

# Texas Republicans issue civil arrest warrants, as Democrats flee to block Trump-backed gerrymander

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On Monday afternoon, the Texas House voted 85–6 to issue civil arrest warrants for more than 50 Democratic lawmakers, who fled the state Sunday night in order to break quorum and temporarily block Republican redistricting efforts aimed at eliminating five Democratic-held congressional seats.

The civil warrants issued by the Texas House have no legal force outside the state. None of the lawmakers face criminal charges, but in a fascistic letter issued Sunday night, Texas Governor Greg Abbott threatened to remove the elected representatives from office if they did not return by 3:00 p.m. local time Monday.

“For any member who fails to do so, I will invoke Texas Attorney General Opinion No. KP-0382 to remove the missing Democrats from membership in the Texas House,” Abbott declared. He claimed that the opinion—written by his far-right Attorney General Ken Paxton—“empowers me to swiftly fill vacancies under Article III, Section 13 of the Texas Constitution.”

Paxton’s opinion is not legally binding, but Abbott’s threats to arrest and remove the Democrats are aimed at laying the political and legal groundwork for such actions.

Promising to pursue criminal action not only against the lawmakers themselves but also against anyone who dared donate to them, Abbott wrote:

Many absentee Democrats are soliciting funds to evade the fines they will incur under House rules. Any Democrat who “solicits, accepts, or agrees to accept” such funds ... may have violated bribery laws. The same could be true for any other person who “offers, confers, or

agrees to confer” such funds to fleeing Democrat House members.

Despite Abbott’s threats, roughly 56 of the 62 Texas Democratic state representatives were absent from Monday’s special session. Under the Texas Constitution, two-thirds of the House—100 out of 150 members—must be present to establish a quorum.

While the civil warrants issued by the Texas House carry no legal weight outside the state, some unnamed Texas Democratic lawmakers “expressed concern” to the *New York Times* that Trump “would try and use federal agents to round up the legislators and bring them back to Texas.”

Abbott convened the special session last month at the urging of President Trump, who publicly stated that the redistricting effort was intended to allow Republicans to “pick up” up to five congressional seats.

“Texas would be the biggest one,” Trump told reporters. “Just a very simple redrawing, we pick up five seats.”

He added that while other states could gain three or four seats through map changes, Texas presented the biggest opportunity for Republican gains.

This is not the first time Texas Democrats, nominally in defense of democratic rights, have fled the state to prevent a quorum. In 2021, 51 members fled to Washington D.C. to appeal for national Democrats to assist them in blocking a series of voter suppression laws.

Then-President Biden and the national Democrats, led by then West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin,

rebuffed their efforts to protect voter rights and the Democrats eventually returned to Texas, which allowed the Republicans to pass the bills, including one that would impose daily fines of \$500 if Democrats attempted to break quorum again.

Once again, the Democrats are staging a spectacle for fear of a movement of the only social force capable of defending democratic rights: the working class. They are once again performing a stunt that is destined to end in defeat—just as it did in 2021.

The bill the Democrats are attempting to block would redraw congressional boundaries around Texas's largest cities—including Dallas, Houston, Austin and San Antonio, as well as along the US–Mexico border. The state's congressional districts were last redrawn following the 2020 census.

Republicans have maintained control of the Texas House, Senate and governorship continuously since 2003, securing a political trifecta for over two decades. As of mid-2025, Republicans hold 25 of Texas's 38 US House seats, with Democrats occupying the remaining 13 seats.

The Democrats have fled to several states, including Illinois, New York and Massachusetts. On Sunday, several held a press conference alongside Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, while others appeared with New York Governor Kathy Hochul on Monday. In both events, Democratic lawmakers threatened to pursue similar anti-democratic gerrymandering tactics in their own states if Texas Republicans continued with their redistricting efforts.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, after meeting with Texas Democratic legislators in Sacramento, declared: “This is not a bluff. ... This is real, and trust me—it's more real after listening to these leaders today, how existential this is.” Newsom stressed his willingness to pursue hyper-partisan redistricting in California if Texas Republicans moved forward with their plan.

For decades, both parties of big business have done everything in their power to block any challenge to their political cartel at the local, state and federal levels. From gerrymandering to onerous signature requirements, independent, left-wing and socialist parties have been systematically excluded from the ballot, leaving workers and youth with no choice outside the candidates favored by Wall Street.

In last year's presidential election, the Democratic Party routinely challenged ballot access petitions filed by the Green Party, the Party for Socialism and Liberation and independents Cornel West and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Standing against attempts by Democrats to strike him from the ballot in Michigan, Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore defended the democratic rights of West and his supporters.

Far from defending democratic rights, the Democrats have collaborated with the Republicans to enforce this political stranglehold and pave the way for Trump's return to the White House. Following the failed January 6 coup, leading Democrats—from Joe Biden to Nancy Pelosi—insisted on the need for a “strong Republican Party,” a party not only engaged in gerrymandering but one that overwhelmingly supported Trump's coup attempt.

Nearly seven months into Trump's second term, the Democrats have done nothing to stop his assault on the democratic rights and social and economic conditions of the working class. Beginning with their support for the anti-immigrant Laken Riley Act, the Democrats have co-signed and collaborated with Trump's fascist agenda, including the ongoing genocide and starvation campaign in Gaza.

Democratic rights are incompatible with extreme levels of social inequality and endless war. The only social force capable of defending the democratic gains won in previous periods is the working class, organized independently of the capitalist parties and mobilized in the struggle for socialism.



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