

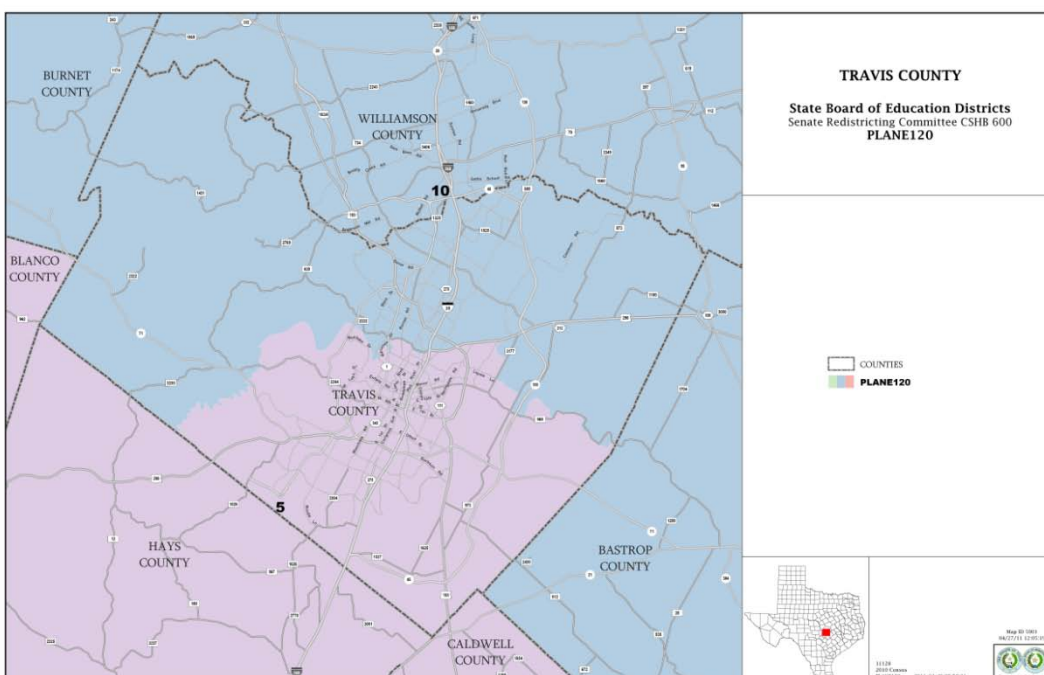
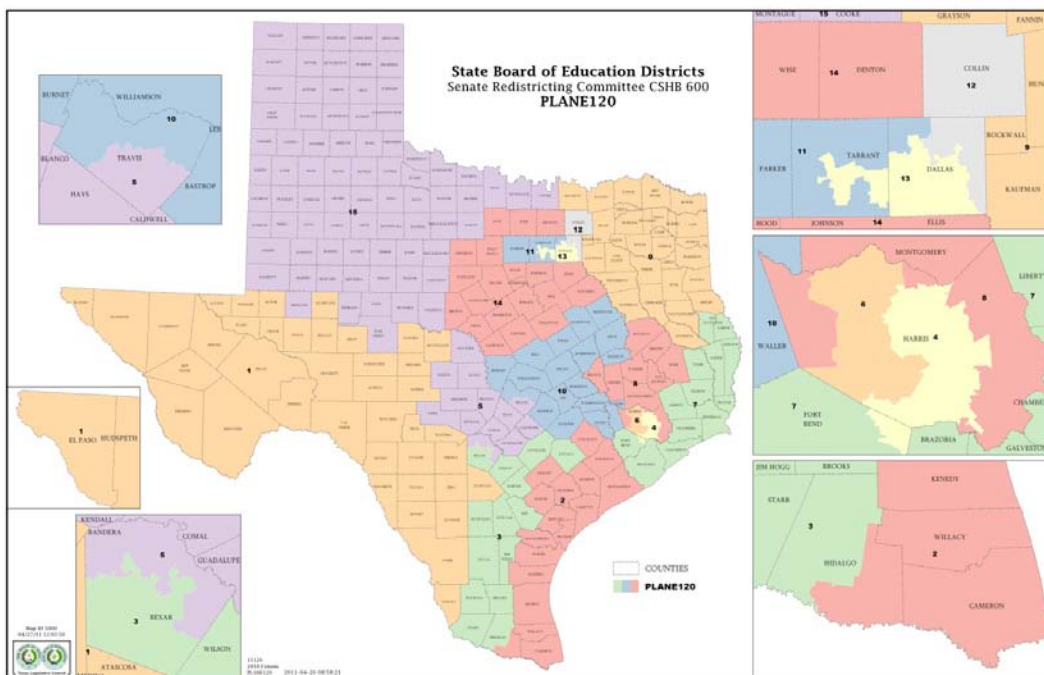
Yesterday, the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting met for the first time to discuss new maps. They considered the State Board of Education (SBOE) map that the House passed on April 15. Senator Seliger made some changes to the House map and introduced a committee substitute. His substitute was passed by the Committee and should be brought before the full Senate as early as tomorrow.

In the map, the SBOE district boundaries cut Travis County in half. The map also divides historic minority communities, the city of Austin, and the Austin Independent School District. I feel that Travis County needs to be united in a single SBOE district, under a single representative to the State Board of Education, in order to have our voice heard effectively.

Below, I've included the SBOE map that passed out of the Committee and my statement to the Committee objecting to the proposed map. Also, here's a link to an article that ran yesterday in the *Austin Chronicle* about this map and my position:

([www.austinchronicle.com/blogs/news/2011-04-27/watson-wants-travis-whole-in-sboe](http://www.austinchronicle.com/blogs/news/2011-04-27/watson-wants-travis-whole-in-sboe))

The SBOE map makes clear that the Senate leadership is willing to divide our county and undermine minority voting strength. Please be ready to join me in protecting our community should the same approach be taken when Senate and congressional redistricting is considered.



### **Statement by Senator Kirk Watson Objecting to Adoption of CSHB 600**

Today, Senator Seliger laid out the committee substitute to House Bill 600 in the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting. I appreciate the work and attention put into the substitute, but object to the proposed State Board of Education district boundaries in Travis County.

Travis County has a population of 1,024,266, enough to serve as the anchor of a complete State Board of Education district without dividing the county. Instead, the proposed map cuts the county in two parts for no apparent reason. By doing so, it divides the minority community of Travis County. This community has revealed itself to be very effective at building coalitions to elect the candidates of their choice in Travis County.

Additionally, by dividing Travis County, the map fails to create as compact a district as it could, and divides other communities of interest such as the Austin Independent School District. This district is the fifth largest district in the state of Texas. It is fifty-nine percent Hispanic, nine percent African American (not of Hispanic origin), and three percent Asian. Over sixty-three percent of the students come from low-income families and twenty-nine percent enter schools as English-language learners.

Kirk Watson  
Senator, District 14