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Regarding: Congressional

Message:
Opposition to the Proposed Midterm Redistricting Map

Current vs. Proposed Congressional Maps

Texas lawmakers are considering an unprecedented mid-decade redraw of the congressional map to add five new Republican-leaning districts. Under the existing map (drawn after the 2020 Census), Republicans already hold 25 of the state's 38 congressional seats. The draft proposal would effectively tilt five marginal Democratic seats to the GOP, producing 30 districts that President Trump carried by at least 10 points in 2024. This aggressive plan would pre-determine outcomes and sharply amplify Republican control. In practical terms, nearly every targeted district would become a safe GOP seat; the new map would have ensured a Republican win in all 30 of those districts last year. By comparison, the current map – while already drawn to benefit incumbents – still allowed Democrats to win a meaningful share of seats. For example, Democratic Representatives Henry Cuellar (South Texas) and Vicente Gonzalez (Lower Rio Grande Valley) both prevailed under 2024's lines (Trump got about 53–52% in those districts). Under the proposal, even these heavily Hispanic districts would shift to approximately 55% Trump territory. In short, the new map would turn once-competitive or Democratic-leaning districts into guaranteed Republican victories, whereas the existing map at least leaves those communities some electoral voice.

Impact on Representation and Democratic Principles

The proposed map exemplifies extreme partisan gerrymandering. It targets minority and urban districts for "packing and cracking," packing more Democratic voters into a few safe seats and spreading Republican voters into surrounding districts. For example, the plan would redraw Houston's 9th Congressional District (a majority–minority, deep-blue seat) into a new district President Trump would have won by 15 points – instead of the 44-point margin that Vice President Harris carried it in 2024. In San Antonio and Dallas, the draft map would force popular incumbents to run against each other or lose their home bases. Overall, this redistribution does not make any Republican-held district meaningfully more competitive; rather, it consolidates GOP majorities. Observers note that the current Republican-dominated legislature redrew the 2021 map "with an eye toward protecting incumbents by making their seats as safe as possible," and indeed Trump won every Republican-held Texas district in 2024 by double-digit margins (the closest GOP win was by 14 points). Now the proposal goes further:

it explicitly "remove[s] three Democratic-held seats in Houston, San Antonio and Dallas" and creates new GOP opportunities in their place. In effect, the new plan would lock in a nearly one-sided delegation. Even House leaders in Texas acknowledge that it "creates a path forward for a Republican to win five more of those seats".

At its core, this map-change undermines fundamental democratic values. As the Brennan Center warns, "when lawmakers draw district lines to entrench one party's political power, some votes count more than others," and gerrymandering "skews election results, makes races less competitive, and hurts communities of color". Likewise, the Center for American Progress explains that "manipulated election maps undermine the basic tenets of healthy democracy, including fair representation and government accountability." Under the proposed map, voters in targeted districts would effectively have no meaningful choice of representatives; the outcome would be decided in the mapmakers' backroom, not by the ballot box. In a fair system, elections are decided by voters "who are responsive, reflective, and accountable to the communities they represent", not by predetermined lines. Instead, this proposal would allow politicians to "choose their voters, rather than having voters choose them." Moreover, by diluting Hispanic and Black voting power, it risks violating the spirit (if not the letter) of the Voting Rights Act. Already, critics warn that redrawing majority–Latino districts (like Cuellar's and Gonzalez's) will "rip the Voting Rights Act to shreds" by diluting minority representation. In short, the draft map contravenes the principles of equal representation and minority rights that underlie our electoral system.

• Equal Voting Power: Every citizen deserves an equal voice. Maps should not be engineered to predetermine outcomes. As the Brennan Center notes, partisan gerrymanders make "some votes count more than others," undermining the core principle that each person's vote should carry equal weight. The proposed plan explicitly violates this by skewing districts to favor one party.

• Fair Competition: Elections should be competitive to hold officeholders accountable. By tilting five marginal districts firmly to the GOP, the proposal would eliminate genuine contests in those areas. It would handcuff the opposition party by creating de facto single-party seats. A democracy cannot thrive if the outcome is foregone. The new map undermines fair representation by making races uncompetitive.

• Minority Representation: Latino and Black communities have fought for districts where they can elect representatives of their choice. This map aims to dilute those communities' influence. For instance, it would transform a district Vice President Harris carried by +44 points into one that would have gone +15 for Trump. Packing Hispanic voters into fewer districts and cracking urban Democratic enclaves into safely Republican ones weakens minority voters' voices. Observers caution that such changes could violate the Voting Rights Act, which exists to prevent precisely this kind of disenfranchisement.

• Public Trust: Redrawing maps in the middle of a decade for pure partisan gain erodes confidence in government. Independent experts agree that manipulated maps "make races less competitive, hurt communities of color, and thwarts the will of the voters.". Texans expect transparent, rule-based districting, not ad hoc power grabs. Preserving trust means respecting norms – including deferring major map changes until after the next Census, or else subjecting any map to neutral criteria or independent review.

Conclusion: Preserve Fair Representation

For all these reasons, the proposed redistricting scheme should be rejected. It is an extreme partisan gerrymander that contravenes democratic ideals and legal principles. Legislators should recognize that altering the map for electoral advantage undermines the legitimacy of our system. Instead, they ought to uphold the current (if imperfect) boundaries and focus on fair competition. Doing so would respect voters' rights and the values of one-person-one-vote, competition, and minority protection that define our democracy. In short, we urge the

Legislature to abandon this plan and preserve a map that, flawed as it may be, does not yet fully foreclose the people's will.

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