

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

August 5, 2025

The Honorable Kash Patel  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Patel,

I write to encourage the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) to take any appropriate steps to aid in Texas state law enforcement efforts to locate or arrest potential lawbreakers who have fled the state. As a maneuver to avoid legislative responsibilities, on August 3, 2025, many members in the Texas House of Representatives absconded from the state. Their stated goal was to prevent the legislature from properly meeting, in violation of their oath of office.<sup>1</sup> By leaving the State of Texas, these legislators intend to prevent the existence of a quorum in the Texas House of Representatives. Without a quorum, no legislative activity can proceed.

In a representative democracy, we resolve our differences by debating and voting, not by running away. Some Texas legislators have fled to New York, and others have fled to Illinois.<sup>2</sup> Since these state legislators are currently outside of Texas, the Texas Department of Public Safety may need support to arrest the fleeing lawmakers. Out-of-state actors have made public comments about protecting the Texas legislators who are currently hiding out of state from any accountability for their actions.<sup>3</sup> I request the FBI’s assistance, as federal resources are necessary to locate the out-of-state Texas legislators who are potentially acting in violation of the law. The FBI has tools to aid state law enforcement when parties cross state lines, including to avoid testifying or fleeing a scene of a crime.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, I am concerned that legislators who solicited or accepted funds to aid in their efforts to avoid their legislative duties may be guilty of bribery or other public corruption offenses.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor Goldstein, John C. Mortiz, *Texas House Democrats Flee the State to Block a Vote on New Congressional Map*, Houston Chronicle (Aug. 3, 2025), <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/texas-house-democrats-quorum-break-20799924.php>.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Kamisar, et al., *Redistricting Clash Escalates in Texas After Democrats Scatter, Denying State House a Quorum*, NBC News (Aug. 4, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2026-election/redistricting-clash-escalates-texas-democrats-scatter-republican-house-rcna222867>.

<sup>3</sup> Betsy Reed, *Illinois governor says Texas Democrats who left will be protected amid arrest threats*, The Guardian (Aug. 4, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/aug/04/jb-pritzker-illinois-texas-democrats>.

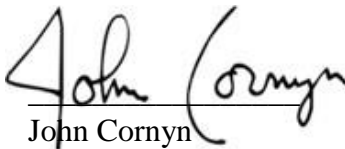
<sup>4</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 1073.

<sup>5</sup> Lauren McGaughy, *Arrest warrants issued for Texas Democrats who fled the state to break quorum*, Kut News (Aug. 4, 2025), <https://www.kut.org/politics/2025-08-04/texas-quorum-break-redistricting-congress>; TEX. PENAL CODE ANN. § 36.

This is a time-sensitive matter. The Texas Legislature is currently in a special session, called by Governor Abbott, with around two weeks left. As Governor Abbott noted, when the Governor calls a Special Session, the “[l]egislature shall meet.”<sup>6</sup> The absence of a quorum prevents key votes on important areas of concern for Texans. For example, the recent Kerrville floods, which caused unbearable tragedy and destruction, is just one issue that needs to be addressed in this legislative session.

I am encouraged by the strong leadership from Governor Abbott on this matter. Governor Abbott and Texas state law enforcement officers are doing what they can within the confines of the law, but federal help may be necessary. These legislators have committed potential criminal acts in their rush to avoid their constitutional responsibilities and must be fully investigated and held accountable. I urge you to work with Texas public officials to provide them the support they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cornyn". The signature is stylized, with the first name "John" and the last name "Cornyn" written in a cursive-like script.

John Cornyn  
United State Senator

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<sup>6</sup> TEX. CONST. art. III, § 5; Gov. Greg Abbott, Statement On House Democratic Quorum Break, (Aug. 3, 2025), <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-statement-on-house-democratic-quorum-break>.