



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 13, 2003

The Honorable Tom Craddick
Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives

Mr. Speaker:

We love the House and take seriously our responsibility to serve our constituents and protect their best interests in the Legislature. Our actions fall entirely within House rules. While disappointed that we were forced to break a quorum, our decision was driven by our solemn duty to fight for and protect the rights and interests of those we were elected to serve in the Legislature.

This was not a challenge to your leadership. Several of our Members serve on your leadership team. However, we cannot stand by as the agenda of the Texas Legislature is taken over and directed by the partisan interests of the Washington Republicans.

We are proud that the Texas House has a bipartisan tradition independent from the partisan rancor of Washington politics. This allows us to work together on behalf of the people of Texas. However, the relentless effort by Washington Republican political leaders to split Texas communities and force an outrageous partisan congressional redistricting plan through the Legislature is dividing us by party, by race, by ethnicity, and by region. As long as congressional redistricting remains a misplaced priority on the House agenda, we cannot trust that the rights of our constituents will be respected and protected.

We cannot continue to allow congressional redistricting to distract and disrupt our Texas House in such a way that makes it even harder to reach consensus on the more important issues facing Texas. By rejecting Washington, DC partisanship – of either party – we can then get back to the real business of Texas.

It is entirely inaccurate to state, suggest or otherwise infer that our actions will be fatal to any pending legislation. Deadlines are set by House rules, and recent actions show clearly that such rules can be suspended when appropriate.

We are eager to walk onto the House floor and work day and night for the people of Texas. We trust that you will acknowledge the need to reject national party politics and bring us together, not as Republicans and Democrats, but as Texans, to meet the real responsibilities of the Texas House and the enormous challenges facing our great State.

Sincerely,

Jim Dunnam
Member of the House

P.S. As you know, we are at the Holiday Inn in Ardmore, Oklahoma. Please stop having our loved ones in Texas followed and staked out by law enforcement.

A Declaration in Defense of Self-Determination

We must defend against the use of raw political power used to attack the constitutional and natural inalienable rights of the people. The national Republican Party, through state legislatures in Texas and Colorado, is currently attempting to obstruct the will of the people in determining their elected representatives in the U. S. Congress.

In our democracy, power rests with the people. The founding documents of our nation declare the self-evidence of this natural law.

Government is only as strong as the people who choose their representatives through elections, through their consent granting government its legitimacy.

One of the great distinctions of our country and our state is its individualism. When Texans elect representatives, they elect individuals. In Texas, people who voted for George Bush, Rick Perry and John Cornyn, also voted for a Democratic representative in Congress. The Congressional Republicans argue that those individuals are wrong and that their votes must be denied. But what is wrong is their shameless quest to deprive citizens of their vote.

As common citizens of our nation and as elected officials of our state who believe we must defend these attacks on the natural rights of our people and our Constitution, we are obligated to act. We use the law of the land to break a quorum and stop this raw misuse of political power.

Our aim is right. Our means are right.

It is for this very reason that government has principles – the natural laws of the Declaration of Independence -- and it has rules by which we govern, such as the rule of a quorum. Our founding fathers created the rule of a quorum as a prescription for the ill occasion in which we now find ourselves.

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