

# LONE STAR PROJECT

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## **Perry/DeLay Will Set Modern Record for Vacant Texas Seat** *Republican's scheme will leave TX-22 unrepresented more than four months*

Teddy Roosevelt was President, Butch Cassidy was alive and Lyndon Johnson had not yet been born the last time a Texas congressional district was forced to go 130 days without knowing who represented them in Congress.



Theodore Roosevelt, Butch Cassidy, and Lyndon Johnson as a baby

It has been more than 100 years since a Congressional District has been left without a Congressman for longer than 130 Days. However, under the scheme hatched by Texas Governor Rick Perry and surrendering former House Republican Leader Tom DeLay, citizens in the 22nd District of Texas will be left without any Member of Congress representing them for at least 130 days, from June 30, 2006 until November 7, 2006. This gap in representation could be even longer if DeLay resigns earlier in June or if a run-off results from a November 7th special election, leaving the seat open another 30 days.

## **DeLay/Perry Move Will Create Longest Vacancy Since 1905**

Unlike DeLay, whose last chapter will identify him as the guy who decided to quit and run, the last Texas Member of Congress to cause such a long vacancy went out guns blazing – literally. On April 24, 1905, the Congressman for the 8th District of Texas, John M. Pinckney, was shot and killed at a meeting of the Waller County Prohibition league. According to the man who killed Pinckney, “I

heard a shot behind me about 6- feet away and I turned and saw [Congressman] John M. Pinckney shoot at papa. I turned around and shot at him 3-times.” (Source: [Rockdale Messenger, April, 27 1905](#)). Pinkney had served in the Confederate Army and as a County Judge before entering Congress. He was succeeded by John M. Moore, a former State Representative from Fort Bend County after a vacancy of 224 days. (Source: [Handbook of Texas Online](#))

Since then, whether congressional vacancies occurred due to resignation or tragic death, an election was held to fill the seat in less than 130 days and usually fairly soon after a district lost its Member of Congress. (Source: [Biographical Directory of the United States Congress](#))

- **Resignation** – Congressman Sam Hall (CD1) resigned his seat on May 27, 1985, to accept an appointment to the federal bench. Even after a heated special election that included a contentious run-off, Jim Chapman won his seat after a vacancy of only 100 days. (Source: [Biographical Directory of the United States Congress -Sam Hall](#))
- **Tragic Death** – Legendary Congressman Mickey Leland (CD18) perished in a plane crash during a child hunger mission to Africa. The sudden death shocked colleagues in Congress, friends in the Legislature and his Houston-based district. Even under these tragic circumstances a special election was held and sitting Texas State Senator Craig Washington was elected. Residents in Congressional District 18 knew who their representative was even though Washington could not be sworn in until after a special session of the State Legislature had concluded. The total time between Leland’s death and Washington’s election was 117 days. (Source: *The Associated Press, December 10, 1989*)

## What Can Happen in 130 Days?

Leaving the 22nd district vacant and unrepresented may serve the political purposes of Tom DeLay and Rick Perry, but Texans, and particularly those in the 22nd District, pay a significant price. For more than four months, Tom DeLay will have succeeded in more than just redrawing Texas congressional districts to his liking. He will also have succeeded in effectively reducing the number of Texas congressional districts from 32 to only 31. Governor Perry, with the approval of Tom DeLay, is willing to leave Texas a vote short and the residents of District 22 without a vote at all during this critical time period.

Over the last three congressional election years ('00, '02, '04), an average of 289 roll call votes has been taken on the House floor between June 30th and November 7th. (Source: [Clerk of the United States House](#))

- In 2004 between June 30th and November 7th, there were 34 roll call votes on the House floor on appropriations bills alone. (Source: [U.S. House of Representatives Roll Call Votes 108th Congress - 2nd Session](#))

- In 2002 between June 30th and November 7th, there were House floor votes on both the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the bill providing authorization to President Bush to send troops to Iraq. (Source: [U.S. House of Representatives Roll Call Votes 107th Congress - 2nd Session](#))

## DeLay Spending Final Days Protecting Future Career as Lobbyist

- In the few days that Congress has been in session since Tom DeLay announced his intention to abandon Texas and retreat to the Washington suburbs, he has missed five House floor votes, almost half of the total 12 votes he has missed all year. (Source: [Washington Post, US Votes Database](#)).
- However, DeLay was in attendance on February 1st, and cast one of only 50 votes against a bill designed to restrict the influence of congressmen turned lobbyists. The bill eliminated House floor privileges and access to Member exercise facilities for registered lobbyists who are former Members of Congress. (Source: [Clerk of the United States House](#)) Judging by his actions, DeLay is spending his time preparing for a lobby career **not** representing the constituents of the 22nd Congressional District.

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