

fight for their voice in shaping our government, comparing those brave Texans to people such as Hussein's Presidential adviser, the King of Spades; comparing them to the Republican Guard chief of staff, the Jack of Clubs; the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the Iraqi Armed Forces chief of staff, a jack of Spades; the Secretary of the Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard, along with other Iraqi terrorists who have been responsible for the death and murder and rape of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens. Shame on Texas Republican legislators and whoever developed that cute little gimmick to compare our legislators in our country to Iraqi terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of folks in my district in central Texas are not yet aware of what would have happened had this Sunday night 52 Texas legislators not gone to Ardmore, Oklahoma, to break a quorum. This is the real story:

On Sunday, Mother's Day, when most families in my district were with their families honoring their mothers, Mr. DELAY and Mr. Craddick's forces had a different agenda that day. Their agenda was to put the final touches on a secret, unknown redistricting map that the public had never been able to see. It was going to dramatically change the 11th Congressional District in central Texas. I salute these heroes in Oklahoma for standing up to that kind of secret dealmaking that would have destroyed the 11th Congressional District as we have known it for over 100 years.

IN CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE TEXAS DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to follow my Waco, Texas, colleague. I come to the floor today to pay tribute, like my colleagues from Texas, to the very brave men and women of the legislature, those Texas heroes who have put their political lives on the line to ensure that the voting rights of all Texans will remain intact.

Again, I want to personally thank my State representatives, and of course there are 53 of them totally, but Rick Noriega, Jessica Farrar, Joe Moreno, Senfronia Thompson, Kevin Bailey, Scott Hochberg, and the other dozens of Texas heroes.

Yesterday, these Killer Ds, as they are now called, sent a letter to Texas Speaker Craddick, who I was honored to serve 13 years with in the statehouse. In this letter the members of the legislature said, "During recent interviews, you indicated you were not willing to negotiate with us regarding the issue of congressional redistricting. You stated you were concerned if you negotiated with us on this issue, we

would break a quorum every time we disagreed with you on other important issues of the day, such as our school finance, health care and homeowners insurance.

"We want to clarify this point so that your concern is addressed and no ambiguity remains. We are here because we strongly feel that congressional redistricting should only be taken up every 10 years, unless otherwise ordered to do so by the courts, and that it should not be a priority above other issues facing our State.

"If you are willing to assure us that congressional redistricting will not be taken up by the House during the remainder of this session and the special sessions to come, then we are willing to give you our word, through this letter, that we will not break a quorum on other issues during that same time, even when we disagree."

And I am sure that there will be plenty of things to disagree about.

"We had no intention to break a quorum on issues following this one, and if you need this guarantee, then this letter provides it. In our system, negotiations and compromise are often the only way to make progress and improve our State. To that end and in that spirit, we respectfully ask you to accept our offer. We hope you will respond as soon as possible today, so we can return right away."

And, again, this letter was sent yesterday.

"There is a lot of work we can do, and we would like to get that work done."

During my 20-plus years as a State legislator, 13 as a State House member and 7 as a State Senator in Texas, the thing I treasured the most was the bipartisanship that existed in both our chambers. The problems occurring in the Texas Legislature now are not what is normal. I remember in my 20 years there that we had redistricting bills, and we fought them based on Democrats and Republicans. We had election code bills, and we fought based on Democrat and Republicans. But to have redistricting overshadow the important issues facing the State of Texas, or any State for that matter, I think is frustrating.

We see sometimes that Washington politics, the partisan nature of that, has invaded our State legislatures. In all honesty, my friends on the Republican side that I have served with in the Texas Legislature both say we should sit down and talk about problems without it being such a partisan issue. Maybe we can learn something from our legislators here that say, wait a minute, we will fight over redistricting, we will fight over election codes, but when we talk about school finance, insurance reform, health care, or the State budget, you will not see us try to break a quorum in Texas.

Today, this Fort Worth Star-Telegram said, and I quote, "Once upon a time, TOM DELAY killed vermin and varmints and other disreputable crit-

ters for a living. Now he's trying to prove that he remembers how, by exterminating any remnants of bipartisanship in the Texas House."

And continuing the quote, "Little does DELAY, the U.S. House majority leader, care if he incites a blood feud in Austin; he'd just as soon suck the Democrats dry in his lust to make himself master of the universe. In his insatiable ambition to obliterate the two-party system, DELAY apparently expected the Texas House Dems to roll over on their backs like roaches on Raid and let his water boys roar undisturbed through the Capitol with a new congressional district map.

"When Texas Democratic House members hightailed it north of the Red River, it wasn't to avoid thorny problems still facing the State. It was out of exasperation that neither Mr. DELAY nor Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick would let earnest, hard-working lawmakers of both parties focus on the vital business that the legislature ought to be spending its energy on as this session winds down."

Mr. Speaker, I served with Mr. DELAY as a State legislator. I served with a lot of Members on the Democratic and Republican side, and I would hope that we could get past this partisan issue and let those folks go back and deal with the problems we have in the State of Texas. Hopefully, we will learn something from them and develop a better bipartisan spirit up here.

PARTISAN POWER GRAB IN TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SANDLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, the improper and purely partisan power grab by TOM DELAY and Washington, D.C., Republicans to redistrict Texas and destroy rural representation is an affront to the citizens and the voters of the great State of Texas.

This arrogant play is not about our State, our communities, our constituencies. This is political gluttony, selfishness. Even the Republicans' own witness in their 2000 redistricting battle has acknowledged that this plan is a partisan feeding frenzy. Listen to what the Republican witness said in a trial in 2001. The Republican expert witness, Rice University Professor John Alford, called the plan "a pro-Republican partisan gerrymandering, on top of an already pro-Republican existing plan." That is what their expert has said about the current map.

Mr. Speaker, in Texas, we say pigs get fat, hogs get slaughtered. Overreaching is apparently the word of the day. Mr. Speaker, this plan does not just destroy Democratic representation, this map destroys rural representation. This map displaces rural northeast Texas into a Dallas suburban district. Southeast Texas becomes dominated by Houston suburbs. Deep east Texas becomes a Tyler district just