

51 Texas legislators who fought to stop U.S. House Majority Leader TOM DELAY from forcing a divisive, partisan and unnecessary congressional redistricting plan through the Texas House of Representatives. Their act of courage was heralded by editorial boards throughout our State of Texas. I salute legislators like Jim Dunnam and John Mabry from my hometown of Waco, Texas.

Without their actions on Monday morning of last week, the Texas House would have passed a plan that would have split my 100-year-old historic rural central Texas district into four different congressional districts stretching from Fort Worth to the suburbs of Houston to San Antonio, literally covering hundreds and hundreds of miles without a single bit of input from one mayor or city council member in our district, one school board member, because that plan was only put together on Mother's Day afternoon last Sunday with the intention of passing it through the Texas House starting at 10 a.m. the next day, on Monday morning. That was wrong for that plan to have been pushed and right for Texas legislators to stand up not for themselves, not for me, but for the right of central Texas citizens in my district and Texans, Republicans and Democrats alike throughout our State, to have a voice in shaping their congressional districts and the future of their communities.

While the Texas legislators are back in Austin working on State priority issues, there are some questions that will not go away and some questions to which the American people deserve an answer.

Outrageously, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the new agency with the responsibility to protect American families from terrorists here and abroad, that agency used Federal antiterrorism resources and personnel to track down Texas Representative Pete Laney of Hale Center, Texas, as he flew his private airplane from his hometown to Ardmore, Oklahoma. To borrow a phrase from former Senator Lloyd Bentsen, "I know Pete Laney, Pete Laney is a friend of mine, and I can assure you Pete Laney is no terrorist." Quite to the contrary, he is the former Speaker of the Texas House, a respected leader in our legislature, respected by members of both sides of the aisle. In fact, Pete Laney was the one individual that President George Bush who then as Governor Bush asked Mr. Laney to introduce for the first time to the public President-elect Bush in his first speech to the Nation and the world once he found out he would be President.

I have some questions for the Department of Homeland Security:

One, and most importantly, why will you not release the tapes of the conversation between the Texas Department of Public Safety and the U.S. homeland security agency, the very conversation that led to the possibly

unlawful and certainly unethical use of Federal resources, antiterrorism resources to track down the law-abiding citizen Pete Laney?

Secondly, do you have something to hide? Why is our U.S. homeland security agency afraid to let the American people and the press know what was in that conversation?

Thirdly, does the public not deserve to hear the conversation that led to what does appear to be a gross abuse of Federal resources?

Fourthly, to the homeland security agency, our U.S. agency again trying to defend us against terrorism, if the tape exonerates you and your actions, what are you afraid of? Why are you not willing to release that tape now, not weeks, not months from now, not years from now? Why are you afraid to release that tape now to Members of Congress and to the public?

Fifth, did Majority Leader TOM DELAY or House Speaker Tom Craddick or any one of their staffs or someone speaking in their behalf ask the Texas Department of Public Safety to make this request to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security?

We will not know the answer to those questions until the tape of our U.S. homeland security agency is made available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, this is no longer just a Texas issue. It is an issue for all Americans who care about defending our families and our neighborhoods and our communities from terrorists. How horrible it is that during the very week that al Qaeda was preparing the final efforts apparently to attack Morocco and American citizens in Saudi Arabia our homeland security agency was tracking down former State Speaker of the House and present State representative Pete Laney in Hale Center, Texas, a community of just over 2,000 people, not known as a hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism or radicalism in little old west Texas.

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

(Mr. CULBERSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TEXAS REDISTRICTING

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, there is disturbing news coming out of Wash-

ington, D.C., and Austin, Texas, today that should be of great and grave concern to all Americans. Because, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Homeland Security, a U.S. government agency, has basically now had to admit that it used a homeland security plane and government resources for political purposes and now they are covering it up. As most of the country now knows, Texas Democrats in the State House recently absented themselves from the floor to break a quorum, a legitimate parliamentary maneuver. This angered the Republican powers that be in Washington, D.C. A homeland security plane was dispatched to try to follow and harass Pete Laney, the former Democratic Speaker of the Texas House, and other members. Upon being caught and not before, the Department of Homeland Security said that they actually were under the impression that the plane was lost or crashed.

Mr. Speaker, that is just not credible. That is just not so. Period.

Now it has been learned that a tape and a transcript of the contact between Homeland Security and law enforcement has been discovered. And what has been the response of homeland security? They refused to turn over the tape. They refused to turn over the transcript.

Mr. Speaker, I have two questions. What did they know and when did they know it? The U.S. Congress calls upon Homeland Security to release the tapes, stop the cover-up, and do it now. Otherwise, they need to get a dictionary and they need to look up the word "subpoena." Otherwise, they need to get the statutes and look up in the statutes the term "freedom of information."

The use of the Federal Government for political purposes should frighten all Americans. The Fort Worth Star-Telegram said this Sunday, "To meet the threat of global terrorism, the United States is assembling enormous Federal resources focusing on activities in American cities, neighborhoods and countrysides that could endanger those citizens. If we are to have this security apparatus, it must be contained to its designated purposes. There must be every safeguard so that it does not cross the thin line between protecting innocent citizens and spying on their private lives. That these security resources were used no matter in what minor way in a Texas political dispute should be alarming to us all."

And, Mr. Speaker, alarmingly there is more. Not only has the Federal Government been spying on citizens for private purposes and then covering it up but also the authority of the state has been used to intimidate and terrorize the families of Texas legislators.

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Here are some examples: Representative Craig Eiland, his wife recently had premature twins, the twins in the neonatal unit of the hospital. Investigators were sent to the neonatal unit to