



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 13, 2021

Texas Dems Flee State to Avoid Vote on Election-integrity Bill

Dozens of Texas Democrats have left the Lone Star State in a denial-of-quorum attack designed to stop a vote on a new election-integrity bill. At least 59 Democrat members of the state's House of Representatives boarded chartered jets and flew to Washington, D.C., where they hope to gain national support for their effort to stop election reform in Texas.

While 59 of the legislature's 67 Democrats are known to have left the state, the full number may not be known until roll is called in the chamber on Tuesday morning.



Richard McMillin/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The "fugitive" legislators will have to stay out of state for weeks in order to avoid the 30-day emergency session called for by Governor Greg Abbott. The [session](#) was set to address election integrity in the state as well as other hot-button items such as bail reform, the teaching of Critical Race Theory, social-media censorship, and transgender participation in athletics.

The move echoes the last minute walk-out that Texas Democrats [staged](#) on May 30 at the very end of the legislative session to avoid voting on the same election-integrity bill.

In a statement, Texas Democrats framed the walk-out as a way of keeping Republicans from trampling freedom in the state.

"Today, Texas House Democrats stand united in our decision to break quorum and refuse to let the Republican-led legislature force through dangerous legislation that would trample on Texans' freedom to vote," the statement read.

Abbott responded to the stunt in a message to citizens.

"The Texas Democrats' decision to break a quorum of the Texas Legislature and to abandon the Texas State Capitol; that inflicts harm on the very Texans that have elected them to serve," Abbott said. "As they fly across the country on cushy private planes, they leave undone issues that can help their districts as well as help the entire state."

"The Democrats must put aside partisan political games and get back to the job they were elected to do. Their constituents must not be denied these important resources simply because their elected representatives refused to show up to work," the governor concluded.

Democrats must get back to the job they were elected to do.

Their constituents must not be denied important resources simply because their elected representatives refused to show up to work. pic.twitter.com/dGC9DceRaZ

— Greg Abbott (@GregAbbott_TX) [July 12, 2021](#)



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But the Democrats declared that they are simply taking their fight national, looking to reignite the election integrity fight in Congress in hopes that new federal legislation will preempt significant portions of the bill being considered in the Texas Legislature.

“We are now taking the fight to our nation’s Capital,” the Democrats’ statement read. “We are living on borrowed time in Texas.”

Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan (R-Beaumont) issued a statement rebuking his Democrat colleagues and promising a fight going forward.

“A number of House Democrats stated their caucus intends to break quorum in an attempt to stall election integrity legislation. These actions put at risk state funding that will deny thousands of hard-working staff members and their families a paycheck, health benefits, and retirement investment so that legislators who broke quorum can flee to Washington D.C. in private jets,” Phelan noted.

“The Texas House will use every available resource under the Texas Constitution and the unanimously-passed House Rules to secure a quorum,” the Speaker declared.

According to House rules adopted unanimously at the beginning of the session, a full two-thirds of the 150 members of the House of Representatives must be present to secure a quorum. When the legislature is in session, members can vote to lock chamber doors to prevent other members from leaving in order to deny a quorum — a measure that was not used during the May 30 walkout. The legislature may also vote to have law enforcement track down members who have already fled.

Unfortunately, the Texas Rangers would likely face a jurisdiction issue in Washington, D.C.

If there is no quorum on Tuesday morning, any legislator may use a call of the House “to secure and maintain a quorum.” Should that motion be seconded by 15 members and so ordered by a majority vote of remaining members, the House Democrats that fled to Washington will officially become fugitives in the State of Texas — which, frankly, seems appropriate.



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