



**Houston Area
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

A Letter To The Texas Legislature

July 30, 2025

As an organization that has served to protect civil rights and liberties for all people within the Houston community for over 50 years, The Houston Area Urban League considers the recent decision to consider mid-decade redrawing of congressional lines, potentially in Houston and other areas, to be outrageous.

If Texas State representatives, who claim to represent all Texans, move to adjust district lines in ways to further weaken the political power of voters of color and other under-resourced communities, the consequences will be devastating. It will leave communities with far less access to representatives who will advocate for policies that improve health care, fair housing, and educational resources for all the tax-paying constituents Texas public servants are elected to serve.

This effort must be viewed in the context of a broader, nationwide trend: a systematic attempt to disenfranchise communities. Any congressional redistricting that further reduces the electoral power of voters of color will only worsen the challenges Texans already face. With 17 million residents at risk of serious hardship following the passage of H.R. 1 which threatens access to medical coverage, nutritional assistance for families, and essential environmental protections, Texans stand to lose even more under such policies.

Every 10 years, the redistricting process requires states to adjust their congressional maps to reflect population changes. Federal law and the U.S. Constitution prohibit tactics like 'packing' and 'cracking' districts, as well as the use of partisanship as a tool to harm Black voters and other voters of color. Therefore, the current effort to authorize mid-decade congressional redistricting that employs these tactics under the guise of partisanship risks stripping communities of color of their voices and silencing those with legitimate concerns.

At the end of 1865, following the Civil War and the formal announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Reconstruction era finally allowed Black delegates to participate in the legislative process. However, from 1870 until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, Texans experienced a 68-year gap during which communities of color had little to no access to voting rights or meaningful representation due to racially discriminatory practices imposed by Texas legislative bodies.

The absence of representation gave disproportionate power to white lawmakers, who acted to provide unequal services, eliminate equitable alternatives, suppress economic opportunity, and cripple Black and Brown political power.

Fortunately, cases like *Smith vs. Allwright* (1944), which challenged one aspect of the unconstitutional limitations on whites-only access to the ballot box, paved the pathway for courts to uphold the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments both of which protect the rights of U.S. citizens from racial discrimination in the political process and other areas of life.

We have a rich history and with it, a duty to uphold unity, cultural inclusion, and a constitutional commitment to civil rights. This is not a matter of convenience, but a promise to protect the people we serve.

Under the Texas Bill of Rights, our Texas Constitution outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals across Texas. Grounded in the principles of liberty and equality and in the belief that political power resides with the people we call upon you, our lawmakers, to uphold the law. Preserving, protecting, and respecting our communities is a core priority in governance. Under the current circumstances, there is no justification for conducting mid-decade congressional redistricting unless it is done to protect and strengthen representation for all communities.

Representatives, today we ask you to rise with courage and conviction to honor the wishes of Texans within our state by resisting the urge to conduct any mid-decade congressional redistricting and attempts to harm our voting power. Texans deserve the right to choose who represents them rather than have representatives decide who they will represent, using extreme partisanship as a tool to promote further discrimination. Federal law and the U.S. Constitution demand no less. And neither should you as our Representatives.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Judson W. Robinson, III', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Judson W. Robinson, III
President & CEO