

NBC Nightly News with Tom Llamas

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6:30:26 p.m. [TEASE]

26 seconds

[ON-SCREE HEADLINE: Breaking News; Lawmakers Bolt Texas to Block Redrawing of House Map]

TOM LLAMAS: Tonight, the Texas-size political battle with leaders calling for lawmakers who have left the state to be arrested, to bring them back to vote. As Republican leaders look to gerrymander congressional maps, Democratic lawmakers flee the state to delay the vote. Why some leaders are calling for Democrats who are out of state to be hunted down and arrested as some Democratic governors vow to do what Republicans are doing in Texas.

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6:32:33 p.m.

3 minutes and 14 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Arrest Threat Amid Redistricting Fight]

LLAMAS: [B]ut we do want to start with that high-stakes drama in Texas where work ground to a halt in the state capital after Democrats fled to avoid debating a controversial, gerrymandering redistricting map. The remaining members opting to send for the missing lawmakers under warrant of arrest. At issue, the Republican majority's plan to redraw the state's congressional lines, opening up a whole new can of worms. The move sending more than 50 Democratic lawmakers fleeing to the state — to other states around the country. Texas Governor Abbott signaling he could send law enforcement after them or further test his legal authority. Tonight, some democratic governors vowing to "fight fire with fire." Ryan Chandler reports tonight from Texas.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Republicans Threaten to Arrest Democrats Who Left Texas]

TEXAS HOUSE SPEAKER DUSTIN BURROWS (R-TX): Members, a quorum is not present.

RYAN CHANDLER: Tonight, Texas Republicans issuing civil arrest warrants for the Democrats who left the state in a Hail Mary move to block a controversial redistricting bill.

BURROWS: The Constitution says the members of the legislature shall show up to do their jobs.

CHANDLER: More than 50 Texas Democrats headed to Chicago, New York, and Boston over the weekend, stalling a Republican push to redraw congressional districts in their favor. [TO LITTLE] Why do you believe it is important for Texas to take this rare step of mid-decade redistricting?

STATE REPRESENTATIVE MITCH LITTLE (R-TX): Oh, because we have the opportunity. We have the time, we have the opportunity, and we have the advantage.

CHANDLER: In New York, flanked by Texas Democrats, the governor said she would push her state to consider redistricting in response to what's happening in Texas.

GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL (D-NY): This is a war. We are at war, and that's why the gloves are off.

CHANDLER: Governor Greg Abbott today ordering state troopers to find and arrest the Democratic lawmakers who today dared him to try.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOLANDA JONES (D-TX): Subpoenas from Texas don't work in New York, so he going to come get us how? Subpoenas in Texas don't work in Chicago. He's going to come get us how?

CHANDLER: The decisions that come from this chamber could reverberate nationwide. Law enforcement now empowered to bring Democrats back to their empty seats. House rules allow Republicans to lock members inside until they get a chance to vote on this bill. In July, President Trump pushed his allies in Texas to redraw the map to pad the tight Republican margin in Congress.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP [on 07/15/25]: It is a very simple redrawing. We pick up five seats.

CHANDLER: Some Democratic strongholds would be absorbed into red districts including downtown Austin, one of the most liberal parts of the state. Under the proposed map it would be a deep red district, drawn into a massive rural area stretching three-and-a-half hours east. Representative James Talarico is camping out in Chicago.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D-TX): It's almost like two football teams heading out of the locker room at halftime and the team that's ahead says they want to change the rules for the second half, so they can win the game. I mean, that's cheating, plain and simple. If they're going to cheat, we're not going to play.

LLAMAS: Ryan joins us now live. Ryan, walk our viewers on how the standoff could end.

CHANDLER: Well, Democrats in Chicago tell me they packed for three weeks hoping to run out the clock on this special session. Republicans say while Democrats may be able to stall this bill they can't stop it, Tom.

LLAMAS: Ryan Chandler leading us off tonight here. Ryan, we thank you.