

east of Dallas. Waco would become a part of Fort Worth. And Abilene would be dominated by Lubbock.

In addition to arrogant politics, this is poor public policy. Urban districts and rural districts have different interests, different needs, different representations. My district has issues such as water, timber, rural health care, steel. Issues are different in urban areas. Texarkana, meet Plano. Sulfur Springs, this is Highland Park. Tatum? Houston is calling. Red River County's median income, \$28,000 a year; Collin County's median income, \$73,000 a year.

If you live in Texas, you know this plan will not work, yet the Republican powers that be in Washington continue to run roughshod over the Texas Legislature, both Democrats and Republicans.

Everyone knows this process is a sham, a joke, an embarrassment, and illegal. In fact, it is no process at all. This is an insult to the word "process." It is a naive, weak-kneed Republican-controlled statehouse letting Washington, D.C., insiders run over it. As a result, 53 principled Democrats in the statehouse stood up for the citizens of our State and said, enough. They broke the politically decreed quorum. Thank God these men and women stood up against the tyranny and heavy-handedness of the mindless majority. Thank God fierce independence still lives.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us step back and see what Republican representatives in Texas, not Republican Representatives in Washington, D.C., working their will are saying. Let us see what they say in Texas. Representative Charlie Geren, Republican, Fort Worth, said the Democrats were doing what they believed they needed to do in order to represent their constituents. "I understand what they're doing. It's just really the only tool in their toolbox," Geren said. "They're passionate about the map that's in front of us not being good for their constituents."

Representative Pat Haggerty, Republican, El Paso. "It's the smartest move they could have made," Haggerty said. "Under the circumstances, it was the only alternative they had. It's been done before. It's in the rules, and they're playing by the rules."

That is what the Republicans in Texas said. The Democrats are working hard, standing tall, standing up for their constituents and playing by the rules.

Let us stop this Tom and Gerry-mandering dead in its tracks. Let us get the State back to the issue of education, back to the issue of the budget, back to the issue of taxes, back to the issue of homeland security. Mr. Speaker, let us get the State House back to the issues of the people. That is what they expect, and that is what they deserve.

□ 1515

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of

the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FROST addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. TURNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

TEXAS REDISTRICTING

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to follow my colleagues from the Texas congressional delegation who have just previously spoken and also prouder to stand up here and be able to speak in behalf of some of my colleagues who are serving in the Texas House of Representatives, my constituents in the Ninth Congressional District of Texas, people like Joe Deshotel, who is a former vice president of Lamar University in Beaumont; Allan Ritter, who owns a successful lumber company in Nederland, Texas; and Craig Eiland, who is a successful attorney on Galveston Island, all honorable members of the Texas legislature, which is a citizen legislature, not a full-time legislature like our Congress is. I am so proud of them.

As we heard my colleagues say in the last few minutes, these ladies and gentlemen have stood up for principle, and it is magnificent to see their unity and their willingness to put their political lives on the line. They put Texans before their own personal political ambitions, and I am proud of them for doing the right thing. The real victims of this redistricting plan that is before Texas is not the members who hold those seats right now but it is the communities, certainly not the Members of Congress who may be here. The fight is not about Nick Lampson. It is not about the Democrats or the Republicans. It is about the people of Texas who deserve to be represented fairly and fully in Washington, D.C.

Jefferson County, Chambers County, Galveston County, the areas that I represent along the upper Texas gulf coast, have been in the same congressional district for over 3 decades. They have in common the size of their communities, the large petrochemical industry, and interests which run throughout that area, coastal and water transportation industries and a whole lot more beyond that. Splitting these counties apart and even further splitting Jefferson County and my hometown of Beaumont itself dilutes the strength of the interests and the ability of the people who live there to be represented as those citizens want

to be represented. Splitting these communities is in a sense a disenfranchisement of the people within those communities.

This fight, however, is about more than redistricting. It is about the infusion of partisanship that exists in Washington, D.C., into the Texas legislature. I am absolutely astounded to learn of some of the things that I have heard in the last several days following the action of those brave Texas legislators who chose to go across the Texas border into Oklahoma. I am astounded at the fact that my friend Craig Eiland, that State representative that I just mentioned, his wife, Melissa, who has recently had twin babies who were born prematurely and are in the hospital in Galveston, knowing that State law enforcement officials were directed by the Governor of our State and by the Speaker of our House to go and question the nurses in that hospital, wanting to know the whereabouts of State Representative Craig Eiland. And even after it was published in the newspaper that our legislators were in Ardmore, Oklahoma, they went to Craig's wife's home where Craig was not there and harassed her about his whereabouts, when their babies are in the hospital being treated.

We are seeing an abuse of power. We are seeing an abuse of Federal resources even. The fact that Federal resources, according to the newspapers in Texas, the homeland security agency had an airplane that was tracked. The airplane belonged to a cotton farmer/State legislator, citizen legislator, Pete Laney. It was through the information that our United States Federal homeland security agency gave to the State of Texas that led to the whereabouts of our legislators who were trying to send a message to the Speaker of the House and to the Governor of Texas. We used the wrong kind of resources because interestingly enough about 2 miles from here down the road stands a hotel called the Watergate, a place of historical significance and a symbol of the use of Federal law enforcement resources for private political gain. I am not sure where TOM DELAY stays when he is in Austin, but maybe someday that hotel will carry the same significance as Watergate. It might remind us all of the outrageous diversion of Federal law enforcement authorities to pursue Democratic legislators.

I am proud of these folks who stood up in Texas. When we shut out the interests of the people because of partisan politics, it is the people who are the ultimate losers. The people of Texas are not losers.

It might remind us all of the outrageous diversion of federal law enforcement authorities to pursue Democratic legislators who fled to Oklahoma

In this current time when we face the threat of terrorism, asking the Department of Justice, Homeland Security and the FBI to participate in personal politics is despicable

When we shut out the interests of the people because of partisan politics, the people are the ultimate losers

This is the people of Texas versus one man. Lest someone think that all is well in the U.S. House of Representatives, please consider that the level of frustration has hit a new low. Long-serving members tell us story after story of their being shut out of the legislative process which in turn causes the loss of voices of millions of American citizens. We need real leadership here. People who will reach out and heal the divisiveness, people who are willing to change the direction that our legislative bodies are going.

I repeat: When we shut out the interests of the people because of partisan politics, the people are ultimate losers.

This is the people of Texas versus one man. TOM DELAY's interests cannot and will not be allowed to win out over the interests of the good people of the great State of Texas.

THE 53 TEXAS DEMOCRATS COURAGEOUS PROTEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on May 12, 2003, 53 courageous and selfless Democratic members of the Texas legislature departed en masse from the Texas Capitol in a display of protest, solidarity, and community pride. Included in these 53 courageous souls are Harold Dutton, Al Edwards, Senfronia Thompson, Garnett Coleman, and Jessica Farrar from my district. Also, Joe Moreno, Kevin Baily, Scott Hochberg, and Rick Noriega from the Houston area.

The Texas Democrats are protesting the new Texas Redistricting plan proposed by the Republican members of the Texas Legislature. This plan is a sham, an outrage, and an insult.

The Republican redistricting plan is an unnecessary, partisan initiative. Redistricting maps are drawn the year following a state census. Accordingly, in 2001, the Texas district lines were drawn and certified by a unanimous federal district court. By law, the present district lines are fair to the public and both political parties. It is an unprecedented and possibly illegal action to redraw the lines so soon after a census.

For example, the Republican goal of increasing the minority percentages in the 30th district could lead to that district being declared illegal under either the Voting Rights Act for "packing the minority community" or illegal in a racial gerrymandering challenge because the district as proposed under Representative KING's plan is not narrowly tailored.

Also, the Republican's elimination of the 24th District as a minority opportunity district would regress black voters in Texas in clear violation of the Voting Rights Act.

The only possible justification for redrawing the district lines is so that the Republicans can advance their malicious, mean-spirited goals of party dominance. In advancing their partisan goals the historic 5th Ward will simply be destroyed.

The Republicans have violated over 120 years of congeniality and compromise. During the Democrats' time as the majority party in the Texas legislature, bi-partisan compromise,

party parity, and harmony was the rule of the day. The power hungry Republicans have insulted all Democrats by shattering this longstanding policy of working together.

The Republican insults have stretched all the way to Washington, DC. The Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives TOM DELAY made the bizarre request to have federal authorities like the U.S. Marshals or the FBI pursue the Democratic members of the Texas Legislature.

The 53 Democratic members of the Texas Legislature are not criminals, they are champions of justice.

There are some Republican supporters out there who have begun a mail campaign against the Democratic members of the Texas legislature. They have encouraged people to mail letters calling the Texas Democrats villains and scoundrels.

The vast majority of the public, however, has spoken out in full support of the 53 Texas Democrats. Stanley Tolliver of Cleveland, Ohio, the President of the Norman S. Minor Bar Association, called in with a better idea. Mr. Tolliver encourages us to begin our own mail campaign calling the Texas Democrats what they really are—heroes and sheroes, patriots, the patriotic 53.

These brave individuals are standing up for democracy. They are doing the work of the people of Texas, not the dirty work of TOM DELAY.

I stand today to applaud my colleagues and friends in the Texas Democratic coalition. I salute you and I support you. All of us who believe in justice, fairness, and equality are with you in mind and in spirit. You are our heroes.

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

(Mr. HINOJOSA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

TEXAS REDISTRICTING

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

Mr. BELL. Mr. Speaker, this gives us a great opportunity to talk about what has transpired in Austin, Texas, and Ardmore, Oklahoma, over the course of this week and what really has transpired throughout the Nation and to set the record straight. I appreciate having this opportunity. During the course of the debate which has taken place this week, there have been some very large misstatements of fact. This gives us a chance to correct the record on some of those issues.

There has been a lot of finger-wagging by the majority leader, Mr. DELAY, along with the Speaker of the Texas House, Mr. Craddick, acting as if they were terribly surprised by the Democrats' reaction to this redistricting bill that was going to be jammed down their throats.

Mr. Speaker, we can look back to editorials in almost every major Texas newspaper dating back to January of

this year where almost every major newspaper took an editorial position that because of the problems facing the State of Texas, because of the challenges that the Texas legislature would be facing because they only meet every 2 years and they have a very limited amount of time to address those challenges, every major newspaper editorialized that redistricting should be stayed away from. Redistricting had already been accomplished by the courts just 2 years ago. There was absolutely no reason to take an absolutely unprecedented course of action and take up redistricting in what was obviously nonsense this year.

But despite those warnings and the warnings set forth very clearly that redistricting would be an incredibly partisan issue, an incredibly divisive issue and would distract from everything that the legislature needed to accomplish, despite those warnings, the majority leader of this body decided to march forward with this very partisan power grab. And so what we saw happen this week with 53 very courageous Democrats from the State House of Representatives going to Ardmore, Oklahoma, had to be expected. There was no surprise. Everybody knew that they would take a stand, that they would fight back. For them to now act as if they were completely shocked is absolutely absurd and absolutely ridiculous.

Another question that has been raised during the course of this debate is that is this not politics as usual and now that the Republicans have a majority in the State House, should this not be expected; should they not try to change the majority of congressional districts in the State of Texas since Texas is a majority Republican State. Again, that is a little bit misleading. Because Texas already has a majority of Republican congressional districts. In fact, if one looks at the voter percentages and the voter history in each of the congressional districts in the State of Texas, there are 20 Republican districts and there are only 12 Democratic districts.

Why then is there a Democratic majority? Why are there 17 Democrats and 15 Republicans elected to Congress from the State of Texas? That is rather simple. Because in five of those Republican districts, the voters, Mr. Speaker, have decided that they like their Democratic Representatives and have returned them time and time again to the U.S. House of Representatives. That is what in Texas and I think everywhere else in the United States we call democracy. Under this plan, the secret plan that finally saw the light of day that Mr. DELAY is proposing, Mr. Speaker, it would change all that by going in and tearing apart districts, tearing apart communities that have been together for years and years, destroying those districts as they exist today to make it practically impossible for the Representatives, the