

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

Exhibit AJ

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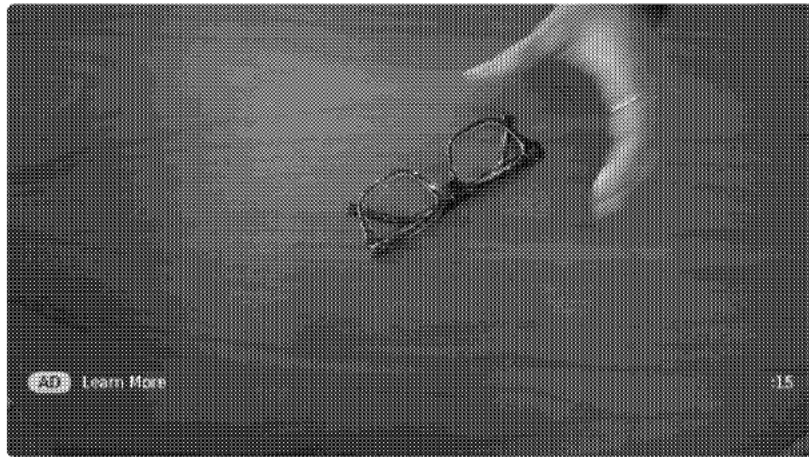
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Eric Holder backs Democratic response to Texas redistricting plan

The former attorney general called the plan by Republicans "authoritarian."

By **Nicholas Carr**
August 3, 2023, 3:24 PM



'Democracy is threatened' by TX GOP push to redraw Congressional maps: Holder ABC News' George Stephanopoulos interviews former Attorney General Eric Holder on "This Week."

Eric Holder, chair of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, called Texas' attempt to redraw its congressional maps for the second time in less than a decade "an authoritarian move" by the White House.

Holder, attorney general under President Barack Obama, has led the charge among Democrats to eliminate gerrymandering for years. But speaking with "This Week With George Stephanopoulos" on Sunday, Holder said that Texas' plan means Democrats need to "do things that perhaps in the past I would not have supported."

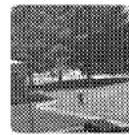
"I think that responsible Democrats in other states have to take into account the threat to our democracy, the need to preserve our democracy, so that we can ultimately try to heal it," Holder said. "And I would hope that they will take steps that are, again, as I said, temporary but responsible."

"And we're seeing talk about that in California, we're seeing talk about that in New York, as well."

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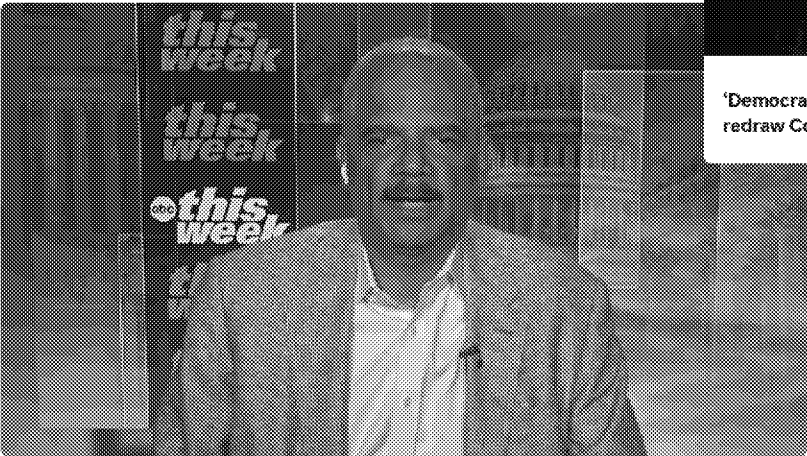
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"And we're seeing talk about that in California, we're seeing talk about New York, as well.



Former Attorney General and Chair of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee Eric Holder appears on "This Week With George Stephanopoulos" on Sunday, Aug. 3, 2025.
ABC News

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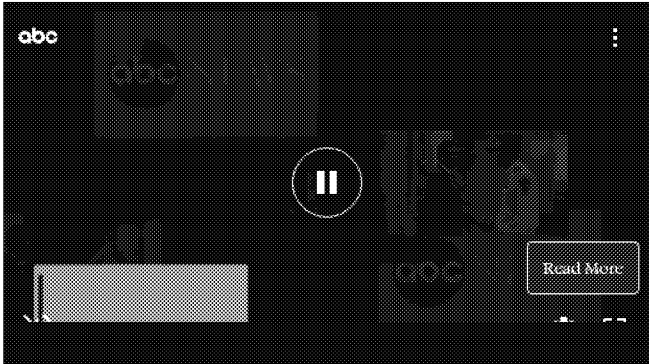
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'Democracy is threatened' by TX GOP push to redraw Congressional maps: Holder

"But those attempts are more longshots, aren't they?" Stephanopoulos asked, referring to laws on the books in those states that protect against partisan gerrymandering.

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While Holder conceded that the actions Democrats could take would ultimately depend on each state, he argued that those protections are an advantage.

"What they're trying to do in Texas is simply impose a new map on, an unpopular new map, on the people of Texas. To do it in California, you actually have to go to the people and ask them to suspend that which they have in place, which is a really well-functioning, independent redistricting committee," Holder said. "So the people will have a voice in what California does. The people do not have a voice, a meaningful voice, it appears so far in Texas."

Trump's political operation floated the prospect of redistricting in June in efforts to undermine the GOP's efforts to pass legislation, Trump said his party

Texas."

Trump's political operation floated the prospect of redistricting in June in efforts to shore up the GOP's fragile House majority. Trump said his party could pick up five seats if Texas redraws its congressional map. He suggested that there "could be" other states that follow suit but didn't identify them.

The Department of Justice told Texas in a letter in July that four majority-minority districts represented by Democrats needed to be redrawn, arguing they were "unconstitutional racial gerrymanders."

Here are more highlights from Holder's interview:



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On changing his views on gerrymandering

Stephanopoulos: You've been leading an effort to stop gerrymandering. Now, you say it's time to fight fire with fire. Why the turnaround?

Holder: Well, I think we have to understand that the nature of the threat that has been put upon the country through what they're trying to do in Texas has really increased the danger to our democracy. And as a result of that, we've got to do things that perhaps in the past I would not have supported.

On stopping Texas redistricting

Stephanopoulos: Is there any way to stop it?

Holder: Well, I think there are a number of ways in which we can try to stop it. If you look at the people who have testified at the hearings, 100-to-1 people have testified against it. Editorial boards in the media in Texas have opined against it. The polling shows that the people in Texas are, in fact, against it. So, I think that's one of the ways in which you try to stop it from actually happening.

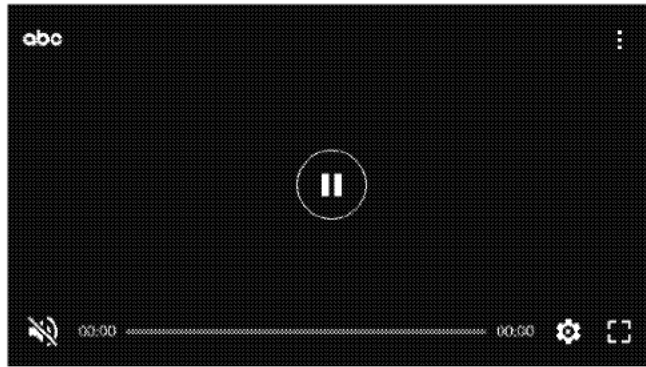
On when to release the Epstein files

Stephanopoulos: So, the -- so, finally, you would release the files if you were attorney general right now?



'Democracy is threatened' by TX GOP push to redraw Congressional maps: Holder

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Holder: Yes. I mean, take into account, you know, the privacy interest of various people, certainly of the victims uppermost. But there is investigative material that can certainly be released, that should be released. The focus shouldn't be on grand jury material because there are a whole bunch of problems with respect to the release of grand jury material. But with regard to investigative files that are in the possession of the Justice Department and the FBI, those materials should be released.

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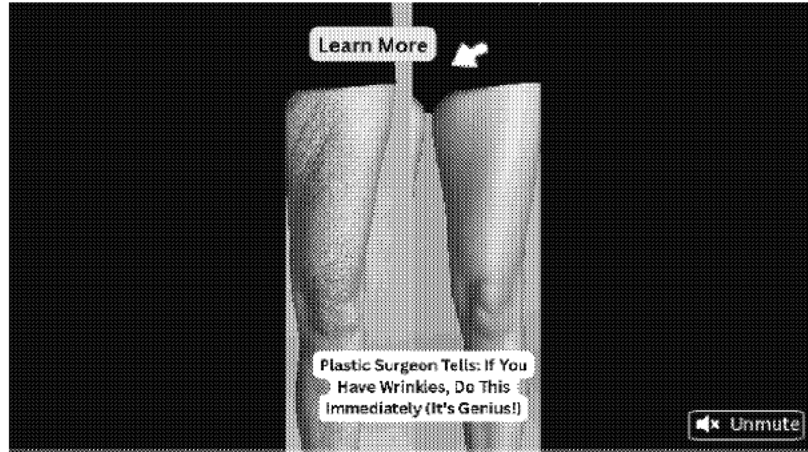
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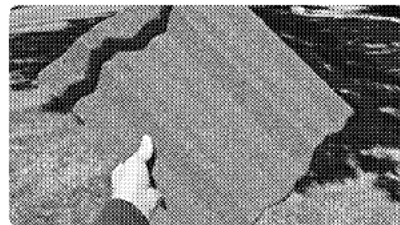
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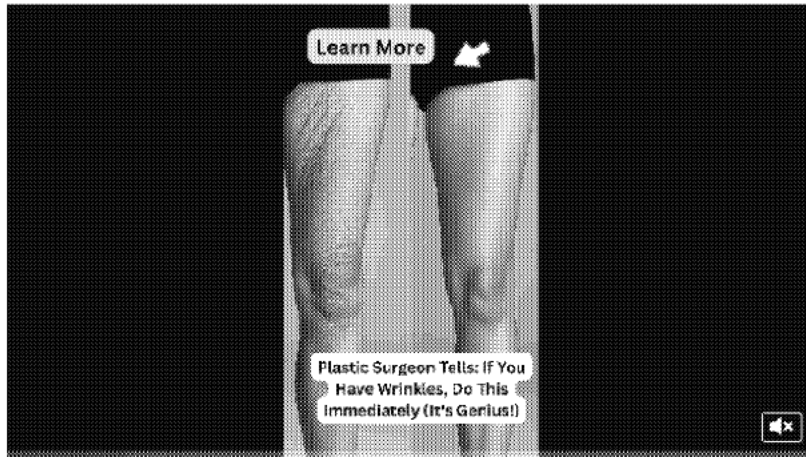


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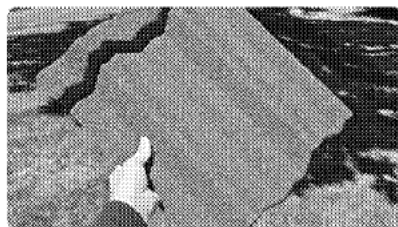
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