



The Senate of Texas

CÉSAR J. BLANCO

TEXAS SENATOR
DISTRICT 29

Senator Blanco's Remarks as Prepared House Bill 4 - 89(2)

When our Founding Fathers met in Philadelphia in 1787, they sought to design a government that would endure. But we haven't just endured. Our government, our country, is that Shining City on a Hill. A testament to the rest of the world that America is a beacon of freedom, prosperity, and democratic ideals.

And our Founders understood that those constitutional principles and the very legitimacy of our government depended upon fair representation of the people. James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 52 that the "definition of the right of suffrage is very justly regarded as a fundamental article of republican government." Representation was not a detail, but the cornerstone of our Republic. To preserve that cornerstone, the Framers created a system grounded in regularity and fairness. They required a census every ten years, so that districts would be adjusted to reflect actual population growth and shifts.

As Madison further explained in Federalist No. 54, apportionment must be based on "the aggregate number of inhabitants" so that representation remained faithful to the people themselves. That is why our Founders, enshrined this idea of tying redistricting to the decennial census. Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution mandates that an apportionment of representatives among the states must be carried out every 10 years.

Apportionment is the original legal purpose of the decennial census, as intended by our Nation's Founders. It ensures that the process is not arbitrary or political, but anchored to objective data, measured at regular intervals. It reflects growth, not advantage. It reflects representation, not power. And that is why this map and this redistricting bill gives me such concern.

Mid-decade redistricting, absent a court order, departs from that constitutional design. It untethers the process from population and instead ties it to political expedience. It risks turning a solemn duty into an instrument of political advantage. Some may argue that there is no law prohibiting this mid-decade redistricting. But just because something may be permitted does not make it right. And while there may not be a law prohibiting mid-decade redistricting, it upends that clear directive from our Founding Fathers.

The Framers of our Constitution did not envision maps being redrawn whenever it suited those in power. They intended for apportionment to follow the census, so that representation would follow the people — not politics.



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That was the directive they enshrined in our constitution. Why are we ignoring that? Why is this legislature not heeding the warning of our founding fathers? Why is Texas bending the knee?

Our Founders, including Thomas Jefferson, understood the dangers of unchecked power. Jefferson reminded us that “an elective despotism was not the government we fought for,” and he distrusted any concentration of authority that ignored the voice of the people. If redistricting can be rewritten at will, then we invite the possibility of maps being redrawn every election cycle – that very despotism Jefferson warned against.

If the rules of representation can be rewritten whenever politically convenient, then stability is lost, fairness is abandoned, and the people’s faith in democracy itself is shaken. We must ask ourselves: will Texans continue to believe in the equality of their ballot when the foundation of equal representation is so easily bent? Will they still trust the principle of one person, one vote if that principle is subjected to manipulation at every turn?

As a veteran, I swore an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. Many of us in this chamber have taken that same oath, both in uniform and in elected office. We defended a Constitution that guarantees equal protection, equal voice, and equal representation to every citizen. Carving maps for partisan advantage undermines that guarantee.

The Constitution is not a suggestion. It is the foundation of our democracy, and it is our solemn duty to uphold it.

History will not only record the votes we cast today; it will also record whether we honored the vision of those who entrusted us with this responsibility more than two centuries ago. For these reasons and to honor our Constitution, our Democracy, and our Founding Fathers, I will be voting no on House Bill 4.