

Via electronic mail

The Honorable Governor Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
Texas State Capitol
Austin, Texas

August 4, 2025

Dear Governor Abbott:

Last night, you issued a statement stating that you would remove Texas state lawmakers elected by their communities from office if they were not present at 3:00pm CT today at a Special Session of the Texas House of Representatives. It appears you called the special session to do the bidding of interests outside of Texas, including President Trump, who are seeking to prevent the fair representation of people in the state. **You are not a King. You have no authority to remove lawmakers elected by their communities in Texas from office.**

You reference an opinion issued by Attorney General Ken Paxton as the authority you purport to rely on to be able to remove elected members from office. But, opinions of the Texas Attorney General do not hold the force of law.

More importantly, however, you and anyone who has taken Texas history knows that the ability of elected representatives in Texas to be absent from a legislative proceeding and to deny a quorum is provided for by the Texas Constitution and has been a practice in the State since the 1800s. In 2021, the Texas Supreme Court, in a case cited in the very opinion by Attorney General Paxton that you reference, affirmed that the Texas Constitution “enables” so-called quorum breaking as a tactic of the legislative minority. The decision by lawmakers to represent their communities by refusing to participate in the Special Session today is, as the Texas Constitution recognizes, an official act, not the abandonment of a Constitutional duty or the failure to perform a duty, as your statement suggests. It is, in fact, the judgment of these lawmakers that their communities are best served by the quorum break, which is a prerogative that Texas lawmakers have the right to exercise.

Your statements to the contrary appear to be an attempt to intimidate lawmakers from doing what is best for their communities and to confuse the public. Indeed, your statement’s reference to the lawsuit that the Texas Attorney General would have to file to even attempt removal from office shows that your threat of the immediate removal of lawmakers has no legal basis. Such a suit would be a waste of judicial resources because these lawmakers are exercising a Constitutionally protected function and there is no basis to conclude they abandoned their offices. But, in any event, the suit would take time to file, serve, and then to be responded to, litigated, and potentially appealed before any final judgment was issued. In all cases, the law, of course, would require that the Texas Attorney General prove that these lawmakers actually intended to relinquish their offices. Not only is there no such evidence, these lawmakers are performing their duties of office in preventing a quorum and opposing an effort to enact



racially discriminatory voting maps in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act. They have given every indication that they have no intention of abandoning their offices.

What is happening in the state of Texas is not just a test for the rights of Texans, but one for the rights of everyone who wishes to live in a democracy in this nation. You and your allies have created an unprecedented political emergency for the people of Texas and across the nation. Thousands of Texans have testified against and spoken out to oppose the hastily drawn redistricting maps, which seek to make invisible – and take the voices away from – millions. While you have some powers as Governor, you do not have the power to remove elected Texans from office to accomplish a vendetta that you and the President appear to have against the ability of people to vote, against lawmakers who are seeking to protect the people who elected them, and against our democracy as a whole.

With regards, I am

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Skye L. Perryman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Skye L. Perryman, JD
President and CEO, Democracy Forward