

More Than 50+ Texas Democrats Face Civil Arrest Warrants After Fleeing State

In Texas, over 50 Democratic state representatives fled to blue states, such as Illinois, New York and Massachusetts, to deny the House quorum and block a Republican-backed congressional redistricting plan. The Republican majority responded by issuing civil arrest warrants and mobilizing law enforcement to compel their return.

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Republican lawmakers in the Texas House voted 85–6 on Aug. 4, 2025 to authorize civil arrest warrants for at least 51 absent Democratic lawmakers who failed to attend the special legislative session called to redraw congressional districts. Speaker Dustin Burrows signed the warrants, granting the sergeant-at-arms and Texas Department of Public Safety authority to locate and arrest missing members still within state lines.

Governor Greg Abbott accused the absent lawmakers of “holding hostage” essential legislation, including aid for flood victims and property tax reform. He also threatened daily \$500 fines, felony charges for fundraising to pay fines, and removal from office, citing a state attorney general opinion to justify aggressive consequences.



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Most Democrats relocated outside Texas, many to Chicago, New York and Boston, where applicable arrest warrants have no enforcement authority. Legal experts say the warrants are

symbolic unless jurisdictions domesticate them, which appears unlikely.

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Republican officials emphasized the severity of the walkout. Speaker Burrows criticized the absentees for shirking responsibilities, particularly amid pressing legislative needs, and reiterated that consequences would continue until they return.

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Democrats defended their action as a critical check on partisan gerrymandering. State Rep. Gene Wu, chair of the Democratic caucus, accused GOP leaders of pushing through a racially discriminatory map behind closed doors. The caucus vowed to remain out-of-state “for as long as it takes,” dismissing threats and fines as political intimidation.

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