

# As Texas governor approves gerrymandered map, more reactionary laws follow

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Just days after Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed into law a new congressional map gerrymandered to maximize Republican representation in the state's 38 US House districts, a series of reactionary laws Abbott signed during the Texas Congress regular session went into effect on September 1.

The new map, initiated by Abbott at the behest of Donald Trump, has been a point of contention on a national scale, sparking what has been dubbed as a "redistricting war" as the two American capitalist parties fence over the narrow party split in the US House of Representatives ahead of next year's midterm elections.

By dismantling Democratic voting bastions around Texas' four major metropolitan centers, San Antonio, Austin, Houston and Dallas-Ft. Worth ("the triangle"), the new map would hand up to five additional US House seats to the GOP ("Grand Old Party," the Republican Party). Two currently Democrat-held seats on the US-Mexico border have additionally been redrawn to favor Republicans, while all 25 districts already held by Republicans remain safely theirs.

The new map was demanded by would-be dictator Donald Trump, who directly instructed the Texas GOP to carry out the redistricting plan to protect the narrow Republican House majority in the 2026 midterm elections.

If the new map had been in effect during the 2024 presidential election, Donald Trump would have won three more congressional districts. Although Trump won 71 percent of Texas' 38 congressional districts with 56 percent of the popular vote for his second election, the new boundaries would have had Trump carrying 79 percent of districts.

According to the *Texas Tribune*, Abbott expressed trepidation when Trump first made demands for

Republican governors to draw maps favoring himself in the spring. The *Tribune* claims Abbott's concerns were only overcome after a personal call from the would-be dictator himself. According to two sources who spoke with White House officials, Trump called Abbott in July, after which the latter placed redistricting efforts on his agenda for the first special session of this year.

Whether or not Texas' fascistic governor held any initial reservations, his latest actions are part of a long collaboration with the fascist in the White House. This includes Abbott granting Texas police authority to make immigration-related arrests across the state in service of Trump's brutal anti-immigrant policies.

Whatever may have worried Abbott months ago has been assuaged after the summer phone call with his co-conspirator. Abbott signed the new map into law, referring to it as the "One Big Beautiful Map," in a video posted to social media in which he proudly declared that the state's congressional delegation would soon be more Republican and Texas would have "fairer representation in the United States Congress."

Abbott held up the signed law and said, "Texas is now more red in the United States Congress."

The GOP's far-right rampage in Texas has not been limited to gerrymandering, however. Redistricting was only one of many items on Abbott's agenda for the special session, including bills that would curb mail-order abortion pills sent from out of state, further protect police violence from public scrutiny and regulate the use of bathrooms by transgender people. Other laws signed earlier in the year, such as bans on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies in K-12 schools, also went into effect over the weekend.

Many of the right-wing laws failed to pass during previous regular sessions but sailed through the Texas legislature after Trump's intervention.

“Finally, the Republicans found a spine,” said Representative Steve Toth, aligned with the most right-wing faction in the Texas legislature, in an interview with the *New York Times* on Friday. “Trump has just been really good for us in saying, ‘you guys have got to upend the status quo.’”

On Thursday, the state legislature passed the “bathroom bill,” an anti-transgender measure which regulates the use of male and female restrooms in public buildings, such as schools, parks, colleges and courthouses, based on reproductive anatomy. Immediately after, the Texas House passed a law to stop out-of-state shipping of abortion medications by inviting lawsuits against manufacturers and shipping companies.

Senate Bill 1 concretizes the state’s new \$338 billion two-year spending plan, including spending to maintain and provide property tax cuts and a new school voucher program. The bill also contains a provision vetoed by Abbott that included a \$60 million measure that would have let Texas enter a federal summer lunch program for low-income kids.

Senate Bill 2 will create one of the country’s largest school voucher programs, a scheme to strip funding from public schooling in favor of private schools.

Senate Bill 10 lays out strict requirements for the visible display of the Ten Commandments on posters that are at least 16 by 20 inches in public school classrooms, which are attended by around 5.5 million Texan students. An August 20 ruling from US District Judge Fred Biery temporarily blocks the measure from taking effect in nearly a dozen school districts, including Austin, Houston and Plano.

Senate Bill 12 bars schools from offering any programs and guidance dealing with sexual orientation or gender identity. Senate Bill 13 grants parents and school boards more control over what students can access in public libraries. This is of particular concern as Texas was already among the top states for book bans in recent years.

Senate Bill 37 expands the attack on academic freedom by allowing politically appointed regents more say over public universities, including by granting them more power in the hiring of administrators.

House Bill 33 further integrates the police into public schools, compelling school districts and local law enforcement to meet annually in order to assess their

emergency operations plans, resources and capabilities.

One of the most reactionary bills this year is House Bill 229, which defines gender based on biological reproductive systems and applies that definition across the state code. This is in open defiance of scientific agreement on the complexity of gender identity in a state which is home to one of the largest populations of transgender people.



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