

**State Defendants' Response to Brooks, LULAC, and
MALC Plaintiffs' Joint Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

Exhibit AZ

Arlette Saenz, Obama praises Texas Democrats and calls state redistricting effort 'a systematic assault on democracy, CNN (Aug. 14, 2025, 12:56 AM), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/15/politics/obama-texas-democrats-redistricting-systematic-assault>.

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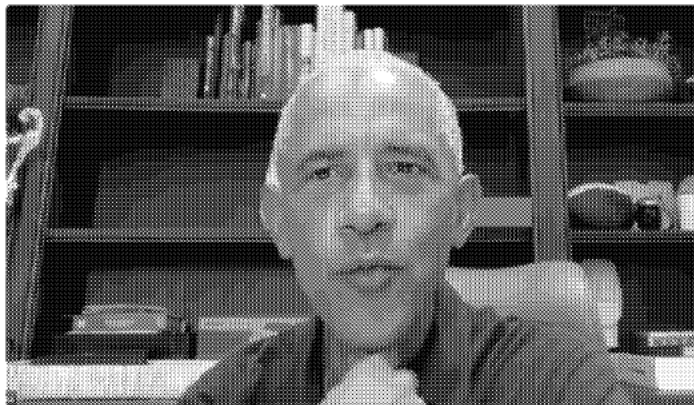
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Obama praises Texas Democrats and calls state redistricting effort 'a systematic assault on democracy'

AUG 15, 2025

By  Ariette Saenz   

Former President Barack Obama joined a virtual call with Texas House Democrats on Thursday, August 14. (Obtained by CNN)

Former President Barack Obama waded into the debate over redistricting in a zoom call with Texas House Democrats on Thursday, warning of a "systematic assault on democracy" spurred by Republican efforts to redraw congressional maps in Texas.

In a video of the 30-minute conversation obtained by CNN, Obama praised the Texas Democrats for standing up to the Republican push to tweak congressional maps in their state to net as many as five GOP US House seats.

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In a video of the 30-minute conversation obtained by CNN, Obama praised the Texas Democrats for standing up to the Republican push to tweak congressional maps in their state to net as many as five GOP US House seats.

“What we all recognize is we can’t let a systematic assault on democracy just happen and stand by,” Obama said. “And so, because of your actions, because of your courage, what you’ve seen is California responding, other states looking at what they can do to offset this mid-decade gerrymandering that is highly irregular and is not what we should be doing, to balance out the maps for this upcoming election.”

“And my hope is that rather than have a race to the bottom where every district is predetermined based on how it’s drawn, that over time, the American people, ideally with the help of the courts, realizes that there’s a better way,” he continued.



The former president’s comments mark his most extensive remarks to date on the redistricting campaigns now unfolding across the country.

ABC News was first to report on the contents of the call.

Republican leaders in Texas are preparing to push through new congressional maps once Texas House Democrats return home after thwarting the GOP’s plans to do so in a special session. California Gov. Gavin Newsom and senior Democrats in the state have also started the process to enact new maps for next year’s midterm elections and put them up for a voter referendum in November.

In his call with Texas Democrats, Obama expressed his initial preference that any redistricting be addressed “in a non-biased way that an independent commission or some sort of neutral approach was taken so that Democrats and Republicans compete

In his call with Texas Democrats, Obama expressed his initial preference that any redistricting be addressed “in a non-biased way that an independent commission or some sort of neutral approach was taken so that Democrats and Republicans compete fairly” but argued Republicans have changed the calculus.

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“The problem that we’ve been seeing, not just recently, but this goes back a while, is that the Republicans increasingly recognize their ideas won’t sell, so we’ve got to fix the game a little bit, and by drawing maps that splinter democratic voting blocs, by packing in Democrats into one district so that they don’t have influence in other districts,” he said.

“That’s not fair. That’s not how democracy is supposed to work,” added Obama, who was joined on the call by former Attorney General Eric Holder, the chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee.

Though he did not mention President Donald Trump by name, Obama cautioned that what is happening under the current administration, including the “militarization of cities,” should be of concern.

“We’re in a moment right now where not just gerrymandering, but efforts at voter suppression, efforts at questioning the results of elections, efforts at the executive branch, unilaterally doing things that bypass Congress and the people’s representatives, militarization of cities, politicization of our justice departments and our military,” he said. “Those are trend lines that remind us this precious democracy that we’ve got is not a given. It’s not self- executed. It requires us to fight for it. It requires us to stand up for it.”

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"And when we have fair voting rights, and we have fair maps, and we're fairly competing, that's good for everybody, not just one side," he said. "And that's what we should be aspiring to over the long term, is a situation in which there are rules that are fair for everybody, and then we compete."

Obama has spoken selectively since Trump returned to the White House in January. At a private fundraiser in July, he urged Democrats to "toughen up" in their pushback against the current administration. And he accused Republicans in Texas of waging a "power grab that undermines our democracy" as the redistricting fight took hold last week.

He is expected to continue speaking about redistricting issues next week when he headlines a Martha's Vineyard fundraiser for the NDRC.

On Thursday, Texas Democrats signaled they intend to bring the nearly two week standoff over redistricting to a close soon, paving the way for the state legislature to approve the Trump-backed maps.

"I want all of you to be returning feeling invigorated and know that you have helped to lead what is going to be a long struggle," Obama told the group. "You've helped set the tone for that, and I'm grateful for it."



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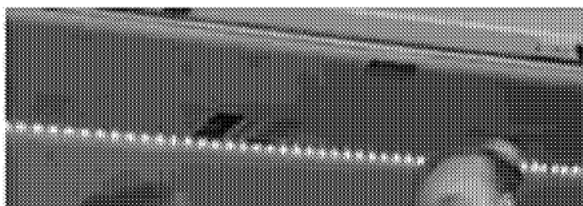
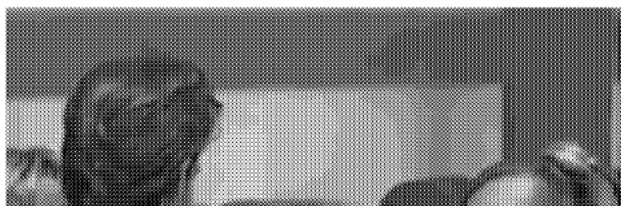
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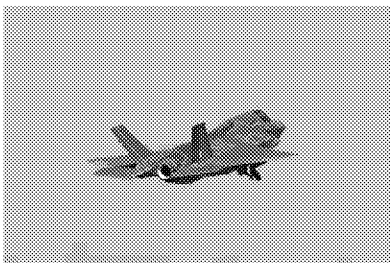
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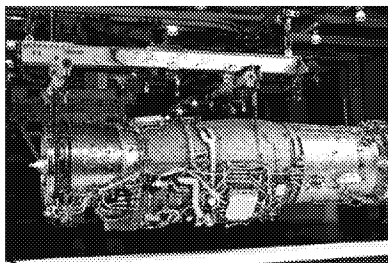
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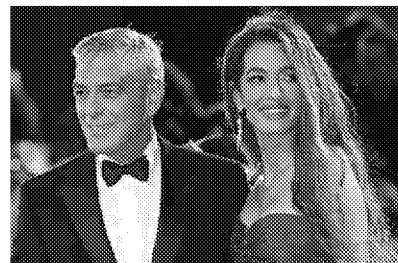
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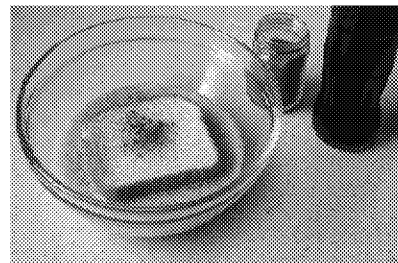
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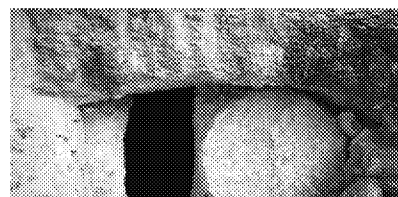
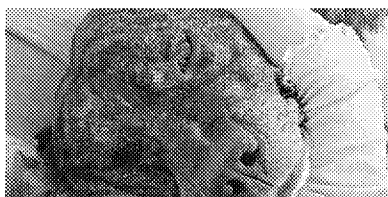
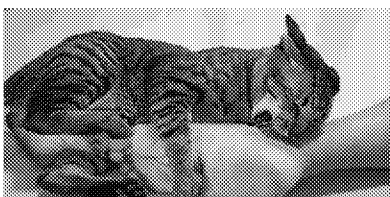
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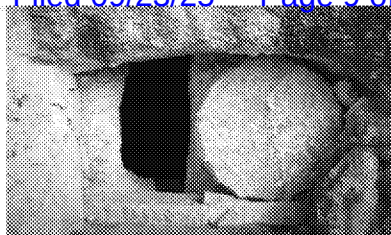
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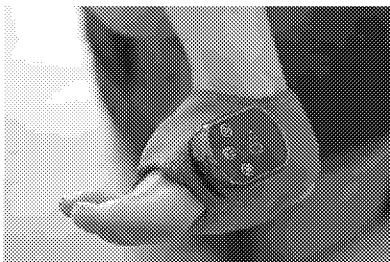
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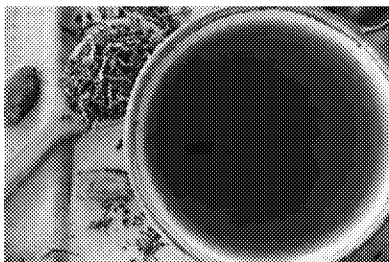
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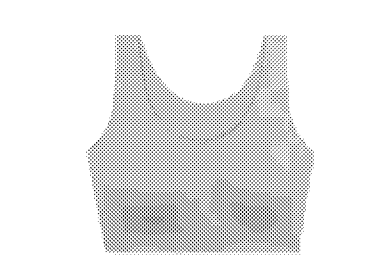
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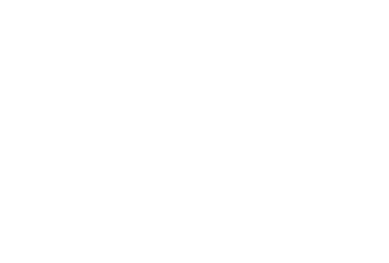
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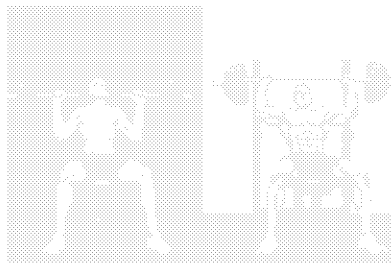
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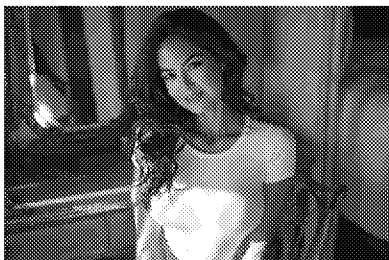
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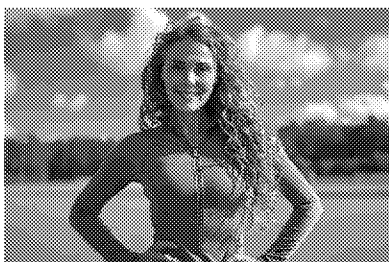
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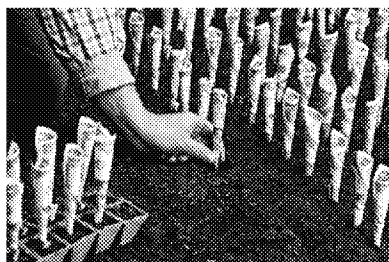
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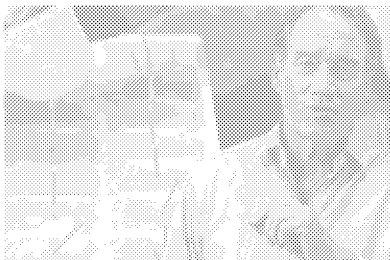
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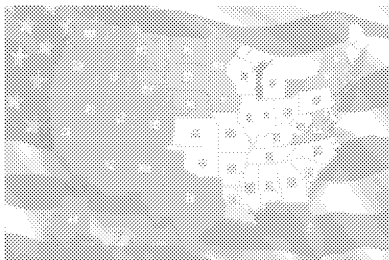
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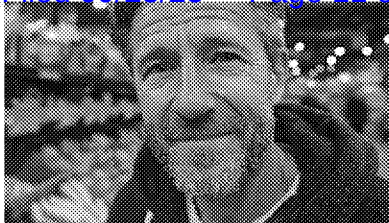
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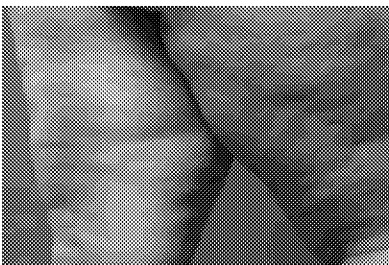
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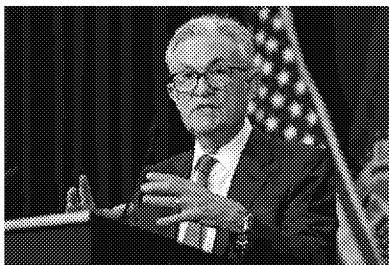
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