

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