Trump's new map in Texas stymied as Newsom urges president to give up

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Texas Republicans were unable again Monday to approve new congressional districts to meet President Donald Trump's demands as California Gov. Gavin Newsom and other Democrats urged Republicans to stand down and avoid a partisan brawl spanning multiple

Texas Democratic lawmakers remained outside of Texas after leaving the state to deny their GOP colleagues the quorum necessary to vote on Trump's aggressive redistricting play and push the stalemate into its second week. The president's agenda also spurred Democratic governors, including Newsom, to pledge retaliatory redistricting efforts in their states — setting up the possibility of an extended standoff that could upend the 2026 midterm elections.

Newsom urged Trump in a letter Monday to abandon his scheme, telling the president he is "playing with fire" and "risking the destabilization of our democracy."

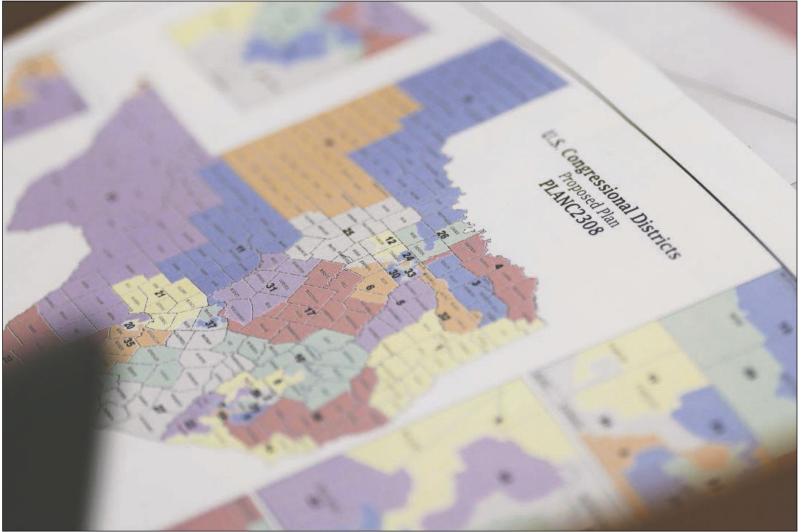
At the Texas Capitol, House Speaker Dustin Burrows adjourned another attempted session within minutes of its early afternoon opening. He used the brief gathering to chastise dozens of Democrats who have civil warrants out for their arrest. Because they are out of state, those lawmakers are beyond the reach of state authorities.

Burrows said Texas law enforcement agencies have been to the residences of the absent legislators, "conducting surveillance, knocking on doors" and calling their cellphones trying to bring them to the statehouse.

"The search continues, and it will not stop," the speaker said. Later he added, "Eventually you will be here."

JUST A FEW SEATS COULD DETERMINE CONTROL OF CONGRESS

Burrows' GOP House majority wants to redraw districts so that five more Republicans can be elected. Trump is pushing other Republicancontrolled legislatures to follow suit as he tries to avoid a repeat of the 2018 midterms. Those elections during Trump's first presidency yielded a new Democratic majority in the U.S. House that stymied his agenda and twice impeached him. Existing maps have promised similar efforts in their



Eric Gav/AP Photo

A map of U.S Congressional Districts proposed plan is seen at a Texas legislators' public hearing on congressional redistricting in Austin, Texas on Aug. 1.

seats of a House majority at a time when there are only several dozen competitive districts out of 435.

Texas Democrats intend to run out the clock on their current special session, which cannot extend beyond Aug. 19. But Gov. Greg Abbott said he'll call lawmakers back to the Statehouse again and again until enough Democrats show up to reach the attendance threshold required to vote on the bill.

Responding to Texas, Newsom and other California Democrats are considering new boundaries to yield a five-seat shift toward Democrats, neutralizing any Texas change. That would require, however, getting California voters to set aside existing maps drawn by an independent commission. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker nationally put Democrats within three Democratic-run statehouses.

In his letter to Trump, Newsom said he prefers that independent bodies draw political districts rather than partisan legislatures, as is done in Texas and most GOP-controlled states. But, Newsom wrote, "California cannot stand idly by as this power grab

If Texas and "the other states call off their redistricting efforts," the governor added, "we will happily do the same. And American democracy will be better for it."

The absent Texas lawmakers are staying in Illinois, New York and elsewhere — and say they have no intentions of returning as long as Republicans are intent on mollifying

"Democrats, especially in Texas, are standing firm," said Rep. Rhetta Bowers at a gathering of Texas lawmakers Monday in Illinois.

DEMOCRATS URGED ABBOTT TO FOCUS ON FLOOD **RESPONSE AND HE DECLINED**

Abbott and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a U.S. Senate candidate, want state courts to remove Democratic lawmakers, asserting that they have abandoned their posts.

"If they show back up in the state of Texas, they will be arrested and taken to the Capitol," Abbott promised over the weekend on "Fox News Sunday."

Paxton has asked an Illinois court to enforce the Texas warrants issued for absent lawmakers so they could be arrested beyond Texas' borders. At the very least, they face \$500 daily fines for each absence under legislative

Bowers and others have said they remain undeterred. She compared both the proposed Texas maps, which morning.

would disproportionately affect districts represented by Black and Latino Democrats, and Abbott's and Paxton's threats to the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-20th century.

Republicans, she said, are using the very same tactics used against Black and brown Americans" who pushed for passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"Their fight is our fight, and just like the Civil Rights heroes of the past, no matter the cost we are prepared to see it through to the end," Bowers said.

Back in Austin, Burrows never mentioned the redistricting legislation, instead highlighting that the special session also includes several disaster response measures after catastrophic floods that killed at least 135 people in the state. He said those bills are set for action on the floor Tuesday

FROM PAGE A1

Elizabethtown," Hazlett said. developments nearby. "It was one of the projects we had targeted that we wanted to go after. So we have been working with the VA ourselves as well as other developers who held an interest in providing

the service to the VA since 2023. As the process unfolded, Hazlett said the VA begins eliminating options from developers because of cost, location, design or other factors.

"So as we got closer to the end here most recently, we felt pretty comfortable with our position in the competition and wanted to at least get our early rezoning work done and in place in anticipation of a potential award," Hazlett said. "That was strictly based on our feeling on the pricing that we knew that we had turned in, and the quality of design that we had developed on the site that we had chosen. So we were pretty confident that the chances were pretty good, that we would land this one."

Hazlett spoke from experience as the company has landed 14 other VA projects prior to

The property, which local real estate agents Brandon Yarbrough and Jim Bramblett with Remax brokered, was targeted by the company because the company felt early on in the

270-737-1851

business.

area, Hazlett said. All this was decided before announcement and develop-

to be a part of where growth is happening and we felt that that portion of town was the best location in comparison to some of the other commercial sites that we did take a look at in the process," Hazlett said. "We did obviously a look at the comprehensive plan that the city had put together and knowing it was zoned residential, but knowing the city has the foresight to recognize where additional commercial growth needs to occur, we took that into consideration before presenting anything to the VA and made it clear to the VA that this is where the city sees future growth, wagree with that position and we certainly want to be a part of it and be able to place the VA in the middle of that."

In making way for the development, Elizabethtown City Council voted unanimously Aug. 7 to change the property from urban residential, or R-3, to regional commercial, or C-3.

The zone change was met with opposition last month from nearby residents concerned about traffic congestion, access to the property from Pear Orchard Road, setbacks from residences and other concerns.

Elizabethtown Mayor Jeff

790North.com

bethtown was targeted in the opposition, the council followed them the concerns, they already the comprehensive plan in their

and active duty service members those will be addressed." "We felt the VA always likes that deserve that care close to home," Gregory said. "The comprehensive plan said that property should be C-3 as opposed to R-3. They read the comprehensive plan properly and made the correct decision ... because that is what the plan called for."

The property had been identified as commercial property when the comprehensive plan was developed and ratified in 2020 following the announcement of BlueOval SK in Glendale. At the time and during any development of comprehensive plans for the city, Gregory said the public was encouraged to participate in discussions surrounding the

"At the time it had nothing to do with whether a VA clinic was coming or not," Gregory said. "That was right call based on the comprehensive plan."

While the zone map amendment was working its way through the process, Gregory said he discussed the residents' concerns with representatives with Hamstra-Juliet

"Because I didn't have a vote, I could work with the developers a little bit," Gregory said, saying he addressed what he saw on social media and through emails

knew the concerns and hopefully, when we see this "This clinic was needed for development plan that they're was a request for at least proposal ment of Publix and its shopping a community with a large going to generate and send to

> Hazlett said he is working with project civil engineer to make sure the items brought up at the planning commission meeting are taken into consideration "as best we can while still meeting the needs for the VA clinics to make sure it operates as functionally as possible."

"It's not unusual to have neighbors in areas around places where we put these clinics to have concerns," Hazlett said. "It would have been ideal for us to be able to present the information we had provided to the VA at the ... planning commission, but because it was premature to present information based on a contract that we were not yet awarded, we did not feel it appropriate to put that out into the public."

In an Elizabethtown Planning Commission meeting last month, Chad Suitonu, representing Hamstra-Juliet JV, said the clinic is developed by his company and then leased to the Veterans Administration, creating a tax boon for the city.

With a typical lease being at least 20 years, Suitonu said a clinic this size could employee anywhere between 120 to 150 workers and bring an estimated \$408,000 per year in property taxes to the city and Hardin

790North.com

process the growth for Eliza- Gregory said despite the to his office. "... I shared with County. More revenue will be it. To see all that hard work that created for the city through occupational taxes.

"The Veteran Affairs recognizes the fact that they're focus needs to be on medical care being sought for a clinic in center, a cardealership and other population of retired veterans our planning commission, all and not changing light bulbs and plowing the snow in the wintertime," Hazlett said. "So it is a tax entity as opposed to a government entity, which would pay no tax property tax for the building itself."

> But most of all, Hazlett said the clinic will provide a service to veterans close to home and be a "key addition to the community," which has a large veteran population.

The appreciation by the veterans for bringing a facility closer to their own front door is always appreciated," Hazlett said, adding he was "extremely thrilled" to bring the project to Elizabethtown. "Each one of these proposals that we put together takes anywhere from 12 to 18 or in this case, almost 24 months, before the VA awards it to any one of the at 270-505-1418 or developers that proposed on gclear@thenewsenterprise.com.

we put into, picking the right site, putting together a quality design, working with a quality nationally recognized architect like Leo A Daly, developing the sites, making all the right moves and providing the VA with all the right information for them to see the benefit of placing the facility here and awarding the contract to us is always a very gratifying feeling."

The only thing more gratifying, Hazlett said, is opening the facility to serve veterans who are seeing it for the first time.

"We're excited to get started," Hazlett said. "We're looking forward to sitting down a meeting with the city to iron out our development plan so that we can get that portion started, which is our next big hurdle."

Gina Clear can be reached



events come to life.

270-737-1851

We're Here For You!

Contact Us Today!

(270) 900-4370

400 Ring Rd, Suite 105 Elizabethtown, KY 42701

LuttrellStaffing.com

Need A Job? Need Employees?