

we do not do because our quorum requirements are a majority. But in State legislatures, particularly in Texas, it has been almost a tradition. In 1979, the State Senate broke the quorum because of an election bill that was being considered. In 1981, when I was a House member, we tried to break the quorum after midnight on a Saturday night on a congressional redistricting bill. We were not nearly as organized as these folks because we only slowed it down for about 3 hours and members of the Statehouse were found in closets and air vents and everything else in the State capital.

But breaking the quorum is not a new legislative tool. In fact, Abraham Lincoln participated in an attempt to break quorums in 1840 during one of his terms in Illinois' House of Representatives.

□ 1800

On one of those days, Democrats wanted a quorum, the Whigs at that time, the predecessors to our Republicans, did not, so the Democrats locked the doors to the House to keep the Members inside the Chamber. Lincoln and two of his fellow Whigs jumped out the window to avoid being locked inside, but their efforts failed, mainly for procedures, because it seemed they had already voted for a motion to adjourn, and in doing so they helped make that quorum which they were trying to break in their hasty departure. Even a former President and a Republican President tried to break a quorum in 1840, so that is a history.

These Members of the Texas Legislature, like I said, who are doing this have a tradition in Texas of using every legislative vehicle for their issues and their concerns. Obviously this redistricting map is the most god-awful-looking map I have ever seen, and, again, having been involved for many years as a State legislator.

In a letter to the Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick, these legislators who are currently living very high in a Holiday Inn and eating at Denny's in Oklahoma said, "We love the house and take seriously our responsibility to serve our constituents and protect their best interests in the legislature. Our actions fall entirely within house rules. While disappointed that we were forced to break a quorum, our decision was driven by our solemn duty to fight for and protect the rights and interests of those who we were elected to serve in the legislature."

TEXAS REDISTRICTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I had prepared a little bit different remarks, but after listening to the last few speakers, particularly our good friend

the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), who spoke earlier about the shape of some of the districts and some of what happened with the development of this redistricting plan in Texas, I thought it might be appropriate to show some of the comparisons.

I also listened a few minutes ago to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) talk about those wonderful people who spent so much time searching for the remains of the Columbia after its dissolution on its return from space. What a magnificent bunch of people who spent so much of their time and effort trying to pick up the pieces to that spacecraft and to find the heroes who died in that craft.

It is interesting that some of what has transpired with this redistricting can be directly affected to my work that I have put forth in behalf of the Johnson Space Center and the magnificent people who live in that Clearlake area of southeast Houston and north Galveston County. Those are areas that, through this redistricting plan, all the work that I have done in working on the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics could very easily be moved away from the Ninth Congressional District, a part of an area that has been represented continuously for over three decades. The community of interest there could very likely be dissolved because of this.

We have talked about gerrymandering. We have talked about the creation of congressional districts that split communities, that literally take away communities of influence, centers of influence, that communities have been together for a very, very long time.

What it does do as an example in my home county of Jefferson in southeast Texas where recently we had a redistricting for the State senate, Jefferson County was split into two different parts for the first time in the history of that county, since 1835. What it does do is to take a part of the southern part of Jefferson County and connect it to a much larger population area in basically the city of Houston. It takes the northern part of that county and brings it over into another part of the city of Houston.

The city of Houston is wonderful, and I represent part of it, but so is the city of Beaumont. What happens is that the people who live in Houston now can control the future of the city of Beaumont, because a large number of people in one part of that district will determine who the Representative will be, Democrat or Republican, and consequently a center that is completely different, a center of influence around Beaumont or Port Arthur, Texas, becomes watered down, and it does not matter whether they are represented by a Democrat or a Republican, they are going to not be able to express their interests in the same way, and they certainly will not be able to elect a Representative of either party that is going to be controlled by the larger area of population.

The current districts of Texas look like this. This was a map that was drawn and approved by a Federal district court in Texas, made up of two Democrats and one Republican. The districts are reasonably compact. The Ninth Congressional District is one that also is reasonably compact, including all of Jefferson County, Chambers County, Galveston County and a part of Harris County over here where the Johnson Space Center is. We will see, potentially see, hopefully we will not see, but under this plan the State of Texas is proposing to change that district to look like this, where it splits this county, it splits this county, Chambers, and moves into Harris County in a very convoluted, gerrymandered area.

The interesting thing about this particular map is that the center of influence changes away from all of this area, because over 400,000 people live in this squiggly little part of inner-city Houston over here, connected and controlling the interests of the people who live in this much larger area. That is not fair. That is not fair to the citizens who have a specific interest different than the interests of those folks over there.

We will talk more about this. I hope that my colleagues and my friends across the country will also be looking at how this is developing and why it is unfair to the citizens, not to the elected officials.

IN SUPPORT OF TEXAS REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise today to salute the 53 Texas State House representatives who have taken a courageous stand to preserve justice and democracy in Texas. As those courageous representatives said in a written statement, "We are taking a stand for fair play for all Texans. We refuse to participate in an inherently unfair process that slams the door of opportunity in the face of Texas voters."

TOM DELAY's arguments for redistricting Texas all over again cannot hide the real partisan power grab at work here or the unfair process he has engineered that short-circuits the ability of Texas voters to express their views. First, DELAY argued that the U.S. Constitution requires the State legislature to replace the court-ordered district lines with its own redistricting plan in time for the 2004 election. But the Texas State attorney general concluded that the legislature has no constitutional or legal obligation to redraw congressional districts. He decided that DELAY was flat wrong in his argument that the current district lines are only temporary and that the legislature has a mandated responsibility to redraw them in time for the next election.

But still DELAY presses on. Next he claimed that redistricting is necessary to increase the number of minority districts in Texas. That, too, is flat wrong. In fact, his plan to redraw congressional districts would dilute minority voting strength statewide. It would splinter Hispanic communities all along the southwest Texas border region. It would suppress the voices of millions of Hispanics living along the Texas border and give their representation to areas in central Texas. That is why the proposed redistricting plan blatantly violates the Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution.

In south Texas, border cities such as McAllen, Texas, in my 15th Congressional District are cut up into as many as three different congressional districts and grouped with residents of downtown Austin, Texas. It gerrymanders the 15th Congressional District so that it looks like a serpent that wiggles around the State of Texas for a distance of more than 400 miles with its head in Austin and its tail end in the border towns of Hidalgo County. Just look at the map. It was featured on CNN today. It starts here on the border in Hidalgo County, and it wiggles all the way around like this, all the way to Austin, Texas, for about 450 miles. That is the worst gerrymandering that has ever happened in the State of Texas, and that happens to be my congressional district. All this in order to increase the number of Republican Representatives in the Congress.

Obviously the Democratic State representatives had no voice in the development of this redistricting plan, nor did citizens throughout Texas have an opportunity to speak out on this new congressional district map. That is why these 53 Texas representatives have broken quorum, the only option available to them, to stop this partisan power grab by TOM DELAY. That is why every major newspaper in the State of Texas has editorialized against the new redistricting map. The Waco Tribune Herald said it best: "The map is a travesty that shatters the community of interest that is the foundation of congressional redistricting. It's a Machiavellian scheme that should be soundly defeated."

And the McAllen Monitor, the newspaper in my district, said it very succinctly: "This crooked plan uses crooked lines to achieve twisted goals."

Clearly the citizens of Texas support the existing congressional district lines not just for the 2002 election, but for 2004 and every election after that through 2010 when the constitutionally mandated redistricting process will take place again.

The current district lines are fair to both parties and comply with the Voting Rights Act. If TOM DELAY wants to increase Republican representation, he should seek to do so at the ballot box, not by hammering the legislature into changing the rules of the game in a way that would be extremely disruptive

to our communities, our legislature and our State.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I stand here in solidarity with these 53 courageous Texas State representatives, especially those from south Texas: Kino Flores, Jim Solis, Rene Oliveira, Aaron Pena, Miguel Wise, Ryan Guillen and Juan Escobar. To all 53: We support you. We salute you.

TEXAS REDISTRICTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I want to add my voice of explanation to what is happening in Texas and Oklahoma this week. It seems to be high drama. We Texans pride ourselves on a good old-fashioned, blood-racing, heart-pumping showdown at the OK Corral. It is no wonder the Nation's media has joined the audience for the show. But if anybody thinks this week's actions are nothing more than a real-life alternative to the afternoon TV soaps, they need to look a little closer and understand just what principles are motivating both sides in this showdown.

From the Republican side, it is the principle that says to the winner go the spoils. I am willing to go with this idea to a point, as my colleague the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) mentioned a moment ago. We Democrats certainly enjoyed our spoils for decades when Texas was already a one-party State. It just happened the one party was Democrats rather than Republicans. Acting within the rules and dedicated to the best outcome for its citizens, the majority party would be foolish not to maximize its power to accomplish its goals.

The key phrase of what I just said was "acting within the rules and dedicated to the best outcome for its citizens." That is where I believe the Republicans' principle has become unprincipled.

For the past 2 days, reporters have been asking me if I think it is the right thing for Texas legislators to go on the lam in Oklahoma rather than doing their jobs in Austin. Of course I think that would have been preferable, and so do they. But when legislators do not have a prayer of doing their jobs not because they do not want to, but because the rules have been abused and rigged against them, I do not see what alternative those legislators have but to bring as much sunlight as possible into the rigged process.

Do not forget the context in which this is taking place in Texas, a \$10 billion plus shortfall. I know the State House must be hearing from schoolteachers, health care providers, social workers, and dozens of other worried citizen groups, because I am hearing from them. A normal taxpayer would think with problems like we have in Texas, you would not have needed to pick another fight. But rather than

grapple with those major problems affecting millions of Texans, our State legislators got harassed and harangued so long by Washington that they finally gave in.

□ 1815

Mr. DELAY finally convinced them to buy the kind of partisan poison, single-minded, rule-rigged brand of leadership that he has perfected here in Washington in this House of Representatives.

I understand the frustration of the 53 in Oklahoma, and I understand how it feels to be prevented from having their voices heard; to have their ideas kept out of the arena, for they would not prevail as we Blue Dogs have time and time again. I understand hearings hastily called at inconvenient times, witness lists unnecessarily shortened. I understand the frustration. Mr. DELAY knew how to advise the Texas legislature because he is practicing effectively the same tactics right here in this body.

I will admit that so far in Washington my wife has not yet been trailed by Federal officers or my daughter followed to the hospital as she gives birth to my grandchild. I find this extreme use or abuse of power particularly distressing. Mr. DELAY is quoted as saying, "I have never turned tail and run." But neither have the Democrats in Ardmore, Mr. Speaker. When their hands have been tied, their mouths have been gagged and their eyes blindfolded, they had to be creative in finding a new way to fight under the rules. They are standing and fighting for what they believe in a far more courageous way than are required by rigging the rules of the game. They are playing by the rules.

History has shown that "might makes right" is a philosophy which might work in the short term, but ultimately is brought to its knees for one simple reason. In a democracy the people eventually will rise up and have their way. That is the bottom line here. It is not whether Charlie Stenholm is a Congressman from west Texas. It is not really which party is going to win this high-stakes battle. It is about how the people are being represented, and I am hearing from the people all over Texas saying this is not right to do it as they are doing it. I realize TOM DELAY does not care a whit about how the people in rural west Texas are represented, but I do. I have become very passionate about not losing the rural focus of west Texas districts and under his plan, west Texas will lose one representative.

Mr. DELAY is quick to express his belief that I am irrelevant. The rural constituents of the 17th district feel a little differently. In fact, all of my Texas colleagues whom we have heard from today, as we look at the plans, rural Texas is being shorted by this plan.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the 53 in Ardmore for the courage they have shown for standing up for what they believe.