

LONE STAR PROJECT

Fighting Back... with Facts



(202) 547-7610 - Fax (202)547-8258

March 3, 2006

Contact: Matt Angle

On the web at www.LoneStarProject.net

Assessing DeLay's Damage to Texas

Congressional Redistricting and DeLay's Ethics Problems Cost Texas Clout

While the media and politicians typically focus on the partisan battles that take place in Congress, many important decisions, particularly the appropriation of funds, are settled on a regional basis where seniority and key committee leadership play an important role. While **Tom DeLay** delivered a valuable political gift to national Republicans with Texas redistricting, he **placed a burden on Texas citizens** fighting for their fair share of federal resources. In the process, he lost his own leadership position, put his political career at risk, and squandered his ability to assist his home state. DeLay's most repeated quote, "I'm the Majority Leader, and I want more seats" (*Source: Washington Post, 1/19/2003*) now has an ironic twist. Republicans do indeed have more seats, but **DeLay is no longer the Leader and Texas voters no longer benefit from a powerful House delegation in Congress.**

Before

At the close of the 108th Congress, the 32-Member Texas U.S. House Delegation stood as a testament to legendary House Speaker Sam Rayburn's recipe for congressional clout, "Pick 'em right, elect 'em young and keep 'em there." Before DeLay's remap the Texas delegation:

- had accrued 347 years of seniority,
- held 2 House leadership positions,
- claimed 4 full committee Chair or Ranking Member positions.
- ranked 2nd in state clout only behind much larger California.

After

However, after just one election under DeLay's new map, Texas voters immediately lost 85 years of seniority and 3 powerful Ranking Members of Congress. When Tom DeLay resigned his post as Majority Leader because of

his ongoing legal problems, **Texas was left without any congressmen with leadership positions** for the first time since 1992 and for only the second time since 1977.

	Dec. 2003	Jan. 2004	Power Lost
Texas Seniority	347 years	262 years	85 years
Party Leadership Posts	2	0*	2
Chairs/Ranking Members	4	1	3

* As of 9/28/2005

Loss in State Rank

After the DeLay redistricting map, Texas fell in rank of congressional clout among major States. **New York**, though holding fewer total seats in Congress than Texas, **blew by Texas in total years of seniority and in key committee positions.** (Source: *Roll Call*, 1/24/2005) Other large states such as Michigan, Illinois, Florida, and Ohio gained ground on Texas and relative influence among large state delegations with many states holding more leadership posts and powerful committee positions.

	Seniority	Average Seniority per Member	Leadership Posts	Chairs/Ranking Members of Committees
California	632	11.9	4	6
New York	356	12.3	2	2
Texas	262 (3 of 7)	8.2 (last)	0 (last)	1 (6 of 7, tie)
Florida	230	9.2	1	0
Michigan	236	15.7	0	2
Illinois	191	10.1	2	2
Ohio	218	12.1	2	1

- Ranking out of 7 in parentheses

The Future

Under Republican Conference rules Texas's only Committee Chair, Joe Barton, must give up his chairmanship of the Commerce Committee after the next session of Congress. While the 2006 elections have yet to play themselves out, it is certainly possible that Democrats could win a majority in the U.S. House. Recent generic polls show Democrats with a leads ranging from 14% to 16% percent. (Source: *CNN/USA Today/Gallop* 3/10/06 and 2/28/06) However, because redistricting removed Texas's senior Democrats and ranking members, no Texas Democrat is in place to move into a leadership position or Chair a

of Congress without a single leadership position, committee chairmanship or ranking committee post.

Roundup

There is no question that Tom DeLay's unprecedented mid-decade redistricting decimated congressional Democrats in Texas. It's also clear that DeLay's map saved Republicans the embarrassment of losing U.S. House seats nationally in 2004. However, **Texans** of all political stripes **paid a big price in congressional clout** when Rick Perry and the Republican legislature collapsed to DeLay's demand that senior, moderate, well-placed and influential Democrats be exchanged for harshly partisan, inexperienced freshmen Republicans.

The Lone Star Project is an activity of the Lone Star Fund.

Contributions or gifts to the Lone Star Fund are not tax deductible. All contributions are subject to the prohibitions and limitations of the Federal Election Campaign Act. Federal Law requires us to use best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

Paid for by The Lone Star Fund, 6 E St, SE, Washington, DC 20003.
Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.