

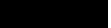


Date: 2025-07-29
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Congressional

Message:
Redistricting 2025

My name is Rita Beving and I'm testifying for myself in regard to the question of redistricting before this body.

I am personally against redistricting as it relates to a timeline that is not congruent for normal consideration of redistricting mid-decade from the census. I am also against redistricting as I see the Department of Justice (DOJ) arguments to the state as contradictory and invalid.

In the letter Department of Justice (DOJ) sent to the Governor and AG Paxton it keeps referring to "race-based" decisions in the last configuration of Congressional districts 9, 18, 29, and 33.

Upon reading the letter, I went back to the actual Senate archived file of October 8, 2021. A final vote was being taken during this day of the 87th third special session on Senator Huffman's substitute for SB 6 (see Part I for that day) regarding the redrawn maps of congressional districts. I encourage all of you to listen to it. Because if this body plans to vote on moving forward with redistricting, I find Senator Huffman's remarks in the first hour of that recorded session to be problematic as her statements would be in direct conflict with the federal government's assertions.

Within the first 7 minutes of the Senate recording while Senator Huffman is laying out her bill, you will hear her say (see sections as time-stamped below):

6:59... "I also want to be very clear on something cause I have received questions about the use of racial data. While these maps were drafted blind to race, it is wrong to say that race was wholly ignored in my end-to-end process. I am committed to giving due regard to all factors relevant to legal compliance including compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The law requires a balancing of the constitution's prohibition on race-based districting and the Voting Rights Act's protections. I worked hard to balance these requirements by completing all drafting without the use of race and obtaining a thorough legal review as I deliberated on maps in any proposed changes. This included determining whether additional Section 2 required districts

should be drawn....”

8:36... “As a result, I believe that I fairly and accurately balanced the need to avoid race-based districting except in those instances where we have a strong basis in evidence to believe that the VRA requires creation of a new district.”

Questioning by Senators follow on the substitute for SB 6, and you will hear Senator Huffman repeatedly stating that the drawing of the districts were not race-based.

In response to Senator Menendez on a question regarding that the census pointed out that the 2020 census revealed a 95% increase in minority population, Senator Huffman states:

19:07... Well Senator Menendez, as I’ve explained before, the maps were drawn blind to race. Once they were drawn, they were checked for compliance. We were assured that all the existing minority opportunity districts whether they be black or Latino were going to perform as such and we saw no evidence, no strong basis in evidence, that a new minority opportunity district should be drawn in the new maps.”

Senator West followed Senator Menendez and began his questioning of Senator Huffman asking her “Race was not considered in this process, is this correct?” Her reply was,

22:25... “Correct.”

Senator Huffman continued answering questions of Senator West regarding if Thornburg vs. Gingles was considered in this process:

22:35... “Absolutely. As I stated in my opening remarks, yes the maps were drawn blind to race but once the maps were drafted and filed, we did both provide the maps to legal counsel, receive legal advice, which I won’t get into, but I will say that I then did some independent looks at some of the data myself, and the maps that I have presented to the Senate, on the Senate floor, I believe to be wholly compliant under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. And yes, so the Gingles factors in considerations are part of that process. But there has been nothing submitted to me that would show a strong basis in evidence that would require a redistricting decision made...”

Upon furthering questioning by Senator West, Huffman went onto reply:

32:05... “Senator West, as I’ve responded before, we drew blind to race. Then we waited for anyone who may present us with something that we had missed. Again, there’s been no strong basis in evidence presented at all that shows that an additional Hispanic opportunity district is required under the Voting Rights Act.”

Senator Miles followed Senator West asking Huffman regarding concerns over a list of protected minority seats:

35:06 ... “As I’ve stated before, Senator Miles, I’m happy to restate the maps were drawn blind to race. Then later we checked to make sure that the opportunity districts in existence were protected. And we saw that they were. And then we did additional checks through either demonstration plans or our own checks to see if additional opportunity districts should be drawn.”

Senator Miles then questions Senator Huffman further and below is her response:

36:48... “Well as I said, we drew the maps blind to race. But in determining and doing the Voting Rights Compliance Act, we certainly would look at either the black citizen voting age population for a black minority district, the Hispanic citizen age voting

population and so forth in a Hispanic protected district. So yes, we did look at race after the maps were drafted and filed to make sure that we had complied with the law. So, to that extent, race was considered to make sure, I mean you have to, clearly, to make sure you have complied with the law.”

So, in listening to just the first hour of the final Senate vote on SB 6 during October 8, 2021 of the third special session, Senator Huffman states at least 8 times that the new congressional maps were drawn “race blind.”

I am aware of the current court case surrounding the 2021 redistricting maps. On June 10, Senator Huffman reaffirmed to an El Paso court in testimony that she drew the maps “race blind.”

Yet now Governor Abbott has stated that a redraw of the congressional map is justified due to “constitutional concerns raised by the U.S. Department of Justice.”

In conclusion, you cannot have it both ways.

It would be intellectually dishonest and contradictory for the Legislature to acquiesce to the DOJ and the federal government to redraw districts based on the agency’s race-based assertions when it is documented and repeatedly stated by the bill’s author and the State of Texas that the congressional districts were drawn “race blind.”

I ask that this body stand up to the federal government’s act of coercion in pursuit of fulfilling the President’s real agenda of creating 5 new Republican seats and NOT pursue this question of redistricting any further.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Rita Beving

[REDACTED]