Gov. Rick Perry's Remarks Regarding Redistricting

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Thursday, October 09, 2003

After many months of hard work, numerous hearings, and vigorous debate, I am happy to announce that members of the House and Senate have reached an agreement on a congressional redistricting bill that achieves our principle goal of giving voters districts that are fair and representative, and that reflects the philosophy and voting patterns of Texas.

I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst, Speaker Craddick, Senator Staples, Representative King, and the many members of the legislature who exercised this constitutional responsibility both diligently and fairly. I also want to thank two individuals who have been at their computers drawing maps for hundreds of hours working to accommodate the requests and ideas of many members, Scott Sims and Bob Davis.

For too long millions of Texans have lived in gerrymandered districts that were drawn to protect incumbents rather than the public interest. Starting today, the voters of Texas can know that their power to choose their congressman or congresswoman will not be hampered by an incumbent-protection scheme. The congressional districts legislators have agreed to are fair and representative of the voting patterns of Texas. While we respect the views of those who oppose this process, we believe that what we have achieved today has been worth the wait, and worth the debate, because ultimately we are preserving the voice, and empowering the vote, of millions of Texans. Texans will now get the opportunity to elect a congressional delegation that is reflective of their views—a congressional delegation with a majority that will work with our president, and not against him. This is a good day for Texas voters, and for the democratic process.

I commend the legislators standing with me today for their hard work, and for the product of consensus they have given us. I will look at it carefully and give it a proper review. But I am confident that today we have taken an historic step toward better representation in Congress.

Thank you. Let me introduce Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst to speak on this matter.