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Legislature's redistricting fiasco

The ongoing special session of the Texas Legislature, which began July 21, lasts 30 days. Among a few other issues, redistricting and flood relief are on the agenda, which the governor sets.

After months of speculation, the president finally told Texas congressional Republicans earlier in July that he aims to gain five seats from the mid-census redistricting in Texas.

Instead of using this special session to provide flood relief and disaster mitigation, Gov. Abbott is exploiting the tragedy to serve the president's unpopular and damaging agenda.

The Trump-Abbott redistricting plan isn't about lines on a map; it's about lives being on the line. They are trying to manipulate congressional districts to give the president more allies to rubber stamp the chaos he's created — chaos that no Republican, Democrat or independent voted for in 2024.

For decades, Texas Republicans have reduced relief programs, cut disaster infrastructure, ignored warnings about disasters and then exploited these events to push an agenda that places Texas families in harm's way and manipulates the rules to hold on to power.

Only losers change the rules in the middle of the game; and here they are, doing it again, all while making Texas families pay higher taxes, lose their healthcare and defund their public schools.

Republicans hold a very narrow majority in the U.S. House, and they know their policies are deeply unpopular with voters; from immigration to trade policy to cuts to Medicaid and Medicare. They are fearful of losing that thin House majority in the 2026 election. So they are rigging the game by embarking on an out-of-cycle redistricting session at the bidding of the president.

Over the past 10 days, the Texas Senate and House held a series of committee hearings throughout the state to hear from voters about the redistricting process. During these committee hearings, Rep. Vikki Goodwin (D-Austin) said, "Guess how many showed up to testify in support of redistricting? ZERO. Nobody. Not one." This out-of-cycle redistricting is solely to disenfranchise voters, particularly minority voters, and silence the voices of citizens.

On a Morning Joe appearance on July 11, Texas Democratic Party Chairman Kendall Scudder said, "Republicans have chipped away

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everyday Americans. And now Greg Abbott and Donald Trump are using this (flood) crisis as cover to ram through redistricting." Abbott has said flood relief will only be brought up after the redistricting package passes.

U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-San Antonio) said, "Trump knows his toxic agenda may cost him the House in 2026. So he's ordering Abbott and Paxton to do his dirty work, even if it will hurt Texans. And because Abbott and Paxton are cowards — they obliged."

Over the past several days, several Texas Democrats have traveled to visit with Democratic governors in other states, including J.B. Pritzker of Illinois and Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico. Texas House Rep. Gene Wu said, "Since Gov. Abbott is acting like a child, we are going to find adults to go talk to."

According to an article in The Hill from July 28, "A House Democratic super PAC is looking to raise tens of millions of dollars to challenge Texas Republicans next year." The PAC sees Republican vulnerability and plans to exploit it.

I urge you to contact Gov. Abbott (512-463-1782), Sen. Donna Campbell (512-463-0125), and Rep. Ellen Troxclair (512-463-0490) to express your opposition to this redistricting effort and to demand they act on flood relief instead.

The Kendall County Democratic Party (KCDP) condemns the president's blatant attempt to rig the 2026 midterm elections and criticizes Abbott for consistently being the president's puppet.

KCDP and Democrats across the state will mobilize and fight to ensure flood victims get the relief they urgently need and prevent the president from using the tragedy to seize congressional control.

Bottomline, Texas needs a non-partisan districting commission to keep both parties from playing the gerrymandering game.

Thanks for reading. To find out more about how to get involved with local Democratic activities and activism, visit www.kcdems.us.

Laura Bray is Chair of the Kendall County Democratic Party. The Texas Democratic Party contributed to this