

From the office of
Texas State Representative - Dan Flynn

THE FLYNN REPORT

Legislative Newsletter

July 17, 2003

Greetings constituents, supporters and friends:

We are more than half way through the special session called by Governor Rick Perry for the legislature to consider the constitutional responsibility of redistricting and other important business of the State. The House responded quickly with a map that while it does not offer everything to all it does achieve the goal of giving Texans an opportunity for the conservative majority elected in the last elections to lead.

It's important to remember that the people dictate the principles of redistricting. The people lay out how districts should be drawn according to where they choose to live, and how they choose to vote. Areas with increasing population should gain seats in accordance with the principle of one man, one vote. Likewise, a party gaining support at the ballot box should gain seats in accordance with the will of the people. The job of the legislature is to reflect those changes in accordance with the law.

The fact remains simple, the Democrat Senators and one Republican Senator is blocking the Senate from finishing congressional redistricting. Senate "tradition" normally requires 21 of the 31 Senators to vote in order to bring a bill to the floor for a vote by the full Senate. This is beginning to sound like the same type of action the Democrats are pulling in Washington by not allowing votes on federal judicial appointments.

The "tradition" in the senate requires two-thirds of senators present (21 of 31) to vote to suspend the rules to bring any bill to the floor. This is because the senate typically puts a "blocker bill" at the top of the list of bills to be considered. (The bill usually relates to items such as the beautification of the Capitol grounds, etc.) To consider a bill out of order - in this case, the redistricting bill - the senate must suspend the rules, which requires a two-thirds vote. This "tradition" is by no means sacred, as some argue. In 1992, the Democrat controlled senate did not have a blocker bill in place during a special session on state senate redistricting. At the beginning of that session Democrats did not use the blocker bill because they did not have the 21 votes needed to overcome it (as evidenced by the 18 - 12 vote on final passage of the redistricting bill that year). Apparently, no senator serving at that time, including the members still serving today, objected to the absence of a blocker bill.

This development needs to be viewed as only a temporary setback. Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst is continuing to work hard to get the votes needed to pass a new and fair map from the Senate. However, Dewhurst, stated, "If the Democrats choose not to work with

the Republicans to finish a fair map, Gov. Perry has said he would not rule out calling another special session to address congressional redistricting should the need arise.”

I believe our leadership remains committed to passing a fair congressional redistricting plan that will reflect GOP voting strength, provide new leadership opportunities for minorities and protect communities of common interest. Those in the liberal media are saying we should just go ahead and except the present map, we are wasting money and are only being partisan. I do not think we should reward this bad behavior with a victory. When children misbehave and run away and act childish we do what is right and stand our ground. When it comes to doing what is right and taking care of responsibility we cannot put a price tag on it. We, as the majority, must act as leaders and do the right thing, and that is take care of our constitutional responsibility.

Since the current special session was called on June 30, many important bills have been filed and acted on. These bills cover a wide variety of issues not just redistricting; tort reform cleanup, insurance, persons circulating petitions, funding provisions for the Texas Mobility Fund, offenses for abandoning or endangering elderly or disabled individuals and for failing to provide care for children, trial preference to asbestos claims involving malignant conditions caused by asbestos exposure as well as our continuing efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state government by eliminating wasteful agencies.

I continue to have confidence in the people and believe the voters will judge those that have worked hard to address the challenges rather than be obstructions to promote their own political agenda.

Our President is also under attack for ridding the world of an evil dictator that the world had not seen the likes of since Hitler, Stalin and Mao. In my visits with his staff he requests your prayers and support as I do and may God gives us all the strength and wisdom to lead the greatest country in the world as we live in the great state of Texas.

My staff and I welcome your input and your questions. You can reach us in our office located in the Capitol extension: **E1.324**. Mailing address: **P. O. Box 2910, Austin, TX, 78768** and our phone number is **512/463-0880**. Canton District office: **P. O. Box 999, Canton, TX, 75103** phone number **903-567-0921**. Email **dan.flynn@house.state.tx.us**.

God bless you and God bless Texas,

Dan Flynn
State Representative, House District 2