

*CBS Mornings*

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7:00:16 a.m. [TEASE]

25 seconds

GAYLE KING: Plus, a political showdown in Texas. Why Democratic lawmakers have left the state. But first, it's today's Eye Opener. It's your world in 90 seconds. Texas Democrats flee to Illinois over what they call a power grab by Republicans, a fight with huge implications for Congress and democracy.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Lawmakers Flee Texas]

TEXAS HOUSE MINORITY LEADER GENE WU (D): This will occur everywhere because if one person is going to cheat and no one's going to stop it, why doesn't everyone just do it then?

(...)

7:02:24 a.m.

3 minutes and 42 seconds

KING: We're going to begin with something that's not so fun depending on your point of view. It's a showdown that could have a big impact on democracy in this country. In Texas, the Republicans want to withdraw [sic] the political map in a way that could help them win additional seats. So, in response, Democratic lawmakers have just fled the state. Last night, they gathered in Illinois where they called the move a power grab by President Trump. And now Republican leaders are threatening to expel and arrest them if they do not come back. Ed O'Keefe is in St. Charles, Illinois. Ed, good morning. Things getting very dicey in Texas today.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking Overnight; Texas Redistricting Fight; Democrats Flee State to Block GOP-Backed Move to Redraw District Lines]

ED O'KEEFE: Texas and now here in Illinois as well, Gayle, good morning. At least 51 Texas House Democrats left their home state last night came to this lovely Illinois town in order to block a Republican-written congressional map that was set to pass the state house later today. The Republican Governor, Greg Abbott, is threatening to expel the legislators for not showing up for work if they don't today. The Republican Attorney General is threatening to arrest them. They could face big fines but so far, these Democrats are defiant.

TEXAS REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TURNER (D-TX): We're here to fight for the millions of Texans who don't want Trump's Texas takeover.

O'KEEFE: Dozens of Texas House Democrats are now in the Chicago suburbs, leaving their state behind and disrupting plans to vote on a new Republican-drawn map to reshape congressional power in the Lone Star State —

WU: We're not here to play political games. We're here to demand — to demand an end to this corrupt process.

O'KEEFE: President Trump has directed Texas Republicans redraw their map. [TO TRUMP, on 07/15/25]: [O]n Texas, how many more seats do you want the Republicans to draw?

TRUMP [on 07/15/25]: Five.

O'KEEFE: — in hopes of avoiding the losses that usually happen to a President's party in midterm elections. Right now, Texas Republicans hold 25 of the state's 38 seats in the House of Representatives, but the redrawn map would give the GOP an advantage in at least five more seats. Down in West Dallas —

CONGRESSMAN MARC VEASEY (D-TX): Marc Veasey, your congressman. How are you doing?

ELDERLY DALLAS RESIDENT: I know that face.

O'KEEFE: — Texas Democratic Congressman Marc Veasey is a familiar face at this community center in a neighborhood he's represented for a dozen years.

VEASEY: I'm really concerned they may be left with representation that doesn't reflect the values and the political beliefs and desires of the people that — that live in these neighborhoods.

O'KEEFE: Veasey now wants Democrats in other states like California and Illinois to redraw their maps.

VEASEY: Absolutely. I have no issues with that.

O'KEEFE [TO VEASEY]: What you are saying is it's time for Democrats to fight fire with fire?

VEASEY: Absolutely, you have to match Trump's energy. If you don't match Trump's energy, you get run over.

O'KEEFE: Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott says the new map is necessary to address constitutional concerns raised by the Justice Department, but critics across the state call it a power grab. Thousands showed up at field hearings across the state in recent days, some driving hours to be heard. [TO UNIDENTIFIED PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST] You drove how many hours?

UNIDENTIFIED PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST: Four hours.

O'KEEFE[TO UNIDENTIFIED PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST]: To come and speak tonight.

UNIDENTIFIED PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST: Yes.

O'KEEFE[TO UNIDENTIFIED PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST]: That's how much this bothers you?

UNIDENTIFIED PROGRESSIVE ACTIVIST: Yes.

O'KEEFE: Now in a statement overnight, the Texas Republican Party calls the Democrats "stunt to cut quorum...nothing more than a transparent attempt to weaponize chaos and rewrite reality. While the Texas Republicans are working to ensure the fair and lawful redistricting that reflects the will of Texans," Republicans say, "Democrats are choosing obstruction over representation, denying voters their voice to score political headlines." Nate, this has kicked something up down in Texas we've never quite seen before.

NATE BURLESON: No doubt. Everything is bigger in Texas. And even the drama. Ed, thank you.

(...)

8:00:55 a.m.

16 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Lawmakers Flee Texas]

TURNER: We're here to fight for the millions of Texans who don't want Trump's Texas takeover.

KING: Democratic lawmakers in Texas flee the state to delay a Republican effort to gain seats in Congress.

O'KEEFE [TO TRUMP, on 07/15/25]: [H]ow many more seats do you want the Republicans to draw?

TRUMP [on 07/15/25]: Five.