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Date: 2025-07-28  
First Name: Jeffrey  
Last Name: Mills  
Title: N/A  
Organization: Documentary Alliance  
Address: [REDACTED]  
City: Houston  
State: Texas  
Zipcode: [REDACTED]  
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Congressional

Message:

Some wise word you should heed from Mr. Solomon, a Republican member of the Texas House of Representatives from 1995 to 2013:

"What Mr. Trump wants my former colleagues to do — redistricting now, years ahead of the usual once-per-decade time frame — would erode the public's already flagging trust in government. The Legislature should stand up against it. The president should stay out of it.

I speak from experience. In 2011, when I chaired the redistricting committee's effort, my party fought hard and, yes, sometimes tried to stretch the boundaries of tradition and precedent to gain political advantage. Republicans were aggressive and redrew lines to protect incumbents where they could and strategically shape districts in ways helpful to the party. I remember acute political pressure from some powerful members and outside groups — tense meetings, phone calls and plenty of pushback on efforts to play by the rules.

That's politics. Republicans and Democrats both do it. But even when we were playing hardball, there were rules and laws that were respected, norms that were upheld and lines that weren't crossed. We were aggressive — there were lower court judges who ruled that some of our initial maps discriminated against minority voters — but that was never my intent, and the Supreme Court eventually largely upheld a revised redistricting plan.

What Mr. Trump proposes today is far worse. And the Texas Legislature appears poised to surrender to pressure and use a mid-decade redistricting effort to rig future elections. If this happens, it would be a blatant power grab threatening our system of representative government. It would inject more partisanship into our already polarized politics, disregard the will of many Texas voters and override the autonomy of a sovereign state, contrary to the wisdom of the Constitution's framers.

Redrawing districts mid-decade is rare, and for good reason. Typically, redistricting happens right after new census data becomes available, allowing legislators to properly balance the number of voters in each district. It shouldn't ever happen at a president's whim.  
Editors' Picks

No American should accept a president deciding who represents Americans in Congress — especially when that president may be worried about the outcome of upcoming midterms. If any president can order up redistricting in this way, it will hasten the end of our federal and state balance of power, and of the balance between the three branches of the federal government. Instead of transparency, debate and civic input, we'll get more backroom deals driven by political calculus. If a map created in response to Mr. Trump's pressure campaign goes into effect, it's very likely that whole Texas communities, particularly in majority-minority areas around Houston, Dallas and San Antonio, will see their voting power diluted as citizens in these communities are shuffled into districts where their votes matter less or not at all.

Texas' elected officials, including Governor Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and the state House speaker, Dustin Burrows, can fall in line with the president or not; they can place party loyalty above Texas voters or do the right thing. It is their choice — they don't have to be complicit.

As a former Texas lawmaker and a current constituent, I urge them to reject this clear partisan manipulation, one that smacks of authoritarian overreach. I urge them to choose the Texas way: Don't let others tell you what to do or how to do it. Reaffirm that Texans — not the president — get to choose their congressional representatives."

