

Legislative update 8/19/25

In the US House the GOP has 210 seats and the Democrats have 212 seats. This adds up to only 431 because we have 4 empty seats. (Please see my “Not Canada!” article in the 4Q 2024 newsletter that came out in January 2025 about why we are fixed at 435 seats.)

Note that mid-decade (between census) redistricting is not prohibited by the US Constitution or by federal law, despite what many in the media are saying. Some states, however, do not allow mid-decade redistricting for the US House (NJ, TN, NY for example).

There was not a lot of redistricting at all during the 1900s, although there was a number of examples of redistricting during the late 1800s. Redistricting started back up again after the 2000 election (Bush v Gore).

So why is TX working on this now? TX was subject to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 because TX was an historically discriminatory jurisdiction (i.e. the Civil War from 100 years prior). TX was forced to draw political multi-racial “coalition districts” in favor of democrats first. HOWEVER, in November 2024 a 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit federal court said (Petteway v Galveston) said that TX no longer needed to draw districts this way. Therefore, TX needed to redraw the districts. Our state constitution allows for mid-decade (between census) redistricting. That’s it. No big conspiracy. Just time to redraw after the Nov 2024 court case.

In protest, the Democrats decided to walk out (to other blue states) and hide so that we don’t have a quorum. We need 100 of the 150 representatives in the TX house for a quorum, and there are 62 democrats.

Other blue states’ leaders are being hyperbolic about this, as if TX is blowing up the country. CA’s Newsom wants to redraw his map, but CA voters already chose to take the map drawing away from legislators and put it into the hands of an independent redistricting commission, so Newsom will have to figure a way around that. Gov. Pritzker of IL says a redraw is “on the table”. IN FL, Gov DeSantis is considering a mid-decade redraw due to the rapid increase in population in FL. OH is also redrawing the map and 2 Democratic reps are considered at risk.

A really good 2-page read is a summary of the issues by the Congressional Research Service:  
<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF13082>.