

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Date: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 9:15:55 PM

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Regarding: Senate

Message:
9/29/21

The Texas Senate Redistricting Committee, with the TX Senate redistricting map it approved on 9/8/21, and the proposed Congressional map it released on 9/27/21, proved without doubt that it is not serious about making sure all Texans are fairly represented by their supposed legislators, but is instead running an incumbent protection racket. At a hearing on September 25 Senator Huffman said with a few exceptions (sounds like two from later info) she called the 31 Senators over to the "redistricting room" and got them to approve their new district lines required by the 2020 Census. She admitted she tried to accommodate every Senator's requests to the extent she could. I heard a lot of public testimony this year from citizens about what they want in redistricting. No one I heard said "give the Senators the lines they want."

Senator Huffman has done a great job giving Senators what they want. Only two of the 31 Senators will face a competitive race, which I've defined as in the last Presidential election the Democratic or the Republican candidate getting 55% or more of the vote in the district. Some of the percentages are over 70%. With these numbers, races are not competitive. The only districts at less than 55% are District 20 (Democrat Senator Hinojosa) and District 27 (Democrat Senator Lucio): 53.4% and 52.6% respectively.

In the 2020 Presidential race in TX Trump got 52% of the vote, and Biden got 46.5%. Multiplying 31 Senators by 52% produces 16.1, and multiplying 31 Senators by 46.5% produces 14.41. So by this metric of how Texans voted by party in 2020, Republicans should get 16 or 17 Senate seats and the Democrats should get 13 or 14. Due to gerrymandering that produces 29 non-competitive seats, Republicans will get 18 seats for sure and maybe 19.

The incumbent protection racket is also baked into Senator Huffman's proposed Congressional map. Of the 38 districts, only one is competitive. 24 seats will go to the GOP and 13 to Dems. If you do the same 52% and 46.5% analysis, the figures should be 20 Republican and 18 Democratic. From 2010 to 2020 Texas added 4 million people, 95% of them

from communities of color. Nonetheless this is what Senator Huffman's proposed Congressional map does: The current map includes 22 districts with white majorities and the proposed map increases it to 23. The current map has 8 districts with Hispanic majorities and the proposed map cuts it to 7. The current map has one majority African American majority district and the proposed map eliminates it. Nearly half of the growth the last ten years was from the Hispanic community, but they get no new districts where they are the majority. In short, although nearly all the growth the last ten years was from communities of color, they get fewer majority districts and the majority of white districts increases.

The Senate Redistricting Committee's redistricting process has been far from fair and open although the federal district court in its 2019 Perez ruling required that it be so. Complex maps were proposed with very little time between their release and when the public could comment on them, and when they were voted on by the committee. This committee has shown that public comment is irrelevant to it. Hundreds of citizens testified. No one said "just draw the lines the way the legislators now in power want them." But Senator Joan Huffman made clear that when drawing the lines for the Senate she gave legislators what they wanted with very few exceptions—thus the incumbent protection racket described above.

After maps were released by Senator Huffman (on 9/8/21(Senate) and 9/27/21(Congress)) she stopped allowing citizens to testify before the committee by Zoom, and required them to travel to Austin. Quite naturally this greatly reduced the number of Texans who could complain about her maps. Senator Huffman has ensured that her maps were drawn in an unfair and opaque process.

This very dismal, demoralizing, and corrupt process shows why Texas must use an independent redistricting commission to draw the lines like at least 14 other states do. The citizens of Michigan recently got fed up with this perversion of democracy (where its legislature drew the lines), and went to an independent redistricting commission. But that happened because citizens in Michigan can put an initiative on the ballot citizens can vote on, and they approved having an independent redistricting commission draw their lines. Texas tragically does not have an initiative process where citizens can put something on the ballot. Here in Texas it does not happen unless the Legislature wants to do so. Legislators with vested interests have a stranglehold on the legislative agenda, and no citizen led reform can be considered if legislators don't like it. Two Senate Joint Resolutions were filed this special session to put possible approval of an independent redistricting commission before the voters of Texas for approval (or not) (Resolutions 8 and 10; thank you for introducing these Resolutions Senators Zafferini and Johnson). But it will get no traction because of the incumbent protection racket.

The Senate Redistricting Committee has not only acted illegally, but it has brought shame on the great state of Texas.

Sincerely,

Tim Dowling

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