

# SAN BENITO NEWS

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## Supreme Court strikes down court-drawn redistricting

### Special to the NEWS

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the court-drawn interim redistricting maps and led many candidates and elected leaders in Texas to sound off.

Congressional candidate Denise Saenz-Blanchard, who planned on running for District 27 which would have encompassed the Cameron County area, said although the decision would affect the upcoming elections it would not deter her campaign.



“Regardless of what impact this has on the timing of the Democratic Primary, I will continue to focus on new ideas and strategies to get small businesses growing and hiring again in south Texas,” Blanchard said. “While the insiders and politicians analyze and argue about what this means, I’m going to stay focused on what really matters here in south Texas: growing our economy and getting people back to work.”

Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., was more assertive.

“The Supreme Court ultimately upheld what we all know – that minority voting rights rest on unshakeable constitutional foundations and that the partisan maps forced through during the 82nd session do not pass muster,” he said. “The Supreme Court sent the court drawn interim maps back to the San Antonio Court and instructed them to redraw those maps in a way that gives more deference to the discriminatory partisan maps that were enacted by the 82nd legislature. However, the Supreme Court left the

door open for significant changes to those partisan maps if the San Antonio Court finds that they discriminate against minorities.”

Lucio added, “I believe the Supreme Court demonstrated an ignorance of Texas politics by saying that that the legislatively enacted maps reflect ‘the state’s policy judgments.’ They do not. Instead, they reflect a partisan ambition that fueled a legislative process where many were left in the dark. This undemocratic process produced maps that were laced with cynical gerrymandering and that deliberately ignored the vigorous growth of minority communities. How can the San Antonio court use such maps as a ‘starting point?’”

The senator also argued that the prolonged redistricting process affects the Valley because the state primaries will now likely be delayed until at least April as the legal wrangling continues.

The Texas Attorney General’s office, meanwhile, spoke favorable of the decision. “As the Justices point out, courts are ill-suited to make policy judgments and redistricting is primarily the responsibility of the State,” an AG press release read. “The Court made clear in a strongly-worded opinion that the district court must give deference to elected leaders of this state, and it’s clear by the Supreme Court ruling that the district court abandoned these guiding principles.”