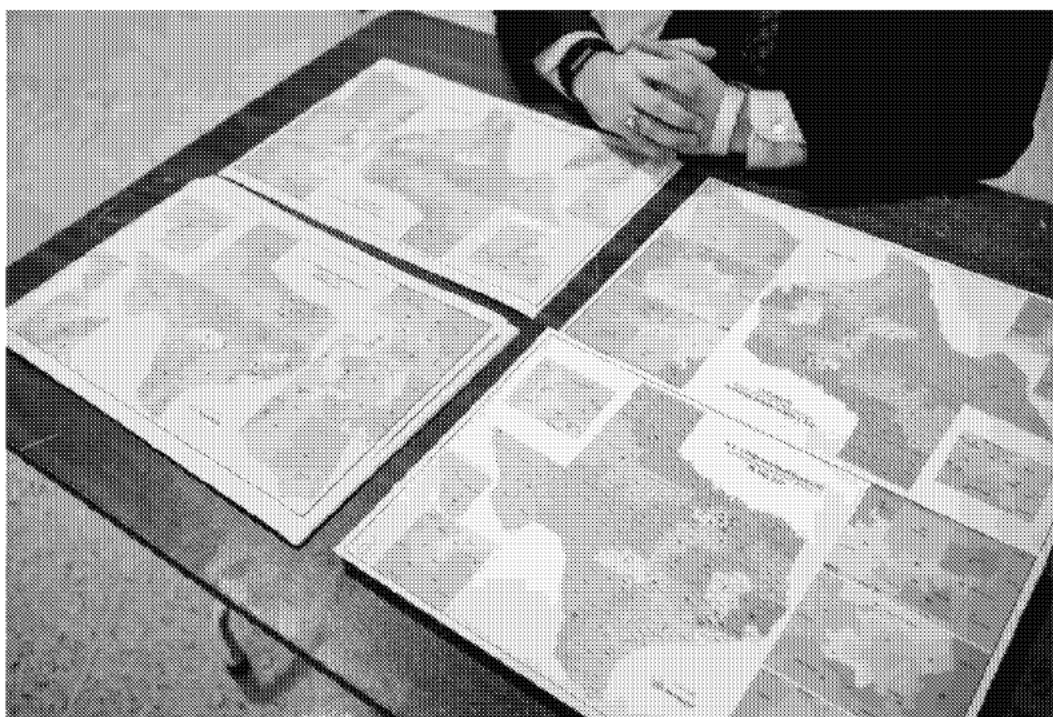
Trump aides want Texas to redraw its congressional maps to boost the GOP. What would that mean?

The plan would shift voters from safely red districts into blue ones. Members of the state's Republican delegation aren't sold on the idea.

BY OWEN DAHLKAMP, THE TEXAS TRIBUNE, AND NATALIA CONTRERAS, VOTEBEAT AND THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

JUNE 11, 2025 5 AM CENTRAL

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Proposed drafts of Texas' redrawn congressional districts outside the Senate chamber in the Texas Capitol in Austin on Sept. 30, 2021.

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Republicans representing Texas in Congress are considering this week whether to push their state Legislature to take the unusual step of redrawing district lines to shore up the GOP's advantage in the U.S. House.

But the contours of the plan, including whether Gov. Greg Abbott would call a special

Republicans representing Texas in Congress are considering this week whether to push their state Legislature to take the unusual step of redrawing district lines to shore up the GOP's advantage in the U.S. House.

But the contours of the plan, including whether Gov. Greg Abbott would call a special session of the Legislature to redraw the maps, remain largely uncertain.

The idea is being driven by President Donald Trump's political advisers, who want to draw up new maps that would give Republicans a better chance to flip seats currently held by Democrats, according to two GOP congressional aides familiar with the matter. That proposal, which would involve shifting GOP voters from safely red districts into neighboring blue ones, is aimed at safeguarding Republicans' thin majority in Congress, where they control the lower chamber, 220-212.

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The redistricting proposal, and the Trump team's role in pushing it, was first reported by The New York Times Monday.

Without a Republican majority in Congress, Trump's legislative agenda would likely stall, and the president could face investigations from newly empowered Democratic committee chairs intent on scrutinizing the White House.

Here's what we know about the plan so far:

How do Texans in Congress feel about the proposal?

On Capitol Hill, members of the Texas GOP delegation huddled Monday night to discuss the prospect of reshaping their districts. Most of the 25-member group expressed reluctance about the idea, citing concerns about jeopardizing their districts in next year's midterms if the new maps overextended the GOP's advantage, according to the two GOP aides, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private deliberations.

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Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Lubbock, was skeptical of the idea.

"We just recently worked on the new maps," Arrington told The Texas Tribune. To reopen the process, he said, "there'd have to be a significant benefit to our state."

The delegation has yet to be presented with mockups of new maps, two aides said.

Is a midcycle redistricting like this legal?

Each state's political maps must be redrawn once a decade, after each round of the U.S. census, to account for population growth and ensure every congressional and legislative district has roughly the same number of people. Texas lawmakers last overhauled their district lines in 2021.

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There's no federal law that prohibits states from redrawing district maps midcycle, said Justin Levitt, an election law professor at Loyola Marymount University and a former deputy assistant attorney general in the Department of Justice's civil rights division. Laws around the timing to redraw congressional and state district maps vary by state. In Texas, the state constitution doesn't specify timing, so the redrawing of maps is left to the discretion of the governor and the Legislature.

Lawmakers gaveled out of their 140-day regular session last week, meaning they would need to be called back for a special session to change the state's political maps. Abbott has the sole authority to order overtime sessions and decide what lawmakers are allowed to consider.

If Texas redraws its maps, what would it mean for the ongoing lawsuit over the existing maps?

A trial is underway in El Paso in a long-running challenge to the state legislative and congressional district maps Texas drew after the 2020 U.S. Census.

If Texas redraws its congressional maps, state officials would then ask the court to toss the claims challenging those districts "that no longer exist," Levitt said. The portion of the case over the state legislative district maps would continue.

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If the judge agrees, then both parties would have to file new legal claims for the updated maps.

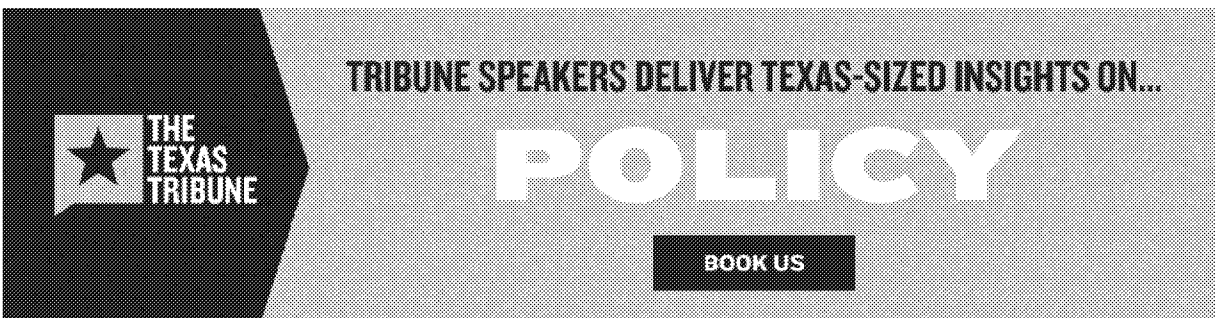
How would this move affect Texas voters?

It isn't clear how much maps could change, but voters could find themselves in new districts, and Levitt said redrawing the lines in the middle of the redistricting cycle is a bad idea.

"If the people of Texas think that their representatives have done a bad job, then when the [district] lines change, they're not voting on those representatives anymore," Levitt said. "New people are voting on those representatives."

The National Democratic Redistricting Committee, Democrats' national arm for contesting state GOP mapmaking, said the proposal to expand Republicans' stronghold in Texas was "yet another example of Trump trying to suppress votes in order to hold onto power."

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"Texas's congressional map is already being sued for violating the Voting Rights Act because it diminishes the voting power of the state's fast-growing Latino population," John Bisognano, president of the NDRC said. "To draw an even more extreme gerrymander would only assure that the barrage of legal challenges against Texas will continue."

Why does Trump's political team view Texas as a prime target to pick up seats for House Republicans via redistricting?

When Republicans in charge of the Legislature redrew the district lines after the

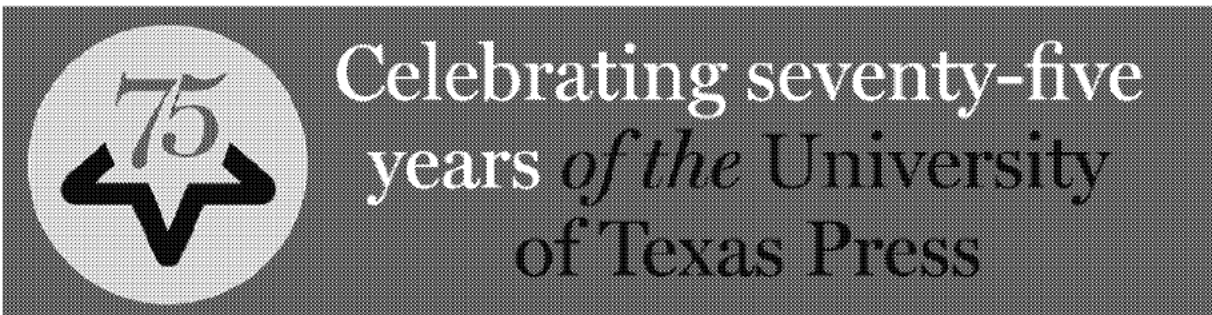
Why does Trump's political team view Texas as a prime target to pick up seats for House Republicans via redistricting?

When Republicans in charge of the Legislature redrew the district lines after the 2020 census, they focused on reinforcing their political support in districts already controlled by the GOP. This redistricting proposal would likely take a different approach.

As things stand, Republicans hold 25 of the state's 38 congressional seats. Democrats hold 12 seats and are expected to regain control of Texas' one vacant seat in a special election this fall.

Most of Texas' GOP-controlled districts lean heavily Republican: In last year's election, 24 of those 25 seats were carried by a Republican victor who received at least 60% of the vote or ran unopposed. The exception was U.S. Rep. Monica De La Cruz, R-Edinburg, who captured 57% of the vote and won by a comfortable 14-point margin.

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With little competition to speak of, The Times reported, Trump's political advisers believe at least some of those districts could bear the loss of GOP voters who would be reshuffled into neighboring, Democratic-held districts — giving Republican hopefuls a better chance to flip those seats from blue to red.

The party in control of the White House frequently loses seats during midterm cycles, and Trump's team is likely looking to offset potential GOP losses in other states and improve the odds of holding on to a narrow House majority. Incumbent Republicans, though, don't love the idea of sacrificing a comfortable race in a safe district for the possibility of picking up a few seats, according to GOP aides.

Has this happened before?

In 2003, after Texas Republicans initially left it up to the courts to draw new lines following the 2000 census, then-U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, a Sugar Land Republican, embarked instead on a bold course of action to consolidate GOP power in the state. He, along with his Republican allies, redrew the lines as the opening salvo to a multistate redistricting plan aimed at accumulating power for his party in states across the country.

Enraged by the power play, Democrats fled the state, depriving the Texas House of the quorum it needed to function.

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The rebels eventually relented under threat of arrest, a rare power in the Texas Constitution used to compel absent members back to return to Austin when the Legislature is in session. The lines were then redrawn, cementing the GOP majority the delegation has enjoyed in Washington for the past two decades.

However, what's at play this time is different than in the early 2000s, when Republicans had a newfound majority in the Legislature and had a number of vulnerable Democratic incumbents they could pick off. Now, Republicans have been entrenched in the majority for decades and will have to answer the question of whether there's really more to gain, said Kareem Crayton, the vice president of the Brennan Center for Justice's Washington office.

"That's the tradeoff. You can do that too much so that you actually make them so competitive that the other side wins," Crayton said. "That's always a danger."

What comes next?

Texas Republicans are planning to reconvene Thursday to continue discussing the plan, according to Rep. [Beth Van Duyne](#), R-Irving, and Rep. [Wesley Hunt](#), R-Houston, who said they will attend the meeting. Members of Trump's political team are also expected to attend, according to Hunt and two GOP congressional aides familiar with the matter.

Natalia Contreras is a reporter for Votebeat in partnership with the Texas Tribune. She's based in Corpus Christi. Contact Natalia at ncontreras@votebeat.org.

Disclosure: New York Times has been a financial supporter of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Financial supporters play no role in the Tribune's journalism. Find a complete list of them [here](#).

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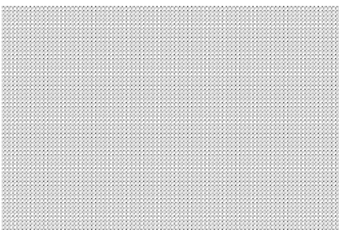
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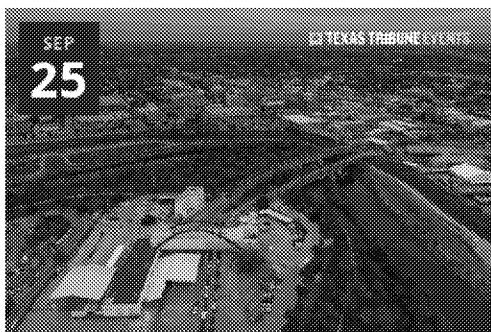
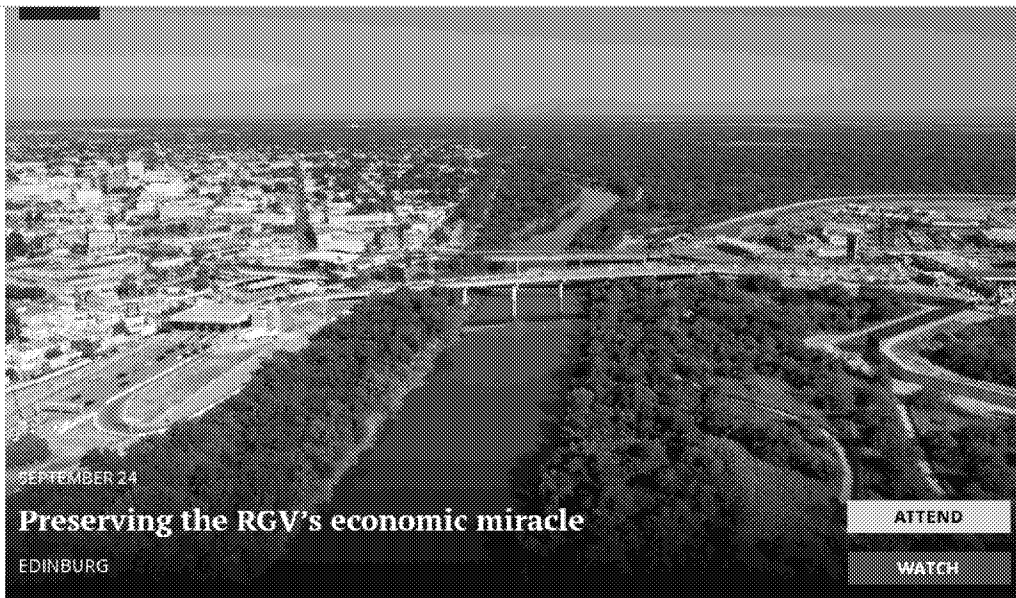
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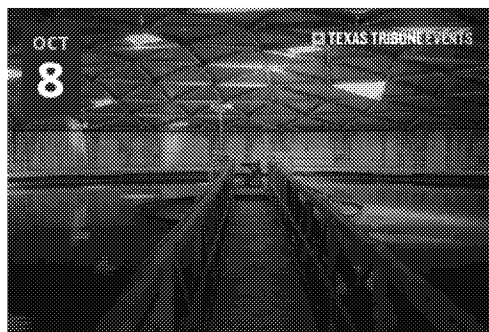


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