

Texas Legislature to take another swing at redistricting vote as Democrats extend their walkout

JESSE BEDAYN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Texas Republicans will again try to convene the state Legislature Monday for a vote on redrawing congressional maps in their party's favor, an effort that already sparked a national political brawl and prompted Democratic lawmakers to leave the state to deny Republicans the quorum they need.

The Republican majority is seeking to redraw five U.S. House districts at President Donald Trump's urging as he tries to avoid a replay of the 2018 midterms. Those elections installed a new Democratic majority in the U.S. House that stymied the president's agenda and twice impeached him.

Now, Democratic-controlled states including California, New York and Illinois are threatening to retaliate against Texas and Trump by proposing their own redistricting, putting the nation



Eric Gay | Associated Press

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

on the brink of a tit-for-tat overhaul of congressional boundaries that are typically redrawn only once a decade.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said he'll call lawmakers back to the Statehouse again and again until enough Democrats show up to reach the 100-member threshold

required to vote on the bill. Democratic leaders in other states are planning out their retaliatory redistricting plans if Abbott succeeds.

"Texas, knock it off. We'll knock it off. Let's get back to governing," said New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on "Fox News Sunday."

As for the Democratic lawmakers who bolted from Texas — some of whom have been appearing alongside the likes of California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker at news conferences — Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is asking the state's Supreme Court to remove some of them from office or give them a 48-hour warning to return.

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

When pressed about blue states' threats to retaliate — such as Newsom's proposal to effectively cut five GOP-held seats in California — Abbott argued that many had already squeezed the juice out of their gerrymandering and would be hard-pressed to push it further.

Democratic leaders say Abbott's plans are nothing more than a power grab.



Julio Cortez | Associated Press

The U.S. Capitol building gives backdrop to a homeless man resting on a steam vent on the National Mall, Dec. 18, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Trump says he's placing Washington police under federal control Guard

JOSH BOAK AND
DAVID KLEPPER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Monday he's taking over Washington's police department and activating 800 members of the National Guard in the hopes of reducing crime, even as city officials stressed crime is already falling in the nation's capital.

The president, flanked by his attorney general, his defense secretary and the FBI director, said he was declaring a public safety emergency and his administration would be removing homeless encampments.

"We're going to take our capital back," Trump declared, adding he'd also be "getting rid of the slums."

For Trump, the effort to take over public safety in Washington reflects an escalation of his aggressive approach to law enforcement. The District of Columbia's status as a congressionally established federal district gives him a unique opportunity to push his tough-on-crime agenda, though he has not proposed solutions to the root causes of homelessness or crime.

Attorney General Pam Bondi will assume responsibility for Washington's Metropolitan Police Department, Trump said, as he also railed against potholes and graffiti in the city and called them "embarrassing." The president did not provide a timeline for the control of the police department, but he's limited to 30 days under statute unless he gets approval from Congress.

As Trump spoke, demonstrators gathered outside the White House to protest his moves. And local officials rejected the Republican president's depiction of the district as crime-ridden and called his actions illegal.

"The administration's actions are unprecedented, unnecessary, and unlawful," District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwab said. "There is no crime emergency in the District of Columbia."

Schwab, a Democrat, said violent crime in the district reached historic 30-year lows

last year and is down an additional 26% this year.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser said she would follow the law regarding the "so-called emergency" even as she indicated that Trump's actions were a reason why the District of Columbia should be a state with legal protections from such actions.

"While this action today is unsettling and unprecedented, I can't say that given some of the rhetoric of the past, that we're totally surprised," Bowser said.

COMBATING CRIME

The president dismissed the idea Washington needed to enlarge its 3,500-officer police force, even as he seeks to have more armed personnel going through the city with the goal of reducing crime.

"What you need is rules and regulations, and you need the right people to implement them," he said.

Trump invoked Section 740 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act in an executive order to declare a "crime emergency" so his administration could take over the city's police force. He signed a directive for Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to activate the National Guard.

While Trump has portrayed himself as a friend to law enforcement and enjoyed the political backing from many of their groups, he pardoned or commuted the sentences of the 1,500-plus people charged with crimes in the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot, including people convicted of assaulting police officers.

About 500 federal law enforcement officers are being tasked with deploying throughout the nation's capital as part of Trump's effort to combat crime, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

More than 100 FBI agents and about 40 agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are among federal personnel being assigned to patrols in Washington, the person briefed on the plans said. The Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Marshals Service are contributing officers.

AUDIT

CONTINUED FROM 1

"Like I've said in the past, I'll give credit where credit's due. I've got a great staff that keeps everything in order," Jones said. "The auditors

keep a close eye on us, which they should, and I'm pleased with everything coming back really good."

The full auditor's report can found at auditor.ky.gov.

Carla Slavey can be reached at cslavey@somerset-kentucky.com

PRICE

CONTINUED FROM 1

from 2015 to 2022.

In 2021, Price was convicted in a jury trial of Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence of Alcohol, Careless Driving and Failure To or Improper Signal.

In that case, he was sentenced to paying a fine of \$425 and have his drivers license suspended for up to six months.

Readers are reminded that a charge is an accusation only, and that all suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Growing wildfire becomes one of the largest in Colorado history

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEEKER, Colo. — A Colorado prison was evacuated as one of the largest wildfires in state history continued to grow, and officials warned residents of remote areas to be ready to leave Sunday as gusty winds and low humidity fed the flames.

Evacuation orders were already in place for mountain communities as the Lee Fire charred more than 167 square miles across Garfield and Rio Blanco counties, with just 6% containment. No injuries or structural damage has been reported.

All 179 incarcerated people were safely removed from the Rifle Correctional Center on Saturday "out of an abundance of caution," the Colorado Department of Corrections said in a statement.

They were temporarily relocated about 150 miles away to the Buena Vista Correctional Complex, the department said.

The Lee Fire, churning through trees and brush about 250 miles west of Denver, is now the sixth-largest single fire in the state's history, according to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

More than a thousand firefighters are battling the blaze, working to keep the flames to the west of Colorado 13 and north of County Road 5, officials said.

Health officials issued air quality warnings related to smoke from the Lee Fire and the 23-square-mile Elk Fire burning just to the east.

In Southern California, crews reached 62% containment on the 8-square-mile Canyon Fire.

SPLASH BASH

CONTINUED FROM 1

it's something we're going to implement yearly and try to continue to grow it."

A little over 150 people showed up to enjoy the pools and slides at the water park — which was privately rented and staffed at the time — which was fun for kids while adults got to interact with local elected officials and candidates for office who were in attendance.

"It seemed to be all new faces from what we're used to seeing at our traditional events, which was great," said Wilson of the non-politicians who attended. "It got us a lot new involvement and engagement and we had a lot of compliments from people there about the event, thanking us for having something that fit a whole different crowd of people, vs. just our regular dinners."

Wilson said he talked to the majority of the officials in attendance and "they all said that they had a great reception from the crowd" and were able

to meet people they'd never spoken with before.

"It goes a long way for them, and if they're running for re-election, it got them with people they normally wouldn't (see at an event)," said Wilson, "so everybody was pleased all the way around."

There was no speech making at this event, though both Somerset Mayor Alan Keck and Pulaski Judge-Executive Marshall Todd were able to say a few words over the loudspeaker to greet those in attendance.

"I think it's really neat," said Keck on Friday evening at the water park. "I compliment Alex Wilson for the innovation, the idea of having an event that, while it's a party event, it's really an event for families to come and hang out. I'm looking (out at) dozens of kids playing ... so it's pretty special."

Todd noted the perfect weather for the Splash Bash, and added, "I just appreciate the Republican Party of Pulaski County sponsoring this and putting it on. ... Anything we can do for the people of Pulaski County, (we want to do)."



Photos by Steve Cornelius | Commonwealth Journal

Burnside Principal April Mounce (left) addressed the large audience that attended the new school's grand-opening open house. Assistant Superintendent Matt Cook (center) and Superintendent Patrick Richardson look on in the background.

SCHOOL

CONTINUED FROM 1

technology is wireless, and the facility is fully equipped for 21st-century learning. Our teachers have worked incredibly hard to prepare — many spent their summer unpacking and setting up classrooms. The dedication of our staff, custodians, and district maintenance team made this all possible."

Pulaski County Schools Superintendent Patrick Richardson echoed that sentiment, noting that the decision to build a new school came after years of structural concerns with the old facility.

"When we looked at the cost of renovating versus rebuilding, we had reached the 80% mark of building value," said Richardson. "It became clear that a new school was the right choice. This facility is something the whole community can be proud of, and it will serve generations to come."

Richardson also emphasized the school's security measures, including comprehensive surveillance systems



Members of the community signed up for the new Burnside Elementary School Open House ceremony on Sunday.

and a secure main entrance that requires all visitors to check in before gaining access to student areas.

"The staff here has done an outstanding job," he said. "Just a month ago, it didn't look like this. Their tireless

work got it ready for students."

For many local leaders and lifelong residents, the new school represents more than just a building.

Burnside City Councilman George Bryant, a graduate of the original Burnside School,

expressed his pride and nostalgia.

"I started first grade at the old school just a year after it opened," Bryant recalled. "We had 12 grades under one roof. Burnside has always been in my blood, and I'm so proud to see this new chapter. It's a gorgeous school, and I'm thankful to the school board, Superintendent Richardson, and everyone involved."

Burnside Mayor Robert Lawson shared similar sentiments, noting the importance of keeping the school within the community.

"We fought hard to keep Burnside Elementary in Burnside," said Lawson. "With limited real estate, we had only a few options, and this was the best one. My wife graduated from Burnside High School, so this means a lot to us. It's more than just a school — it's part of who we are."

The new facility marks a fresh start for Burnside Elementary, blending tradition with innovation — and offering a bright future for students and the community alike.

FLOOR LEVELING



STRUCTURAL, TERMITE, & ROT REPAIR

606-875-5648

LICENSED & INSURED

25 YEARS EXPERIENCE