

**State Defendants' Response to Gonzales Plaintiffs'  
Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

**Exhibit V**

2025 0822 2CS, Senate Chambers (Part III) Transcript

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TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO

SENATE CHAMBERS

Friday, August 22, 2025 (PART III)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PRESIDENT: I was trying to wait for all the  
Senators to come back, but we'll start.

The Senate will come to order. Secretary will call the  
roll.

THE CLERK: Alvarado.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Bettencourt.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Birdwell.

MR. BIRDWELL: Present.

THE CLERK: Blanco.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Campbell.

MS. CAMPBELL: Here.

THE CLERK: Cook.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Creighton.

MR. CREIGHTON: Present.

THE CLERK: Eckhardt.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Flores.

MR. FLORES: Present.

THE CLERK: Gutierrez.

(No audible response.)

1 THE CLERK: Hagenbuch.

2 (No audible response.)

3 THE CLERK: Hall.

4 (No audible response.)

5 THE CLERK: Hinojosa of Nueces.

6 (No audible response.)

7 THE CLERK: Hinojosa of Hildago

8 (No audible response.)

9 THE CLERK: Huffman.

10 (No audible response.)

11 THE CLERK: Hughes.

12 MR. HUGHES: Here.

13 THE CLERK: Johnson

14 (No audible response.)

15 THE CLERK: King.

16 (No audible response.)

17 THE CLERK: Kolckhorst.

18 (No audible response.)

19 THE CLERK: Menendez.

20 (No audible response.)

21 THE CLERK: Middleton

22 (No audible response.)

23 THE CLERK: Miles.

24 (No audible response.)

25 THE CLERK: Nichols.

1 MR. NICHOLS: Here.

2 THE CLERK: Parker.

3 (No audible response.)

4 THE CLERK: Paxton.

5 (No audible response.)

6 THE CLERK: Perry.

7 (No audible response.)

8 THE CLERK: Schwertner.

9 (No audible response.)

10 THE CLERK: Sparks.

11 (No audible response.)

12 THE CLERK: West.

13 (No audible response.)

14 THE CLERK: Zaffirini.

15 (No audible response.)

16 MR. PRESIDENT: Members, quorum is present.

17 Please rise in the gallery and on the floor for the  
18 invocation by Senator Birdwell.

19 SENATOR BIRDWELL: Would you bow with me, please?

20 Father, we come before your throne asking for wisdom and

21 grace and strength. We ask your hand upon those in the Hill

22 Country that have lost loved ones. Give them your peace that

23 only you can provide. We ask your hand upon those that are

24 still searching for the missing, and that they are recovered.

25 We ask your hand of safety upon the people of Texas, our

1 fellow Members in the House, the Executive Branch, the  
2 Judicial Branch, and our National Leadership.

3 In Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

4 MR. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator. You may be  
5 seated and the gallery as well.

6 The Dean of the Senate moves to excuse Senator  
7 Paxton on matters of important family business. Is there an  
8 objection? The Chair hears none.

9 The Dean of the Senate moves to dispense the  
10 reading of yesterday's journal. Any objections? The Chair  
11 hears none. Motion's adopted.

12 Members, if there is no objection, I'd like to  
13 postpone the reading in referral of bills and resolutions  
14 until the end of today's calendar. Hearing no objection,  
15 motion is adopted.

16 That concludes the morning call.

17 Senator King, you're recognized for motion to  
18 spend the regular order of business on House Bill 4. Senator  
19 King? Senator King, you're recognized. Sorry. Yeah, I know  
20 it's been a long day.

21 SENATOR KING: Sorry.

22 MR. PRESIDENT: You're not quite finished yet.

23 SENATOR KING: I had to catch up with myself  
24 there. I move to suspend the regular order of business on  
25 House Bill 4.

1 MR. PRESIDENT: Secretary will call the roll.

2 THE CLERK: Alvarado.

3 THE CLERK: Bettencourt.

4 THE CLERK: Birdwell.

5 THE CLERK: Blanco.

6 THE CLERK: Campbell.

7 THE CLERK: Cook.

8 THE CLERK: Creighton.

9 MR. PRESIDENT: 18 ayes, 11 nays. Rules are  
10 suspended.

11 Chair lays out on the third reading House Bill 4.  
12 The Secretary will read the caption.

13 THE CLERK: House Bill 4: Relaying the  
14 composition of the districts for the election of Members of  
15 the United States House of Representatives from the State of  
16 Texas.

17 MR. PRESIDENT: Members, is now the time for third  
18 reading speeches.

19 Senator Zaffirini, you're recognized.

20 SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you, Mr. President.

21 Mr. President and Members, I rise in strong  
22 opposition to House Bill 4. The unfair, untimely  
23 Congressional Redistricting Plan. In 2023, Members, the U.S.  
24 Supreme Court ruled in Allen v. Milligan that Alabama's  
25 congressional map violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights

1 Act, because it denied Black voters the opportunity to elect  
2 a second candidate of their choice when warranted by  
3 population growth and demographic patterns.

4 This decision reaffirms Section 2 as a powerful  
5 legal tool to evaluate the effects, not merely the intent, of  
6 redistricting plans. Despite clear evidence of minority  
7 population growth and shifting demographics, House Bill 4  
8 reflects the same failure by denying minority populations a  
9 fair opportunity to elect candidates of our choice.  
10 In this whirlwind of criticism and controversy, I believe we  
11 agree about the facts.

12 First, that the current congressional map, based  
13 on the then-current census data, was approved in 2021  
14 unanimously by 18 Republican Senators, with 13 Democratic  
15 Senators unanimously voting against it.

16 Second, that during these special sessions, 12  
17 Republican Senators who voted for it unanimously, at that  
18 time, have changed your position and today unanimously seek  
19 to replace it with a map based on now 5-year-old census data.  
20 While 10 Democratic Senators, who unanimously opposed it  
21 then, remain consistent in opposition and unanimously oppose  
22 it even more vehemently now.

23 Third, that while congressional redistricting has  
24 taken center stage during two special sessions called by  
25 Governor Greg Abbott, and has been prioritized over the



1 immensely critical issue of the day, flooding and disaster  
2 preparedness. It never was considered during our regular  
3 session that ended in June. That begs the question, why now?  
4 It prompts the answer because the billionaire party bus has  
5 commanded it.

6 Fourth, that the Governor will call as many  
7 special sessions as needed until a congressional  
8 redistricting plan is adopted and will use whatever he calls  
9 -- every bullet in his belt to prevail. Including moving the  
10 election date, finding and arresting legislators, declaring  
11 vacancies in the legislature, and calling upon the federal  
12 government and the judiciary to harken to his side.

13 Fifth, that the legal battle regarding the 2021  
14 congressional redistricting lawsuit rages unresolved in  
15 El Paso Federal Court and that this 2025 re-redistricting  
16 effort is headed for the courtroom. So I agree with the  
17 Democratic lawyers who believe that if HB-4 is going to pass  
18 anyway, the sooner we can get to court, the better. And the  
19 greater the likelihood we can get relief before the election.  
20 You have to wonder. How can Republicans adopt a  
21 redistricting plan in 2021 and then defend it vigorously in  
22 court since then, only to denigrate it in 2025 and try to  
23 replace it? Frankly, surely there are incumbent Republican  
24 Members of Congress who wonder that, too.

25 Fourth, we agree that none of us wants to be here

1 doing this at this time. Redistricting is such a partisan  
2 issue that it is best addressed every decade after the census  
3 data are released. And states across the country, minority  
4 parties will accuse majority parties of gerrymandering for  
5 political advantages. In Texas, the minority accusations  
6 were proven right. The NAACP, MALDEF, and the Democratic  
7 Party have prevailed in five congressional lawsuits filed in  
8 federal court through 2024. I am convinced that if justice  
9 prevails in the U.S. Supreme Court, Democrats and minorities  
10 will prevail in contesting the 2021 and the 2025 plans.  
11 That's a big 'if'.

12 Democratic Senators oppose House Bill 4 not only  
13 because it disregards the growth and diversity of our state,  
14 but also because it further erodes the strength  
15 of minority districts, diminishing our ability to elect  
16 candidates of our choice and silencing voices that deserve to  
17 be heard. More specifically, coalition districts that allow  
18 minority voters to elect our candidates of choice are  
19 protected under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, even if  
20 courts do not require their creation in the first place.

21 Congressional District 28, anchored in Laredo, for  
22 example, remains majority Hispanic, but loses Bexar County,  
23 with whom we have a strong community of interest, and adds  
24 Hidalgo County despite the city of Laredo and the city of  
25 McAllen being competitive neighbors. The proposed map

1 reflects marginal shifts that might seem insignificant on  
2 paper, but in districts such as this, with narrow turnout  
3 margins and cohesive minority voting blocs, it is exactly how  
4 opportunity is eroded. When minority voters comprise the  
5 majority, but cannot elect our candidate of choice due to  
6 strategic redistricting, that is precisely the definition of  
7 vote dilution under Section 2.

8           A particular concern in House Bill 4 is the  
9 splitting of school districts, which occurs throughout  
10 Senate District 21 and across Texas. In my district, Del  
11 Valle ISD, a primarily Hispanic and economically  
12 disadvantaged community with distinct needs, is being divided  
13 in half. This division would destabilize the district by  
14 forcing residents to engage with multiple congressional  
15 representatives who may hold very different political  
16 priorities. Such fragmentation risks disenfranchising the  
17 community and can lead to different outcomes based on which  
18 portion of Del Valle ISD has a more responsive  
19 representative.

20           We also heard testimony illustrating this  
21 challenge. Residents often reach out to their assigned  
22 congressperson, only to be redirected to a neighboring  
23 representative of a different political party to have needs  
24 assessed.

25           Congressional District 35, which stretches from Austin

1 to San Antonio, was drawn by a Republican in federal court  
2 after the legislature's 2011 map was declared to dilute  
3 Hispanic voting strength. It was crafted specifically to  
4 provide Hispanic voters in central Texas a realistic  
5 opportunity to elect their candidate of choice. House Bill 4  
6 effectively dismantles that district. It divides its core of  
7 East Austin's Hispanic and Black neighborhoods and  
8 redistributes them into adjacent districts in which voters of  
9 color no longer will have sufficient Members to elect their  
10 candidates of choice. I would hope we agree, an elective  
11 body should reflect the population its Members represent.  
12 If so, House Bill 4 is a far cry from that standard.

13           Representative Vincent Perez recently offered an  
14 analysis indicating what the proposed map would ensure. One  
15 congressional representative for every 445,000 Anglos.  
16 Meaning 26 of 38 seats for their population of 12.5 million.  
17 One congressional representative for every 1.5 million  
18 Hispanics, meaning eight seats for our population of 12  
19 million. One congressional representative for every 2  
20 million African Americans, meaning 2 seats for their  
21 population of 4 million, and Asian Americans would have zero  
22 representation in the delegation, despite their population of  
23 1.6 million.

24           That means Anglos, who comprise 40% of the  
25 population, would hold 68 percent of the delegation.

1 Hispanics, who comprise 40 percent of the population, would  
2 hold 21 percent of the delegation. African Americans, who  
3 are 13 percent, would hold 5 percent. And Asian Americans,  
4 who comprise 5 percent, would hold none. Under this  
5 proposal, a Hispanic Texan has one-third the political value  
6 of an Anglo Texan.

7           From my perspective as a Texan of Mexican,  
8 Spanish, Sephardic Jew, and Greek descent with an Italian  
9 last name, it is glaring that Hispanics comprise 40 percent  
10 of the population and should hold 15 of 38 seats, but under  
11 House Bill 4 could elect only 21 percent of the delegation, 8  
12 of 38. Three of those districts, Congressional District 28,  
13 15, and 34, are drawn in a way that makes them less effective  
14 at producing electoral outcomes consistent with the  
15 preferences of Hispanic voters.

16           This is not proportionality, which admittedly the  
17 law does not require, but it is evidence of systematic under-  
18 representation, especially when combined with data indicating  
19 cohesive voting patterns, racially and ethnically polarized  
20 elections, and strategic redistricting choices that undermine  
21 voter influence. Clearly, House Bill 4 negatively would  
22 impact minorities' ability to elect candidates of our choice,  
23 including in South and Central Texas, which I represent. Its  
24 consequences are as deeply profound as they are exceedingly  
25 concerning.

1           Particularly within a legal framework that  
2 prohibits voting changes that result in minority voters  
3 having fewer opportunities than others to elect  
4 representatives of our choice.

5           The proposed map dismantles effective minority  
6 opportunity districts, reduces the influence of cohesive  
7 voting blocs, and retreats from the progress made under  
8 decades of court oversight and community advocacy. It also  
9 fails the test of fairness. It fails the test of Section 2,  
10 and it fails the people of Texas. The Texas Senate used to  
11 be known as the most deliberative body in the world; those  
12 days are over.

13           Today, the majority will prevail, but the rights  
14 of minorities were ignored. Outnumbered, outvoted, and  
15 outgunned, Democrats will go down fighting, having used every  
16 available legislative tool. My prayer is that the pendulum  
17 will swing sooner rather than later, and that when it does,  
18 Democrats will respect all minorities, including political.  
19 For these reasons and more, Mr. President and Members, it is  
20 with a very heavy heart that I will vote no regarding House  
21 Bill 4.

22           Thank you, Mr. President, and Members, and thank  
23 you, Senator King, for your courtesy in answering my  
24 questions.

25           MR. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Zaffirini.

1 Senator Menendez, for what purpose?

2 SENATOR MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. President, to  
3 speak against the bill.

4 Mr. President, Members --

5 MR. PRESIDENT: Excuse me, Senator Menendez --

6 SENATOR MENENDEZ: Oh --

7 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator West, did you wish to go  
8 next?

9 SENATOR WEST: Yes.

10 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Menendez, my apologies.

11 SENATOR MENENDEZ: Not a problem. Not a problem.

12 MR. PRESIDENT: He was next up in line up on  
13 seniority.

14 Senator West, for what purpose?

15 SENATOR WEST: To speak against the bill.

16 MR. PRESIDENT: You are recognized.

17 SENATOR WEST: Members, I'm -- well, not to  
18 duplicate what Senator Zaffirini has already said. I think  
19 it's a job well done. This is my third redistricting  
20 session, and I know, Senator King, you had a job that you had  
21 to do. You know, Members, each and every day of the session,  
22 we start it off with a prayer. Let it sink in. Start it off  
23 with a prayer, and what I get from that is that we kind of  
24 put God above politics.

25 We want to make certain that each and every one of

1 us, obviously, represent our constituents, but we don't do  
2 that if it's contrary to our Father's word. We've gotten  
3 into -- gotten to a point when in many instances that's  
4 exactly what we're doing. We won't stand up and do what's  
5 right.

6 Senator King, you said we want to do what's  
7 political. We want more Republicans in Congress, and just  
8 think about that. That what we really need to be doing to  
9 try and make sure we heal this country and bring it back  
10 together, frankly, from cliff of disaster? Well, you see, a  
11 lot of things that are going on right now, you can kind of  
12 look at the Bible, and you can see exactly all of them were  
13 kind of set forth in the Bible. Beating us to Revelations.

14 I'm not going to go down that road, but I'm going  
15 to tell you a few things that I think, as it relates to where  
16 we are today. This was not an issue when we first started  
17 session. It didn't become an issue until Donald Trump asked  
18 Texas for five more Republican votes for Congress because  
19 he's afraid that if history repeats itself, that he's going  
20 to lose the House of Representatives.

21 And you know, as Senator King, about  
22 circumstantial evidence. As soon as Trump made that  
23 statement in the news, the Department of Justice sends a  
24 letter. They have a session and redistricting, my friends,  
25 is put on the agenda for us to consider. Exactly what Donald



1 Trump wants.

2 I understand you're a Republican, but are you a  
3 Republican first, or are you a Texan first, like we were last  
4 night? Senator Parker, you hit the nail on the head. We  
5 take care of Texans first.

6 Our Attorney General -- let me back up a little  
7 bit. We're in court right now for the 2021 map. Senator  
8 Huffman was the Chair of the Committee. Senator Huffman has  
9 testified over and over again. Yes, we are contesting that  
10 particular map. The Attorney General was supportive of  
11 Senator Huffman's statement about it being race blind. We  
12 have an Attorney General that has made a living off of suing  
13 the federal government. For some strange reason, as it  
14 relates to this issue, we can't find the will  
15 (indiscernible). Why? Because of Donald Trump. When you  
16 begin to look at where we are right now.

17 African Americans -- I pointed to this portrait  
18 over here on this wall, you know what it represents. Miles  
19 and I -- Senator Miles and I have to consistently be  
20 confronted with this every time we come in here because of  
21 that history. You know what the history is of this state.  
22 You know discrimination still exists in this state, maybe not  
23 as much as it used to be. If we are indeed Christians,  
24 supposed to be looking out for our fellow man on a consistent  
25 basis.

1 African Americans have finally been able to get  
2 four congressional seats in this state. We will have a  
3 population of some 50 million people by the year 2040. We  
4 have what, 38 congresspersons or African Americans? And  
5 what's getting ready to happen if this map passes, we'll have  
6 said it's not about our brother's keeper. Not about making  
7 certain we do what's fair, that we do what's politically  
8 expedient, and still, we pray each and every day that we're  
9 here in fairness.

10 If you feel what we're doing is fair, deep in your  
11 heart, then go ahead and put politics over what you have said  
12 and professed Christian. Why is it that when people --  
13 ethnic minorities in this state, which frankly is the  
14 majority groups now, start making strides consistent with the  
15 American dream? All -- many incidences professing to be  
16 Christians, but in all instances professing to be Texans.  
17 Putting Texas first.

18 We do it alone with our Anglo brothers and sisters  
19 each and every day because we're proud to be Texans. But in  
20 political games, for some reason, ethnic minorities end up  
21 being pawns. You know what the numbers look like in terms of  
22 the Census 2020. You voted on a map that didn't give ethnic  
23 minorities fair representation in this state, and we're doing  
24 the same thing now.

25 We're using ethnic minorities, and we've

1 consistently done this throughout history, as pawns. Be it  
2 back in slavery, and throughout history as pawns. If we  
3 continue to do that today, I hope not, but it looks like  
4 that's exactly what is going to happen as Christians.  
5 Senator Zaffirini, thank you very much for what you've done  
6 in terms of kind of setting the stage for all of this. I'm  
7 not going to be repetitive, but what we do today, Senator  
8 Bettencourt, I hope we do it as Christians, not as  
9 politicians. And we do what's in the best interest of all  
10 Texans, not just a select few.

11 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Hinojosa, (overlap).

12 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. President. I  
13 would like to make a statement.

14 MR. PRESIDENT: Yes.

15 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. President and  
16 Members. Members, I rise in strong opposition to House Bill  
17 4 and the map before us. I understand and recognize that  
18 redistricting is one of the most partisan and politicized  
19 issues we undertake. It is (indiscernible), it's naked,  
20 political power used by the party in control.

21 I also acknowledge the motivation by the Trump  
22 administration to redistrict in the middle of the traditional  
23 10-year census cycle. It is to further entrench his power to  
24 control Congress at the expense of minority congressional  
25 districts here in our state.

1           The difference is that this (indiscernible)  
2 special session pierces the heart for Democracy and equal  
3 protection of all citizens to have a voice. This  
4 redistricting special session is in line with the demands  
5 made by the July 7th Department of Justice letter and makes  
6 clearer the intent of the Trump administration to silence the  
7 voice of our US Citizens based on the color of their skin,  
8 Black, Brown, and Asian. That is not race blind.

9           The congressional districts identified in the  
10 Department of Justice letter of July 7th, our districts, all  
11 four of them, are represented by Black and Hispanics. The  
12 July 7th DOJ letter also misrepresented and distorted the  
13 Fifth Circuit Opinion in Petteway v. Galveston County in that  
14 the Fifth Circuit never declared coalition districts  
15 unconstitutional. In a split decision, the Fifth Circuit  
16 Opinion was never (indiscernible), focusing on Section 2 of  
17 the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

18           The opinion stated only, "That coalitions of  
19 different racial or ethnic groups within one district  
20 referred as coalition minorities by the courts could not  
21 claim voter dilution in a redistricting challenge under  
22 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act," and that's important.  
23 They didn't say coalition districts were unconstitutional.

24           The DOJ letter misinterprets the Fifth Circuit  
25 ruling, and the DOJ makes it clear in their letter it wants

1 to wipe out poor congressional districts, and they name them  
2 in the letter. Representatives elected by the  
3 minority/majority voters. This is targeting racial  
4 discrimination by any definition. The DOJ researched the  
5 racial makeup of districts in Texas and notified three  
6 districts in which Black and Hispanics were voters working  
7 together to constitute a majority, and one district in which  
8 Hispanic voters constitute a majority.

9 To target these districts, all represented by  
10 minorities, is unconstitutional. Did you notice the Trump  
11 administration did not target any of the Republican  
12 Congressional Districts? House Bill 4 emerges not only from  
13 necessity but for a political motivation to target,  
14 intentionally, coalition congressional districts. Unlike the  
15 regular post-census process, this mid-decade redistricting is  
16 timed and clearly engineered to create five additional  
17 Republican districts before the 2026 midterm elections. That  
18 is very obvious, and all of this is the expense of minority  
19 districts where their voters, constituents, elected their  
20 candidate of choice.

21 This map push ignores even undermines ongoing  
22 legal scrutiny. The 2021 congressional map was subject to  
23 numerous lawsuits with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and  
24 the 14th Amendment. State officials previously asserted that  
25 the 2021 map was race blind, but now point to the DOJ

1 concerns of four districts drawn along strict racial lines,  
2 the justification for revamping them. This dramatic shift  
3 betrays a political calculation rather than a principled  
4 response, highlighting that racial discrimination motivates  
5 this effort, targeting only minority districts.

6 This also ignores demographic reality, where 95  
7 percent of the population growth in Texas came from non-Anglo  
8 residents. As of the 2020 Census, Hispanics are the largest  
9 demographic group at 40 percent and have been the primary  
10 driver for the state's population growth over the last  
11 decade.

12 And, as Senator West noted, our State of Texas is  
13 now a minority/majority, and yet our representation grows  
14 less and less with every redistricting map that we draw and  
15 pass in this chamber.

16 House Bill 4 redraws district lines to weaken the  
17 overall ability to let the preferred candidates have a  
18 choice. The overall number of districts where minority  
19 borders can be (indiscernible), the preferred candidates are  
20 projected to shrink under House Bill 4.

21 It reduces the number of congressional districts  
22 where the coalition of minorities hold the majorities from  
23 9 to 4 -- from 9 to 4. It reduces the power and influence of  
24 minority voters in the state. Let me be clear, this map also  
25 splinters communities of interest. They will sit together

1 for generations. It packs and cracks minority neighborhoods  
2 to show up Republican control, breaking apart districts with  
3 minority voters can no longer elect the candidates of their  
4 choice, and moving them to majority Anglo districts.

5 In Corpus Christi, for example, House Bill 4  
6 cracks minority communities such as the historically Black  
7 Hill Crest community. It moves it to a district that now  
8 includes part of South Austin. What do they have in common?  
9 Not much, if anything. Meanwhile, the rest of Corpus Christi  
10 is packed into a district that also includes Brownsville, a  
11 unified coastal community broken apart. No longer connected  
12 to economic drivers such as the port of Corpus Christi and  
13 the Corpus Christi Army Depot. Even the noisiest county  
14 refineries are split into two different congressional  
15 districts.

16 House Bill 4 also splits Del Mar College. The  
17 port of Corpus Christi is also split from the Naval Air  
18 Station of Corpus Christi. And the Rio Grande Valley, cities  
19 like McAllen, Edinburg, and Pharr, places bound by shared  
20 culture, economic networks, and family ties, are being  
21 fractured across multiple districts, diluting the voice in  
22 Congress, not working together as a community with long  
23 family histories.

24 The cities of McAllen and Edinburg, with their  
25 long history of working together under a single congressional

1 district, are no longer together. This is not a fair  
2 representation. This is deliberate division. In addition to  
3 that, the City of Pharr. The City of Pharr is divided into  
4 two, and the city has a school district, the  
5 Pharr-San Juan-Alamo School District, which is divided in  
6 half. That is not a community of interest. This is being  
7 done by House Bill 4.

8           The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the United States  
9 Constitution required maps to protect communities of interest  
10 and give every Texan an equal voice. Yet this plan does not  
11 do that; it does the opposite. At its core, this plan  
12 violates the basic principles of fair representation and true  
13 democracy and deepens mistrust in our democratic  
14 institutions. Voters should choose their representatives.  
15 Representatives should not manipulate maps to choose their  
16 voters.

17           House Bill 4 entrenches power by weakening  
18 accountability, disenfranchising communities of color, that  
19 define the principles of fair and equal representation. We  
20 allow hyper-partisan gerrymandering to continue. We  
21 undermine the very foundation of our democracy. As President  
22 Abraham Lincoln so rightly called a government of the people,  
23 by the people, for the people. Texas deserves maps that  
24 reflects its people. Not maps that silence them.

25           Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Members.



1 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Menendez, you're now  
2 recognized to speak on the final passage.

3 SENATOR MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. President.  
4 Thank you, Members.

5 I want to thank three of our most tenured  
6 colleagues in the Senate, Senator Zaffirini, Senator West,  
7 and Senator Hinojosa. You know, I was -- my father, if he  
8 were with us, he'd be 102 this year. So as you can imagine,  
9 he tried to impart a lot of wisdom, and I think we need to  
10 learn from the lessons of our past because if we don't,  
11 they'll come back to haunt us. And sometimes when we're  
12 sitting here working on legislation, it's just -- and what's  
13 been said many times, it's just words on a piece of paper.  
14 The difference is that this map, this map is going to affect  
15 people's lives. You know, there's a reason why so many  
16 people flock to this country and have for years.

17 In the Declaration of Independence, when Thomas  
18 Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident  
19 that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by  
20 their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that these --  
21 that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of  
22 Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are  
23 instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the  
24 consent of the governed."

25 This bill, this map, these maps reduce the consent

1 of the governed. The people, especially those who live in  
2 these racially gerrymandered districts. In these founding  
3 documents, Americans were promised a better and more just  
4 future. I feel that we have strayed very far.

5 This letter that I hold in my hand right here is  
6 the letter that many have referred to, dated July the 7th.  
7 At the very top, it says U.S. Department of Justice, Civil  
8 Rights Division, Offices of the Attorney General, addressed  
9 to Greg Abbott, Office of the Governor, and Ken Paxton.

10 The part I'm going to read to you is just where it  
11 says, "As stated below, Congressional Districts, TX-9, 18,  
12 29, and 33 currently constitute unconstitutional coalition  
13 districts, and we urge the State of Texas to rectify these  
14 race-based considerations from these specific districts."  
15 Race-based.

16 So the Department of Justice writes this letter to  
17 the Governor on July the 7th. On July the 9th, Governor  
18 Abbott issues a proclamation where it says, "Legislation that  
19 provides a revised Congressional Redistricting Plan in light  
20 of constitutional concerns raised by the U.S. Department of  
21 Justice." What constitutional concerns? The ones that say  
22 that these coalition districts are race-based.

23 I find it difficult to understand how we can be  
24 listening to our colleague talk about how race was not taken  
25 into consideration when the Department of Justice asked

1 specifically to rectify the race-based considerations. And  
2 then we ask ourselves, sometimes as public servants, why do  
3 people not vote? Why is voter -- why did the vote turnout so  
4 low? What's happening? Because when they see gerrymandered  
5 maps like this that takes someone living in Travis County and  
6 put them in a district with someone in Ector County, 375  
7 miles away, they're like, "What is fair, compact, about  
8 this?"

9           When they hear that 9 minority districts are going  
10 to 4 when 90 percent of the growth in the last decennial  
11 census was made up of minorities -- 90 percent. Yesterday,  
12 we heard many of our colleagues in the house talk about  
13 specifically how they're going to discriminate and hurt our  
14 communities. Representative Anchia said the Latino  
15 community, by any standard, is already underrepresented in  
16 this state. We represent 40 percent of the population  
17 responsible for 50 percent of the growth, and yet these maps  
18 have to be intentional.

19           You have us enjoy even less representation under  
20 this map if you apply the numbers this map furnished. It  
21 just doesn't make sense. If you apply math to that  
22 percentage, 4 to 5 districts out of 48, it comes out to 10  
23 1/2 to 13 percent, even though Latinos represented 50 percent  
24 of the growth.

25           In Tarrant County, where 70 percent of the

1 population is Latino, this map dismantles their only chance  
2 at a congressional representative. In Dallas County,  
3 millions of Latinos have waited over a decade to have an  
4 opportunity to elect a Dallas County neighbor of their  
5 choice. This map denies that opportunity. Working-class  
6 families are paired with faraway suburbs that have nothing in  
7 common.

8 In my hometown in San Antonio, a performing 60  
9 percent plus Latino congressional seat disappears. Gone.  
10 With no explanation. This map is not democratic or  
11 representative. It is deliberately, intentionally, a  
12 racially gerrymandered map.

13 Senator Zaffirini covered a lot of the stats that  
14 were covered by the next representative, and I'm not going to  
15 be repetitive. But I think that this is something that does  
16 need to be repeated. Under this map, under the map that's  
17 being proposed for us to vote on right now, white Texans will  
18 receive one member of Congress for every 445,000 residents.  
19 But if you're Hispanic, it's going to take 1.5 million  
20 residents, as Senator Zaffirini said earlier, to get the same  
21 representation, one congressperson. But if you're Black,  
22 it's going to take 2 million African Americans.

23 This proposal, a Hispanic, has been said, has  
24 1/3rd of the political value of a white Texan and a Black  
25 1/5th. Representative Jeanette Nunez said, "Latino

1 communities in this map have been split apart in  
2 Congressional District 29, which has stood as a performing  
3 Latino majority district. The map dismantles the district,  
4 and Hispanic citizen voting age population is reduced by 20  
5 percent." Members, this process and this map, no matter what  
6 has been said, the outcome, the net effect is intentional  
7 discrimination.

8 I understand the author of the bill says it  
9 doesn't violate the Voting Rights Act. That the act --  
10 because -- the act that prohibits racial discrimination, all  
11 while claiming these maps were drawn race blind, but how?  
12 How can we believe that to be the case when Senator King has  
13 told us over and over again that he did not draw the maps?  
14 That he did not run the tests. That these maps were given to  
15 him.

16 Today we heard that Senator King and Adam Kincaid,  
17 who was possibly one of the map makers, had something to do  
18 with the map making, does map making for the Republican  
19 party. That they've spoken three times, but Senator King  
20 said don't tell me anything about maps. Don't talk to me  
21 about maps, is what I heard when they saw each other at the  
22 ALEC convention. But, Senator, how did you know he was  
23 drawing maps?

24 Folks, I'm going to close with this. I've told  
25 y'all. I've had great conversations with many of you offline

1 where we've been able to talk about our background, where we  
2 come from. Who makes us -- what makes us who we are, and  
3 y'all know both my parents immigrated to this country with  
4 nothing. Father with a fourth-grade education. My mom with  
5 a nursing degree at the age of 18, just with a strong will,  
6 strong backs, and a desire to work hard. And they raised us,  
7 saying, work hard. Stay determined. Play by the rules, and  
8 in this country, people respect the rules, and you'll be able  
9 to do anything.

10 This -- these maps, they're going to dilute the  
11 voting strength, the representation for communities of  
12 colors. These maps are going to make it more difficult for  
13 communities of colors to progress. These maps are  
14 discriminatory based on the impacts on racial minorities, and  
15 as we heard earlier from our colleague, Senator Gutierrez,  
16 they split Native American tribes. These maps are  
17 unconstitutional and illegal.

18 Mr. Chairman, you said yourself today that the  
19 data that needed to be used to draw, the only data was  
20 Decennial Census Data. I repeat, and the last redistricting,  
21 the last census cycle, they gave us those redistricting 2021  
22 cycle with 90 percent growth being minority. We did not gain  
23 one additional Hispanic opportunity seat. In this map, yet  
24 again, we do not gain another seat. And just recently, as  
25 the Supreme Court is getting ready to debate and entertain

1 some of the issues that are occurring. Here we go.

2 There's case law that holds that a good-faith  
3 presumption applies to congressional maps when they are  
4 originally drawn by the Texas Legislature after a decennial  
5 census. In a mid-decade redistricting such as this, the good  
6 faith presumption may not apply because the Texas Legislature  
7 redrew majority/minority districts after it was made aware  
8 that the law regarding majority/minority districts is  
9 unsettled and the constitutionality of the majority/minority  
10 districts is being currently considered by the US Supreme  
11 Court and Louisiana v. Kelley.

12 The legislature will be acting in bad faith,  
13 dismantling existing majority/minority districts and creating  
14 new ones, knowing the constitutionality of those districts  
15 has yet to be decided by the Supreme Court.

16 Members, as I read earlier, in our Declaration of  
17 Independence, this country was meant to derive its just  
18 powers from the consent of the governed. Our democracy has  
19 been strong for a long time. But I worry about it in the  
20 future. This has gone too far. Why? Because it's the right  
21 of the people to govern it. I'm asking everyone to watch,  
22 that's watching, please do not give up. Get involved.

23 Even though the odds are going to be potentially  
24 actively stacked against you. You have to show up. You have  
25 to show up every time. You have to vote because our

1 government is representative of our communities.

2 Today, just like our country, the Texas Senate, I  
3 feel like with these maps that talk about fairness, legality,  
4 compactness, yet you have Travis County sliced and diced like  
5 a pizza. Tarrant and Dallas and Harris. Tarrant, I think I  
6 counted nine congressional districts in one county. Nine.  
7 Bits and pieces, just grabbing the people they wanted for  
8 certain districts. That's not compact. That's not  
9 constitutional, and it's not legal.

10 You know, there was a senator long before I ever  
11 even thought about politics, long before I even was here, who  
12 used this desk? Who fought segregationist laws? Who fought  
13 anything he felt was against fair and equal representation  
14 for his communities? And that senator went on to be a U.S.  
15 Congressman. And in San Antonio, Congressman Henry B.  
16 Gonzalez, whose portrait is hung -- hanging back there, he  
17 used this desk.

18 We have got to take a real accounting of  
19 ourselves. Because folks, what do we gain if your party  
20 picks up five seats here? What do you gain? But if you make  
21 the people of Texas lose faith in their government, what do  
22 you really gain? I implore you to vote no against this  
23 flawed map.

24 Thank you, Members and Mr. President.

25 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Miles to speak on final



1 passage?

2 SENATOR MILES: Speak against the bill,  
3 Mr. President.

4 You know, by now I would think that all of you in  
5 this chamber know that I don't say much, but when I do speak,  
6 I mean what I say and I say what I mean. From the moment I  
7 was appointed to this committee, Chairman King, I've been  
8 very clear, and I've made it very clear to all of you that I  
9 was going to expose this process for what it truly is. You  
10 know, we talk about decorum in this chamber, but there is no  
11 decorum to be had when you're being oppressed, and the voices  
12 of your community, Black and Brown communities, are being  
13 suppressed.

14 I've served this legislature since 2007. Elected  
15 by my peers and my community. I'm a Senator and I enjoy  
16 being a Senator, but I will always be a Black man first. And  
17 every session, I come to this floor, and I tell you about  
18 these policies from CRT to DEI to now this election bill and  
19 redistricting bill. How much harm it will cause, and every  
20 time I hear from my Republican colleagues in this chamber,  
21 they tell me I'm wrong about it. They tell me I'm wrong.  
22 And every morning, I wake up to a life every morning of pain  
23 for my people. If it's from CRT to DEI to the election  
24 process.

25 So let me be clear, this map from HB to SB and

1 back to committee substitute is just plain racist. This map  
2 is disrespectful. It is deplorable. It is discriminatory,  
3 and the actions of ramming it through the process is devious,  
4 damaging, and downright despicable. The Republican  
5 leadership followed through with the President's plan, aided  
6 by the Department of Justice. Putting out a hit list for  
7 congressional seats in the Black and Brown communities of  
8 Texas.

9           This plan seeks to discriminate against people of  
10 color and steal congressional seats, and yes, I mean steal.  
11 When you take what doesn't belong to you, it's called  
12 stealing. Fact, these congressional seats do not belong to  
13 any elected official, any one party, or any President. They  
14 belong to the people, the people. This is about citizens and  
15 this state of a district having the ability to elect the  
16 candidate of their choice -- of their choice. From the  
17 beginning of this process, of mid-district and mid-decade  
18 redistricting has been a complete sham, as I said earlier,  
19 and a farce.

20           You know, some of you may know, and some of you  
21 may not care, but August 6th was the 60th anniversary of the  
22 Voting Rights Act in Texas -- in this country. And Texas has  
23 been found guilty of violating the Voters Rights Act every  
24 decade since enacted, every doggone decade for the last two  
25 decades.

1 As I said before, and I mean this, and I want  
2 y'all to hear this. You cannot be complicit in racist  
3 actions and get mad when someone calls you a racist. You can  
4 no longer hide the racism of your party. Once more, we face  
5 a map that does not reflect the truth of Texas but instead  
6 manipulates and whitewashes it. They call it redistricting,  
7 but let's be clear, it's rig-districting.

8 When you imbalance the voting of the -- and  
9 guarantee, one result that's not democracy, that's rigging.  
10 And when you rig, the people's choice is taken away. Texas  
11 is the home of the largest Black population in the United  
12 States. That should mean something in how these maps are  
13 drawn, but instead of recognizing that, that's the reality;  
14 this map seeks to bury it. It takes the voices of Black  
15 Texans, splits them up, dilutes them, packs them, cracks  
16 them, and erodes Black voices in this state.

17 Let's dig a little deeper and a little closer to  
18 home. Houston's Black population accounts for 35 percent of  
19 the state's overall Black population, and instead of  
20 recognizing that and creating additional opportunity, you  
21 pack Senate District -- Congressional District 18.  
22 Disintegrate the Black vote in Congressional District 9.  
23 Move them to 18 and have the audacity to act as if you've  
24 done us a favor.

25 The population has grown, but you've gone

1 backwards with this map. Decreasing Black opportunity seats  
2 from two to one in Houston and across the state are not  
3 gifts. Come on, y'all, we can count. We all know basic  
4 math.

5 Packing Congressional District 18 is not  
6 representation. Destroying 9 is not representation. It is  
7 suppression, and make no mistake, suppression is rigged  
8 districting. In committee over and over and over again, the  
9 Chair reiterated, the map is laid out. Maps, he admits, he  
10 did not draw that they were drawn race blind and the bottom  
11 line to that is, it's impossible. It lacks knowledge.

12 Everyone in this chamber knows that Black folks in  
13 Texas overwhelmingly vote Democratic. There is no -- that's  
14 not a secret to anyone. So when you set out to create more  
15 Republican seats, what are you really doing? It's  
16 dismantling the ability of Black Texans to elect candidates  
17 who truly represent their community interests. That's common  
18 sense, not to mention the maps were drawn by a National  
19 Republican -- Republican Redistricting Committee.

20 Let me make it clear, there can be no fairness for  
21 Hispanic Texans if there's no fairness for Black Texans. If  
22 there's no Texas for -- if there's no fairness for any of us,  
23 there can be no fairness for any voter in this State. But  
24 when you silence one community, you weaken democracy for all  
25 of us, and when you weaken Democracy, you take the

1 congressional seats away from people they belong to and hand  
2 them over as property.

3           This map strips away, strips it all away. That's  
4 what this map does. It is a slap in the face of Black  
5 voters. It is a slap in the face of Hispanic voters and  
6 every voter who calls Texas home. And if Texas is truly for  
7 one for all, then voting must matter for all people. In  
8 Texas, we have witnessed to the unrelenting massive assault  
9 on the Voting Rights Act diminishing the political voices of  
10 Blacks and Browns and marginalizing people unlike anywhere  
11 else since the Jim Crow era. This mid-districting or this  
12 rigged districting is just a tactic and another assault.

13           You know, I was in the barber shop the other day,  
14 when I got a chance to go home, Royce. This old 70, maybe  
15 80-year-old Black man came in, and he started talking about  
16 redistricting to me, and this whole situation. And he  
17 described it like this: "It's Jim Crow in a new Cadillac."  
18 The people of Texas have spoken through testimony, through  
19 protest, through their presence at this capital. Yet  
20 leadership turned a deaf ear, acting as if those voices do  
21 not matter.

22           I once heard the four most powerful words in  
23 Democracy. "The people have spoken." But it's clear the  
24 leadership of this state and this nation don't want to hear  
25 the Black and Brown folks speak. And it's clear that the

1 leadership in this state is not listening when 98 percent of  
2 the people who testified, who chimed in on this map, on this  
3 redistricting spoke against it. 98 percent. 2 percent was  
4 in favor of this map. 2 percent. Let me remind you, Black  
5 voices matter, Brown voices matter. Every voice in this  
6 state matters, and we deny those voices. You're not  
7 redistricting; once again, you're rigged districting.

8           You know, let's make a note, whenever an issue of  
9 equality and rights, such as this map, comes up in  
10 Republicans, they often try to justify their actions by  
11 saying, "Well, the Democratic Party was a party of  
12 oppression, and the Republican Party freed the slaves."

13           Okay. Thank you. But that's not an excuse. You  
14 cannot justify the unjustifiable.

15           The Republican Party has become the party of  
16 oppression, and you are now the party of disenfranchising.  
17 Voters -- drawing racist maps by adopting voter suppression  
18 laws. What matters is the moment. What matters is now.  
19 What matters is what are you going to do now?

20           Republicans in this chamber and the House have the  
21 numbers. We understand that. We as Democrats understand  
22 we're outnumbered. So you have the ability to do whatever  
23 you want, but I ask this: just because you can do something,  
24 does it mean you should do something?

25           Lastly, if you allow me, let me speak to everyone

1 in the sound of my voice, watching from the gallery or  
2 streaming online, this rigged districting is just another  
3 evil tactic to keep us from exercising our constitutional  
4 right of voting. Yes, the Republicans have stacked the deck,  
5 and this abomination is going to pass, but not -- do not, do  
6 not, do not give up.

7 Trump and the Republicans want us to be  
8 discouraged and dismayed. They want to give you a reason to  
9 stay at home on Election Day, but please don't. This is my  
10 call to arms; your vote is your weapon. So show them that we  
11 can fight and fight back. Show them that we can get down.  
12 Show that your voices of Black and Brown marginalized  
13 communities cannot be silenced. Vote in spite of. Vote  
14 because of. Vote because of or in spite of this evil map.  
15 Don't give them what they want. Spread the truth.

16 Prepare for 2026 and beyond. Be the hurdle in  
17 their way. Take yourself and your neighbor, your friend, and  
18 get to the ballot box. We need to mobilize, prepare for the  
19 battle. Show Trump and Republicans how Texas, here in Texas,  
20 we really get down. Show them who you are and, more  
21 importantly, show them whose, whose you are.

22 This is redistricting, coined rigged  
23 redistricting. We must keep our faith. Keep our fight.

24 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Johnson, to speak on the  
25 bill.

1           SENATOR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. President.  
2 Members, this is, by any measure, an extraordinary step of  
3 mid-decennial redistricting in a special session.  
4 Redistricting process typically takes a couple of years.  
5 This one's happening in a matter of days, maybe weeks. And  
6 it happened with the speed of the yank on a dog's leash.  
7 It's not dignified. It's not just. It's not legal.

8           We've heard the explanation that this really isn't  
9 about race, this is just about Republican political  
10 performance, and we've heard that one before. We heard that  
11 -- something like that back in 2003. Tom DeLay led the push  
12 to redraw maps just two years into the decennial cycle. He  
13 succeeded. It was a disaster. He was also convicted in the  
14 Abramoff scandal a few months later, so I don't know if that  
15 portends well for this outcome here. But it certainly speaks  
16 to the character of such an act.

17           I think this is a gross misstep. A gross misstep  
18 for many reasons. It looks like you're going to get your  
19 five seats, but what really is the purpose underlying all  
20 this? I don't think it is just like Tom DeLay's; we want  
21 more power. We have the numbers; we can get it. That  
22 happens in Texas, in Illinois, California, New York,  
23 Oklahoma; it happens all over the country every 10 years in  
24 an orderly process that most of us don't think is a very good  
25 process.



1 I think maybe privately we might all be relieved  
2 if the Federal Government and the State Governments would  
3 join together and ban mid-decennial redistricting by statute  
4 or by constitution or by both and enact independent  
5 redistricting commissions.

6 Now I've heard valid concerns that independent  
7 redistricting commissions, in the end, aren't all that  
8 independent in practice, and there's probably something to  
9 that. It's pretty difficult to cleanse a human being of all  
10 partisan leanings whatsoever, particularly if you're in a  
11 state that hasn't bent one way or another, but here's one  
12 thing for sure that wouldn't be happening if we had  
13 independent redistricting commissions. We wouldn't be doing  
14 it.

15 We'd be figuring out what we're going to do with  
16 THC or flooding or property tax, or the other things that we  
17 probably ought to be doing during our regular session instead  
18 of during a special session. So we could use the interim for  
19 the less partisan, less flash, more B process of figuring out  
20 what kind of policy we ought to pursue when we get here for  
21 our 140-day sprints. But that's not where we are right now.

22 And so I ask you, as you embark on this process,  
23 which my colleagues have very, very articulately condemned  
24 with objective information. You're doing this at what cost?  
25 At what cost to public faith in our institutions, in our

1 elections? What cost to faith of the public, and not just  
2 our elections, but in their participation in the elections.  
3 In the outcome of the elections. I think you're undermining  
4 our faith in democracy.

5           You're setting off a national gerrymandering -- I  
6 learned how to pronounce that correctly. It's the  
7 legislature from Massachusetts who gave rise to the word  
8 "gerrymandering", which is how we say it. His name was  
9 Gerry. So, gerrymandering, a nationwide gerrymandering war,  
10 is now in effect because of us, right? Nobody else was doing  
11 this before. And in fact, I'm not going to say 'us', I'm  
12 going to say "y'all," as the majority. That's a consequence  
13 of this. But also think about the consequences to this  
14 institution. I talked about this last round. It's an act of  
15 compliance. It's passive. It waives any even pretense of  
16 that Texas independence of which we're all so proud.

17           It was just a quick suggestion from the President  
18 that went to the Governor that went to here, and serving up  
19 five seats in a gerrymandering war and undermining faith in  
20 Democratic elections. And there's one another piece of  
21 damage to this institution, and one other piece of  
22 undermining faith. And that is the participation in the  
23 processes that happen in this building, and I'm talking  
24 specifically about hearings.

25           Senator Miles brought up the hearings. 98 percent of

1 people testified against it, 2 percent in favor. But after  
2 6, 7, 8 hours of grueling questions and answers, Senator King  
3 demonstrated impressive stamina. What I didn't hear anywhere  
4 in there was any consideration for anything anyone said in  
5 hearing. What was the point? Are we dressing this up to try  
6 to make it look legitimate? There was no amount of hours of  
7 hearings. There were no number of hearings in any number of  
8 places, geographically dispersed across the state, or done  
9 virtually, that could have legitimized what we're doing here.

10 And my notes just disappeared.

11 So I'll move on to the next part. Those are the  
12 damages. That's the cost. And the third thing I want to  
13 take up is the damage to the law or the challenge to the law  
14 that we all now face. No one in here is a Voting Rights Act  
15 expert, but we all have artificial intelligence to consult  
16 and able staffs.

17 And we all have a pretty good grasp that the  
18 Voting Rights Act looks not only at the intent to  
19 discriminate, which would certainly be avoided if a map is  
20 drawn without regard to racial data. But also, the Voting  
21 Rights Act looks at discriminatory effect, intended or not.

22 Including historically throughout the district  
23 courts in the country, coalition districts where one or more  
24 minority groups is politically cohesive and combined in a  
25 district, whether intentionally by -- when the district was

1 drawn or by happenstance. But at the moment that we are  
2 standing in, there are districts, five of them now targeted,  
3 where minority groups, two or more, combine in a politically  
4 cohesive way to be able to choose the people they wish to put  
5 in office. And if they're split up, they will no longer have  
6 that ability.

7           The result of which is lower representation by  
8 greater proportions of people. Which doesn't seem consistent  
9 with the Democratic ideal. In fact, it's not. It's so  
10 flagrantly in contravention of everything the Voting Rights  
11 Act has stood for since its enactment that you'd think it was  
12 a lay-down. Your maps are dead.

13           Now, I hope that is the case, but my feeling and  
14 my suspicion is that the plan here by the map drawers in  
15 Washington, D.C., and the team of lawyers that thought this  
16 stuff up that assure all of you that these maps comply with  
17 the Voting Rights Act. That what they really mean is that  
18 these maps comply with what we think the courts might later  
19 hold about the Voting Rights Act. That the Fifth Circuit's  
20 aberrant view, effectively, gutting the Voting Rights Act,  
21 will become the view of the United States Supreme Court.

22           I hope not. I hope not. And it makes me sad that  
23 what we -- that we would even attempt to avail of that in the  
24 middle of a decade. But here we are, and we will see how the  
25 courts come down on this. And I have hope that they will not

1 that they -- the Supreme Court -- will not decide that these  
2 maps are okay under some new, less helpful version of the  
3 Voting Rights Act, and these maps will go away. I don't know  
4 when. I don't know if it's going to be one year or two years  
5 or three years or five years.

6 I mean, the judicial recourse isn't all that great  
7 either, so I kind of wish we would do things right in the  
8 first instance. But we're going to see this play out in the  
9 courts, and maybe in response to all of this. In response to  
10 the gerrymandering war we've set off around the nation, we  
11 will see some federal action, banning mid-decennial  
12 redistricting.

13 We will see state action and federal action  
14 requiring independent redistricting commissions, and maybe  
15 that comes as a result of the '26 election wave. When the  
16 electorate rises up and says, "This is too much." Thank you.

17 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Blanco, speak on the final  
18 passage.

19 SENATOR BLANCO: To speak in opposition of the  
20 bill.

21 Thank you, Mr. President, Members.

22 Now, when our founding fathers met in Philadelphia  
23 in 1787, they sought to design a government that would  
24 endure, and it has done just that. It has endured. Our  
25 government, our country, our form of government, it's that

1 shining light. That shining city on a hill. It's a  
2 testament to the rest of the world that America is a beacon  
3 of freedom. That it represents prosperity, but importantly  
4 Democratic ideals. And our founders understood that those  
5 constitutional principles and the very legitimacy of our  
6 government depended on fair representation of the people.

7 James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 52 that,  
8 "The definition of the right of suffrage is very justly  
9 regarded as a fundamental article of Republican government."  
10 Any representation was not a detail, or rather, it was a  
11 cornerstone. And to preserve that cornerstone, the framers  
12 created a system grounded in regularity and in fairness. In  
13 regularity and in fairness.

14 They required a census every 10 years, so that  
15 districts would be adjusted to reflect actual population  
16 growth and population shifts. And as Madison further  
17 explained in Federalist 54, "Apportionment must be based on  
18 the aggregate number of inhabitants so that representation  
19 remained faithful to the people themselves." And that's why  
20 our founders in trying this idea of tying redistricting to  
21 the decennial census.

22 Article 1, Section 2 of the United States  
23 Constitution mandates that an apportionment of  
24 representatives among the states must be carried out every 10  
25 years. Members, apportionment is the original legal purpose

1 of the decennial census as intended by our nation's founders.  
2 It ensures that the process is not arbitrary, not political,  
3 but anchored in objective data. Measured at regular  
4 intervals. It reflects growth, not advantage. It reflects  
5 representation, not power. And that is why this map and this  
6 redistricting bill gives me such concern.

7 Mid-decade redistricting, absent a court order,  
8 departs from that constitutional design. It untethers the  
9 process from population, and instead it ties it to political  
10 expedience. It risks turning a solemn duty into an  
11 instrument of political advantage. And some may argue that,  
12 you know, there's no law prohibiting mid-decade  
13 redistricting.

14 But Members, just because there's no law that  
15 doesn't prohibit it, it just doesn't make it right to do it.  
16 And while the framers of our constitution, you know, they did  
17 not envision maps being drawn whenever it suited those in  
18 power. They actually intended apportionment to follow the  
19 census. So that representation would follow the people, not  
20 politics.

21 That was a directive that they enshrined in our  
22 constitution. So why are we ignoring that? Why is this  
23 legislature not heeding the warning of our founding fathers?  
24 Why is Texas bending the knee? You know our founders,  
25 including Thomas Jefferson, understood the dangers of

1 unchecked power.

2           Jefferson reminded us that an elective despotism  
3 was not the government that we fought for. He distrusted any  
4 concentration of authority that ignored the voice of the  
5 people. And if redistricting can be rewritten at will, well,  
6 then we invite the possibility of maps being drawn every  
7 election cycle. The very despotism that Jefferson warned us  
8 against. And if the rules of representation can be written  
9 whenever politically convenient, then stability is lost,  
10 fairness abandoned, and the people's faith in democracy  
11 itself is shaken.

12           We must ask ourselves, will Texas continue to  
13 believe in the equality of their ballot when the foundation  
14 of equal representation will be easily bent? Will they still  
15 trust the principle of one person, one vote? If that  
16 principle is subjected to manipulation at every turn?

17           You know, as a veteran, I swore an oath in uniform  
18 to defend the Constitution. Many of us, in this body, wore  
19 that uniform. And many of us, as elected officials, swore to  
20 defend the Constitution. A Constitution that guarantees  
21 equal protection. A Constitution that guarantees equal  
22 voice. A Constitution that provides for equal representation  
23 of every citizen. And carving out maps for partisan  
24 advantage, well, that just undermines that guarantee.

25           Members, the Constitution is not a suggestion.



1 It's the foundation of our democracy, and it's our solemn  
2 duty to uphold it. You know history is not only going to  
3 record the votes that we take today. It's also going to  
4 record whether we honored the vision of those who entrusted  
5 us with this responsibility more than two centuries ago. For  
6 these reasons and to honor our Constitution, to honor our  
7 democracy, and to honor our founding fathers, I'll be voting  
8 no on House Bill 4.

9 Thank you, Mr. President.

10 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Gutierrez, you're  
11 recognized to speak on the bill.

12 SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well, thank you,  
13 Mr. President.

14 I rise at this moment, I wasn't intending to  
15 speak. I was asked by my colleagues if I was going to speak,  
16 and I really wasn't intending to speak very much because I  
17 thought we'd had our -- we'd had our moment earlier, and we  
18 kind of get everything off our chest. But, I thought to  
19 myself, what do we do if we end up in the courthouse?

20 What do people that have been disenfranchised have  
21 to do and show if we get to the courthouse? How do we prove  
22 that case? And I was listening to my colleague. Senator  
23 Miles and Senator West and Senator Menendez, Senator Blanco,  
24 and so many others sat up in my office, had us some dinner.  
25 A real quick bite of dinner.

1 I got inspired by their words. I thought to  
2 myself, What's this about? How do we prove this case?  
3 What's that binder look like? We talked about it earlier.  
4 What's that trial notebook look like?

5 We have to show that the proponents of these maps,  
6 Senator King and others, used racial bias in the makeup of  
7 these maps. That's really what this is about. That's what  
8 all this questioning has been about all day long. What the  
9 questioning in the House of Representatives was, just  
10 yesterday. Was it yesterday? The day before? To show that  
11 there has been racial bias in the making of the maps.

12 So I figured, well, let's start with day one. We  
13 have a proclamation in the first session from the governor,  
14 and he goes off and he cites the Department of Justice  
15 letter. And it says that there was reverse gerrymandering,  
16 if you will, race-based considerations from the creation of  
17 certain coalition districts in '21. Even though the Attorney  
18 General said that there was no race considerations of any  
19 sort.

20 Even though everybody in this room, every  
21 Republican in this room, voted for those maps. Even though  
22 Senator King, himself, suggested that he was going to vote  
23 for those maps, because he felt that they were fair, not  
24 racially drawn, and within the Voting Rights Act.

25 And so, here we are, all of a sudden, with new

1 maps, and now these maps supposedly are not racially drawn in  
2 any way. The proponent of this bill would have us suggest  
3 that he lives in a world of blissful ignorance. Says, I  
4 don't know. I didn't look at race data. I relied on my  
5 lawyers. I didn't see their analysis. I didn't read their  
6 analysis.

7 Even though he got an opinion from them that none  
8 of us have seen. Even though he acknowledges that they  
9 likely did ecological inference analysis, and they likely did  
10 racial polarized voting analysis. They didn't give him a  
11 report. He didn't ask for a report.

12 It's real simple to say, well, I didn't use race  
13 analysis. I didn't use race data in the consideration; other  
14 people did. Other people did. Said I didn't -- over and  
15 over again, we've heard for weeks. I don't know who the map  
16 makers are. Never met the map makers. And we have that on  
17 audio tape over and over. Never met the map makers. Don't  
18 know who they are. Don't know who the map drawers are. And  
19 this might seem like an attack on Senator King, and I don't  
20 mean it to be, but the fact is, we've got to find out who the  
21 racists are.

22 I know it's not Senator King. It's the map  
23 makers. The people he's never met. Those are the ones who  
24 used the race data to pack and crack these districts. I'd  
25 love to know who they are. But we find out today that, in

1 actuality, he had met one of them. Even though he said over  
2 and over again that he didn't know -- he had not with him.  
3 We find out today that Adam Kincaid is his friend for many  
4 years. Talked to him two months ago over the phone. Met him  
5 at the ALEC Republican conference. Last call was this  
6 Monday.

7 He called him to tell him, "Hey, we're making  
8 changes to the map." Senator King would have us believe  
9 that, okay, I've got to go. That was the end of that call.  
10 When he says that -- asked for someone's number. How long  
11 was that call? I imagine we'll find out.

12 I imagine that lawsuit will uncover phone records  
13 and data that will show us how long that call was. We'll see  
14 if there's any texts there. Somehow, miraculously,  
15 districts, well, 7 of them, end up cracked back down to the  
16 margins where minorities are just over a 50 percent  
17 threshold. But there was no race data in the offing,  
18 according to Senator King.

19 According to Senator King, there's no race data in  
20 the offing. So we have the DOJ's letter that shows us race  
21 was a consideration. We have the Governor's proclamation  
22 that cites the DOJ's letter. We come now to the blissful  
23 ignorance that we've heard all day long today. It's the best  
24 way to try this case to not know, to not say. That's what  
25 he's told us.

1           It would appear to me that our friend is a great  
2 lawyer, a great witness. But it is clear to me also that 444  
3 precincts were broken down to the bloc level. 444 precincts  
4 were divided down to the bloc level, and the only way -- and  
5 when you do that, the only data you have that gives you the  
6 race data that you're looking for is census data. Someone  
7 looked at the census data to break down 444 precincts.

8           When we look at some of the principles of the  
9 Voting Rights Act is we try to keep precincts whole, and  
10 we've all known that. We've been over this, some of us for  
11 two and three times over the last 10 - 15 years. We've dealt  
12 with this, but in this map, 444 precincts were broken down at  
13 the bloc level. And so, I know many of you would like to  
14 remain in blissful ignorance.

15           I think that the people of the State of Texas  
16 deserve a little bit more transparency than blissful  
17 ignorance. I think that the people of the State of Texas  
18 deserve real honesty, real answers. And as I said at the  
19 very beginning of this thing, they deserve that our time not  
20 be wasted on this crap. That they deserve that the real  
21 issues of the State of Texas be addressed, rather than some  
22 political witch hunt for Donald Trump and his cronies.

23           Thank you, Mr. President.

24           MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Cook, you're recognized to  
25 speak on the bill.

1           SENATOR COOK: Thank you, Mr. President and  
2 colleagues.

3           I rise tonight to speak in opposition of this bill  
4 and of the entire process. Earlier today, we heard what  
5 sounded like just a joke or a quip about adding the word  
6 expeditious to the fruits of the spirit, and I just want to  
7 say how disrespectful it is to my constituents. To all of  
8 our constituents, when we joke around about how we need to be  
9 more expeditious about redrawing all the congressional lines  
10 in the middle of a decade, with obvious, serious consequences  
11 for Black and Brown voters.

12           This process should not be done quickly. It  
13 should not be done behind closed doors. It should be done  
14 very publicly and with as much warning as a decennial census  
15 gives us. There were also comments about when one is  
16 sponsoring a House Bill. That one does not do one's research  
17 or homework or carry that bill as though it's somebody else's  
18 baby, which we all know that it is.

19           And so, I just want my constituents and the people  
20 in this chamber to know that when I pick up a House Bill, I  
21 do do my homework. And I do learn everything that I possibly  
22 can about it, and I assure the person from whom I'm carrying  
23 it that I am going to care for it the way that I think that  
24 they would.

25           I think that's how you get good policy. The

1 concept of one person and one vote is a deeply empathetic  
2 concept that centers on human dignity. I truly believe that  
3 each one of us is actually a child of God, and that how  
4 people feel matters to me. Every single person in this state  
5 is just as much a human being as I am, and that's why they  
6 deserve to be a part of the processes that shape the change  
7 around them.

8 To disrespect that is to disrespect the concept of  
9 humanity entirely. And I just want to say how painful it is  
10 to watch many of the Members in this chamber be completely  
11 silent throughout this entire process, but sometimes, when  
12 there's moments off the mic, there is a little bit of honesty  
13 about how broken this is. How unnecessary it is. How,  
14 really, no Texans are asking for this. Maybe even a joke  
15 about how the map in Houston now looks like a hurricane,  
16 because that's the only way to squeeze out more Republicans.

17 That is a hurtful statement to me and to so many  
18 people in my district, especially the Black and Brown voters.  
19 Throughout the process of SB-4 and HB-4 moving through this  
20 legislature, the people's voices have been ignored. There  
21 are no Senate statewide regional hearings, unlike those held  
22 for every redistricting process in all of Texas history.

23 Texas House was no better with a meager three  
24 field hearings, and at the Houston one, almost a thousand  
25 people showed up, but thanks to confusion and

1 disorganization, in my opinion, disrespect, and a lack of  
2 access for folks who use sign language, hundreds never got  
3 the chance to speak. Afterward, I joined my House colleagues  
4 to hear the people's testimony for two hours at Wheeler  
5 Avenue Baptist Church.

6 Since their voices were not a part of the official  
7 record, I would like to take this moment to enter some of  
8 their words into the record tonight.

9 Savant Moore, a proud CD-18 voter, said, "This  
10 district isn't just lines on a map, it's a legacy. Where  
11 Barbara Jordan made history. Where Mickey Leland marched for  
12 the poor and Sheila Jackson Lee defended those that no one  
13 else would. So when you propose a redraw of CD-18, you're  
14 not just moving boundaries. You're moving the soul of our  
15 community. We didn't come here asking for change; we ask to  
16 protect what generations of people built."

17 Another person, Debbie White, said,  
18 "Gerrymandering denies communities their rightful voice in  
19 Congress. It fractures neighborhoods like the 3rd Ward,  
20 Acres Homes, and 5th Ward. Communities that deserve fair  
21 representation. Redistricting should reflect population  
22 growth and the diversity of our state, not suppress them."

23 Koretta Brown said, "Will you allow yourself to  
24 become a cheater of democracy? Will you sit silent while  
25 standing on the shoulders of giants like Barbara Jordan,



1 Mickey Leland, Thurgood Marshall, and Sheila Jackson Lee?  
2 We've seen this before. After reconstruction, Black  
3 representation was violently, and I mean violently, stripped  
4 away. Communities lost rights and progress for nearly a  
5 century until the Civil Rights movement reclaimed them  
6 through the struggle and sacrifice. If you allow this  
7 redistricting to happen, you are choosing to disregard that  
8 legacy."

9           Gretchen Brown said, "I grew up in both the 18th  
10 and 9th districts. Make no mistake, these districts didn't  
11 just raise me. They grounded my values, my vision, and most  
12 of all my ability to fight."

13           77021, 77033, 77048, if you are familiar, that's  
14 up and down MLK Boulevard, but also most of Houston's south  
15 side and also Missouri City. Representation matters. It  
16 really does. Which is why I called out those zip codes and  
17 parts of town. These parts of town are often overlooked,  
18 last on the list.

19           Redistricting, it shouldn't erase the  
20 neighborhoods that built us, that built me. It should  
21 reflect our voices, protect our legacy, and ensure the next  
22 generation sees leadership that feels local, lived, and truly  
23 theirs. And yet today, this body passed a map that tells my  
24 constituents their voices are expendable.

25           The changes we're witnessing are fundamentally

1 altering the makeup of congressional districts that have  
2 historically provided representation for communities of color  
3 in Houston. When communities that have worked together for  
4 decades, shared schools, churches, and struggles, are  
5 suddenly divided, you do silence their voice. You weaken  
6 their ability to advocate effectively for healthcare,  
7 infrastructure, housing, and every single basic need.

8           You destroy legacies, relationships that have  
9 spanned generations, and collective memories that teach the  
10 next generation. These maps are racist, and they are  
11 devastating, plain and simple. It's one thing to do this  
12 every ten years, and it's another to fly in the face of every  
13 constitutional rule and do it mid-cycle. It's arrogant and  
14 the greed is insurmountable.

15           I would like to close with a quote from the  
16 Barbara Jordan, whose picture, of course, hangs on the wall.  
17 Who represented both Senate District 11 and Congressional  
18 District 18, and many of the communities that I get to  
19 represent and serve today. It was the question to be  
20 answered in 1976 when Barbara Jordan gave this address, and  
21 it is still the question to be answered today.

22           "Let us heed the voice of the people and recognize  
23 their common sense. If we do not, we not only blaspheme our  
24 political heritage, we also ignore the common ties that bind  
25 Americans. Many fear the future's uncertainty, are

1 distrustful of their leaders, and believe that their voices  
2 are not heard. They seek only to satisfy their private  
3 dreams. They ignore the common interest, the common good.  
4 This is the great danger that America faces: that we will  
5 cease to be one nation and dissolve into a collection of  
6 interest groups and individuals, each seeking to fulfill  
7 private dreams. Each seeking to satisfy private wants. If  
8 this occurs, who then will speak for America? Who will speak  
9 for the common good? This is the question to be answered."

10 Today, we have seen the common good be cast aside.

11 MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Eckhardt, you're  
12 recognized to speak on the bill.

13 SENATOR ECKHARDT: Thanks so much.

14 We've talked a lot about Barbara Jordan in this  
15 chamber, and what a wonderful thing that we've talked a lot  
16 about Barbara Jordan. I choose to sit right next to her  
17 portrait because on days where I feel like there's just no  
18 chance of the minority getting heard in this chamber. No  
19 chance of having a chairmanship. No chance of being placed  
20 on a committee where we have actual expertise. No chance of  
21 actually participating in the formation of policy in this  
22 chamber, I look over at her and go, "Jeez Louise, put on your  
23 big girl panties, Barbara had it way worse. Keep going."  
24 Right?

25 It's so awesome to be able to glance to the right

1 and know that we can keep going. That we can become a more  
2 perfect union. So I want to take you back in time to when  
3 Barbara was in this chamber and when redistricting was  
4 happening in the early 70s, and I'm going to take you  
5 straight to a book that talks about it. It actually has my  
6 father's name on it.

7 In 1970 reapportionment, Texas had gained one  
8 congressional seat, and much as Eckhardt worked to draw a  
9 seat for himself in 1961, oh, I'm sorry, in 1965, now his  
10 state senate allies, Charlie Wilson, Don Kennard, Oscar  
11 Mauzy, Babe Schwartz, and Barbara Jordan wanted that one new  
12 seat. Jordan was close to Lieutenant Governor Ben Barnes.  
13 And he supported her effort to get that new seat. White guy  
14 supporting a Black woman to get that new seat.

15 Eckhardt went to Barnes' office to discuss the  
16 redistricting dynamics, and Barnes made sure that all the  
17 incumbents, including Eckhardt, had districts they could  
18 continue to win. It was the incumbent protection era of  
19 gerrymandering. Yet, he had to be careful. Eckhardt had  
20 supported Jordan and loved the idea of her coming to  
21 Congress, but he had to give up Black precincts in his  
22 district to a new district for her to win. Both he and  
23 Jordan were able to get what they needed. He kept his  
24 workshop district, and she got many, though not all, of the  
25 minority communities in her district.

1           At the same time, he got caught up in a rift among  
2 Black allies; Barnes and most of the Senators had come to  
3 like and trust Jordan. She worked well with them, and they  
4 considered her a insider, but Curtis Graves, who is  
5 definitely not an insider, wanted Jordan's State Senate seat.  
6 Barnes and Senators were alarmed at the possibility and  
7 decided to block him.

8           Jordan went to Lauro Cruz, who was on the  
9 redistricting conference committee, and asked where Graves'  
10 house was on the map. Jordan took out a magic marker and  
11 drew a line around his house into the district that extended  
12 into River Oaks, the wealthy white area of town, and the map  
13 was passed. Graves was furious. Knowing that he could not  
14 win, the seat did go to a white person. He instead filed to  
15 run for Congress, and Jordan and Graves battled each other in  
16 the primary, with Jordan winning the nomination. Eckhardt  
17 had to stay neutral.

18           The reason why I read this, and it may sound  
19 familiar to you. This kind of horse trading. The politics  
20 of redistricting. That absolutely has been around for --  
21 since the beginning of our Republic. Absolutely, but what  
22 you hear, the difference here, is that it was transparent.  
23 Graves knew that Barbara Jordan had drawn a circle around his  
24 house.

25           Ben Barnes knew who all was vying for those seats.

1 And all the people who were vying for those seats knew each  
2 other were vying for those seats. There was no law firm that  
3 drew the districts behind closed doors and didn't share any  
4 of the actual analysis. There was no attorney/client  
5 privilege that kept them from knowing what was going on.  
6 That didn't happen, Members. That didn't happen until the  
7 later 1970s and into the 1980s. And it didn't go on steroids  
8 until recently.

9           This kind of cloak-and-dagger secrecy, this  
10 pretending that we don't know, is new. And it's dangerous.  
11 We must show integrity and leadership. We must be honest  
12 with each other and with our constituencies about how, when,  
13 and why. We are reapportioning when we do it every 10 years,  
14 but most especially when we do it in an unusual mid-decade  
15 redistricting effort.

16           This idea of doing redistricting behind closed  
17 doors with lawyers under attorney/client privilege in the  
18 middle of the decade is very new. So if somebody tells you,  
19 everybody does it, this is how it's always been done. Look  
20 at history. We've heard a lot about one person, one vote.  
21 And a lot of people, I think, assume that that goes all the  
22 way back to the beginning of the Republic. It doesn't. One  
23 person, one vote is a concept that was derived by case law in  
24 1965 in connection with the Voting Rights Act.

25           Before that, politicians were almost entirely

1 white and almost entirely male, and while the Congress was  
2 apportioned by population, state legislatures could draw  
3 congressional districts of any population to satisfy their  
4 political benefit. And that's how the U.S. House of  
5 Representatives remained almost entirely white and almost  
6 entirely male.

7 The one person, one vote concept and the Voting  
8 Rights Act changed that and ushered in an era where we  
9 started to become a more perfect union reflective -- having  
10 representatives that were reflective of the actual population  
11 of the United States.

12 So, in closing, by bringing redistricting into  
13 mid-decade, just in time for a midterm, and doing it with a  
14 law firm under attorney/client privilege, and pretending that  
15 you don't have access to the information that they used, is  
16 going to take us backward. We will ignite a redistricting  
17 civil war across the United States, where the minority in  
18 each state will be disenfranchised by a hyper-politicized and  
19 secret process.

20 So for those who are listening who think that this  
21 is just Democrats bellyaching, in another state, it will be  
22 the Republicans bellyaching. Look at what the Republican  
23 Party chair in California is saying about the threatened  
24 redistricting there. It sounds really similar to what we're  
25 saying here.

1           So, please think about what we're doing here. We  
2 are going backward. We are going pre-Civil Rights Act. We  
3 are going pre- one person, one vote. That is what's  
4 happening here. We are going back in time. And it's not  
5 better back there. Read the history. It's not better back  
6 there.

7           MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Hinojosa from Nueces.

8           SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. President.

9           Members, I rise in support of House Bill 4.  
10 Members, these maps, which actually increase the number of  
11 majority/minority voting districts, have one goal: to make  
12 sure the people of Texas have their values represented in  
13 Washington. Yet every time minorities shift politically, we  
14 hear the same, tired excuse. Racist this, racist that. It's  
15 all we've heard all day long, and quite frankly, I'm done  
16 listening to it.

17           It's time to put an end to the outdated belief  
18 that you can predict political outcomes based on the color of  
19 someone's skin. That idea is wrong morally and factually,  
20 and I stand here as living proof.

21           You see, in 2022, my district, Senate District 27,  
22 seated in the Rio Grande Valley, was drawn to favor the other  
23 party by at least 4 percentage points, but I didn't lose by 4  
24 percentage points. I lost by less than 1/3 of 1 percent.  
25 But where was the wailing and gnashing of the teeth like we



1 hear today? That an Anglo woman won this majority/minority  
2 district? No. It was quiet.

3 Where was the outrage and the cries of racism? Or  
4 am I not minority enough simply because I'm a Republican?  
5 No, there was never any outrage after the results of my first  
6 campaign, and guess what? There shouldn't have been. My  
7 majority/minority district decided to elect an Anglo for the  
8 first time in over 60 years based off the promises she made  
9 in her campaign.

10 She won, fair and square, but then she came here  
11 to Austin and voted her own values that did not match our  
12 South Texas values, and I had the opportunity to expose that  
13 during our rematch. Only in 2024, during that presidential  
14 cycle, I was up against even greater odds. The data  
15 indicated that I should have lost by at least 6 percentage  
16 points against an incumbent with unlimited resources, but yet  
17 instead, I won and became the first Republican to hold Senate  
18 district 27 since Reconstruction.

19 I didn't win by ignoring voters. I won by  
20 listening to them. By asking them what they believe? What  
21 they value? And what kind of Texas they want for their  
22 families? And their response was absolutely clear. You see,  
23 people in South Texas and across the state want strong  
24 families, safe communities, low taxes, secure borders, and  
25 the right to live their lives without government overreach.

1           We do not support men in women's sports. We do  
2 not support abortion on demand. We do not support tax hikes.  
3 We do not support open borders. These are not just talking  
4 points. These are the words and values of the people that I  
5 represent in South Texas. And therein lies the truth,  
6 Members.

7           The other party lost us Hispanic voters. They  
8 lost us when they shut down our churches during COVID. They  
9 lost us when they dismissed faith, family, and the sanctity  
10 of life. They lost us when they stopped listening to the  
11 very people that they claim to represent. And they keep  
12 losing us more and more and more, especially in South Texas.  
13 This is not a racial shift. This is a values shift. And no  
14 amount of shouting racism is going to change that.

15           The people of South Texas have spoken, and  
16 Washington D.C., now needs to start listening. We have all  
17 seen the political shift in South Texas over the past several  
18 years. It came to a head this last election. I won my seat.  
19 President Trump won counties all along the southern border  
20 that had not voted Republican in generations, if ever.  
21 President Trump won with 55 percent of the Latino vote and  
22 doubled his support among Black voters from where it was in  
23 2020.

24           So let's stop pretending that this is all about  
25 race. It is about values. It is about representation --

1 real representation. The fact that we're redrawing the maps  
2 is to ensure that as these shifts have happened and continue  
3 to happen, that the people are able to have representation  
4 that reflects their values, not their last name, not their  
5 skin color. These maps give Texans a voice. A voice that  
6 reflects their values, not outdated assumptions about race or  
7 party. That is why I support them because our job is to  
8 ensure that the people of Texas, their voices, their  
9 families, and their priorities are represented at our  
10 Nation's Capital.

11 So if you're worried about losing minority votes  
12 in this next election, stop blaming maps and start looking in  
13 the mirror. Stop judging people by the color of their skin  
14 and start focusing on the content of their character. And  
15 with that, Members, I proudly stand and look forward to  
16 casting my vote in favor of House Bill 4.

17 Thank you, Mr. President and thank you, Members.

18 MR. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Hinojosa.

19 Senator King.

20 SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President.

21 Members, I wasn't actually going to give any  
22 closing remarks, but there's been so many things expressed,  
23 alleging or suggesting why I'm carrying this bill. And so I  
24 wanted to make it very clear why I support this map. The  
25 Biden years were devastating to the United States, but since

1 we've had a Republican majority in the U.S. House and the  
2 U.S. Senate and since we've have a Republican President, we  
3 have seen remarkable changes in America.

4 We now have a secure border. We're seeing an  
5 incredible slowdown in the flow of deadly fentanyl. We've  
6 seen a continuation of historic tax cuts that were about to  
7 expire. We're seeing an incredible reset of world trade  
8 policy, all in favor of America.

9 Our military, it's back in the business of  
10 National Security, not social experiments. We're standing up  
11 to Iran. We're standing up to China. We're standing up to  
12 Russia. We may even soon see an end to the Russo-Ukrainian  
13 War, which has taken, I mean, counted lives. We're seeing an  
14 end to the foolishness of men and boys in women and little  
15 girls' sports. We're fighting antisemitism on our college  
16 campuses, which grew so ugly and so rampant. We're seeing  
17 the deportation of Venezuelan gangs and dangerous cartel  
18 Members which had come in.

19 I will tell you, I was a cop in 1980, during the  
20 Cuban boat lift, and Castro opened the prison doors to what  
21 we estimated was about 10,000 hardcore criminals. They were  
22 murderers. They were rapists. They were drug dealers. They  
23 spread out across the United States. I dealt with some of  
24 them in Fort Worth. It took the law enforcement community  
25 across this country years to work through those people and

1 get them in jail and away from the citizens.

2 During the Biden years, there were hundreds of  
3 thousands of hardcore criminal gang Members, aliens --  
4 criminal aliens, criminal gang Members, hardcore criminals  
5 that came into the United States. I'm telling you, our  
6 grandchildren will still be seeing the effects of those  
7 hundreds of thousands that came into America.

8 I could go on and on, but I just want to say that  
9 this map, from my perspective, it has nothing to do with  
10 race. It's been repeatedly said that it's about race -- that  
11 it's racist. It has nothing to do with race. It has  
12 everything to do with good policy. Because this historic  
13 process, the amazing progress that has been made in just  
14 eight months, all of this will end if the Republicans lose  
15 the Congress.

16 And it has become incredibly apparent to us, in  
17 recent months, the amount of gerrymandering that has been  
18 done in blue states. And I'm convinced that if Texas does  
19 not take this action, that there is an extreme risk that the  
20 Republican majority will be lost. And if it does, the next  
21 two years after the midterms, there will be nothing but  
22 inquisitions and impeachments and humiliation for our  
23 country.

24 That's what we saw during the Biden years, and  
25 that's what will happen again if the Republicans lose the

1 majority in Congress. And that's why this map is needed.  
2 Now, as to the map itself, just a couple of quick comments.  
3 I adopted HB-4, which I have said repeatedly was not drawn by  
4 me. But I adopted it because it accomplished my three goals.  
5 Those three goals were that it be legal, that it improve the  
6 political performance for those seeking Congress as  
7 Republican candidates, and that it improve compactness.

8           This map clearly meets all three goals. A lot of  
9 questions today were asked about the use of racial data. It  
10 is my understanding that race was not used in the drawing of  
11 this map. And I can say unequivocally that it was not used  
12 in my consideration of HB-4, not used to any degree. Now I  
13 think it's important to note that despite all the criticism  
14 of this map, no alternate or substitute maps have been  
15 offered by a Democrat as an amendment. Let me repeat that.  
16 Despite all the criticism today of this map, there was not a  
17 single floor substitute offered by the Democrats, nor was  
18 there a single amendment offered.

19           Additionally, throughout all the hearings, no one  
20 presented an analysis of data to demonstrate that this map  
21 violates any law, not one throughout all the hearings. House  
22 and Senate, for that matter, no one presented an analysis of  
23 data to demonstrate that this map violates any law. We heard  
24 hours and hours of testimony, and we were not presented with  
25 any racially polarized voting analysis, Gingles factor

1 analysis, or political cohesion analysis that suggested in  
2 any way that this map was in violation of the Voting Rights  
3 Act. Why not? It's because this map is legal as to all  
4 applicable law.

5 This map is about policy. It's about continuing  
6 good policy. It's about overcoming gerrymandering in other  
7 states. And I think it is self-evident that because no  
8 analysis has been presented through any hearing or on this  
9 floor today. No data has been presented to suggest -- to  
10 show that it is not legal. I think it is self-evident that  
11 this map is legal in all respects.

12 Now with that said, on a personal note. I do  
13 truly want to thank all the Members that have served on the  
14 redistricting committee. It came upon us all pretty quick,  
15 and it's taken a lot of work and a lot of time, and it's been  
16 very difficult. And, in fact, it's even sadly strained some  
17 long-time friendships.

18 But I want to thank Vice Chair Creighton, Senator  
19 Hinojosa, Miles, Hughes, Alvarado, Paxton, Sparks, and  
20 Parker. Thank you for your time on this committee.

21 And Mr. President, with that, I again will move  
22 final passage.

23 MR. PRESIDENT: Members, we are going to take a  
24 break, a dinner break. Our staff has been up here for --  
25 since 10:00 o'clock this morning. We will recess until

1 11:30.

2 Senator Parker.

3 SENATOR PARKER: Mr. President, I make a motion to  
4 recess officially to 11:30 this evening.

5 MR. PRESIDENT: Any objection? Hearing none.  
6 We stand in recess until 11:30.

7 If you want to vote on the motion, the secretary  
8 can call the roll. The ladies have been here for almost 11  
9 hours. They're going to get a break. When we come back, I  
10 understand there is a plan for a filibuster, and if that's  
11 the case, Senator will be recognized. We're breaking for a  
12 dinner break that they deserve. Period.

13 Senator, you have not been recognized. Sorry. If  
14 you want to object, we'll call the roll.

15 Secretary will call the roll.

16 THE CLERK: Alvarado.

17 (No audible response.)

18 THE CLERK: Bettencourt.

19 (No audible response.)

20 THE CLERK: Birdwell.

21 (No audible response.)

22 THE CLERK: Blanco.

23 (No audible response.)

24 THE CLERK: Campbell.

25 (No audible response.)



1 THE CLERK: Cook.

2 (No audible response.)

3 THE CLERK: Creighton.

4 (No audible response.)

5 THE CLERK: Eckhardt.

6 (No audible response.)

7 THE CLERK: Flores.

8 (No audible response.)

9 THE CLERK: Gutierrez.

10 (No audible response.)

11 THE CLERK: Hagenbuch.

12 (No audible response.)

13 THE CLERK: Hall.

14 (No audible response.)

15 THE CLERK: Hinojosa of Hildago.

16 (No audible response.)

17 THE CLERK: Hinojosa of Nueces.

18 (No audible response.)

19 THE CLERK: Huffman.

20 (No audible response.)

21 THE CLERK: Hughes.

22 (No audible response.)

23 THE CLERK: Johnson.

24 (No audible response.)

25 THE CLERK: King.

1 (No audible response.)

2 THE CLERK: Kolthorst.

3 (No audible response.)

4 THE CLERK: Menendez.

5 (No audible response.)

6 THE CLERK: Middleton.

7 (No audible response.)

8 THE CLERK: Miles.

9 (No audible response.)

10 THE CLERK: Nichols.

11 (No audible response.)

12 THE CLERK: Parker.

13 (No audible response.)

14 THE CLERK: Perry.

15 (No audible response.)

16 THE CLERK: Schwertner.

17 (No audible response.)

18 THE CLERK: Sparks.

19 (No audible response.)

20 THE CLERK: West.

21 (No audible response.)

22 THE CLERK: Zaffirini.

23 (No audible response.)

24 MR. PRESIDENT: 18 ayes and 11 nays. The motion  
25 is adopted. Senate stands in recess until 11:30.

(Adjourned.)

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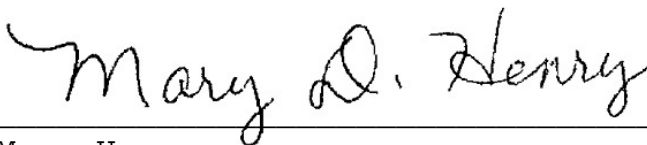
CERTIFICATION PAGE FOR AUDIO RECORDING

I, Mary Henry, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

Please take note that I was not personally present for said recording and, therefore, due to the quality of the audio provided, inaudibles may have created inaccuracies in the transcript of said recording

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related so, not employed by any of the taking parties to the action in which this deposition was taken, and further that I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and of office on this 15th day of September, 2025.



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