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Regarding: Congressional

Message:

I'm writing as a lifelong Texan and resident of Leander, situated in the 31st Congressional District, and I submit this comment to express concern about the mid-decade redistricting authorized in the July 2025 special session. My focus is on timing, political intent, transparency, and how this undermines voter participation in Texas.

1. Problematic Timing & Lack of Necessity

The most recent congressional map was enacted in 2021 following normal post-census procedures. Mid-decade redraws in Texas are highly unusual: the only prior instance occurred in 2003, when Republicans redrew the map mid-cycle, prompting a LULAC v. Perry challenge arguing violations of the Equal Protection Clause and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The Supreme Court struck down District 23 as racially dilutive to Latino voting strength but otherwise upheld the broader map ([2006, LULAC v. Perry decision]) and ([2025, TexasStateProcedures & History]).

The current redistricting item was introduced only after the DOJ released a letter on July 7 and President Trump publicly urged additional GOP-leaning seats. Political analysts estimate the effort aims to secure a net gain of around five Republican-held seats by the 2026 election. President Trump and Governor Abbott's public statements reinforce the political motivations behind this move. The result appears to be an overt attempt to maintain power in a state that has been repeatedly failed by its Republican-majority leadership.

2. Weak Legal Justification Undermines Credibility

In July 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice identified four congressional districts (TX-9, TX-18, TX-29, and TX-33) as unconstitutional "coalition districts" under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and urged that Texas redraw them. At the same time, state officials maintain the 2021 map was drawn race-blind, creating a direct contradiction. This inconsistency undermines legal credibility and strongly suggests political motives are driving the process.

3. Transparency Failures & Eroding Public Trust

During the first public hearing in Austin on July 25, 2025, no draft map was provided to the public, even as testimony continued. Observers criticised the session as

symbolic rather than substantive (2025, Statesman editorial). Follow-up hearings in Houston and Arlington were scheduled rapidly and without advance release of proposed maps, severely limiting the ability of the public to provide meaningful input and damaging trust in the process. This type of public engagement would not be tolerated in the public rule-making process by a state agency, and certainly should not be tolerated and worse - perpetuated - by our state representatives.

4. Voter Apathy & Civic Impact

Texas has historically had abysmal voter turnout. In the 2024 general election, only 61.15% of registered Texas voters cast ballots, placing Texas second to last in voter turnout. When voters perceive district lines as politically engineered, confidence in the electoral system declines and civic participation drops. Research shows partisan gerrymandering depresses turnout and fosters cynicism, contributing to long-term disengagement (2024, Governing: TexasStandard analysis). Candidly, I do not understand how any public representative can consider being elected as a "win" in this environment.

This move is without a doubt politically motivated and intended to preserve the status quo in Texas. As a proud Texan who has spent 24 voting years increasingly disappointed by my representatives, I believe all Texans deserve fair, equitable elections that honor our voices, regardless of geography. Actions like this will continue to drive away businesses and residents, including myself and my family.

