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# FLOOD FACES FURY AT TOWN HALL



KENNETH FERRIERA PHOTOS, JOURNAL STAR

Town hall participants shout down an answer from U.S. Rep. Mike Flood during a town hall Monday at Kimball Recital Hall in Lincoln.



Thia Hartley of Lincoln shouts after an answer from U.S. Rep. Mike Flood at a town hall Monday at Kimball Recital Hall in Lincoln.

**ANDREW WEGLEY**  
Lincoln Journal Star

The first round of jeers came less than three minutes into the Republican congressman's remarks.

U.S. Rep. Mike Flood of Nebraska's 1st Congressional District faced a crowd of more than 700 at a Monday night town hall-style event in Lincoln, told attendees he intended to address the Medicaid provisions in the domestic policy bill he helped make federal law last month.

"I want to go right into this bill because I know this is something a lot of people have questions about, and quite frankly, from where I sit, there's been a lot of misinformation out there about the bill," he said.

Then came the first round of shouts and groans and insults that hardly ceased for most of 90 minutes in the Kimball Recital Hall where, after facing angry crowds at town halls in Columbus and Seward earlier this year, Flood encountered his fiercest backlash yet.

Peppered with questions over a range of hot-button issues — Israel's war in Gaza, the Jeffrey Epstein files and, most often, the steep cuts inside President Donald Trump's "One Big, Beautiful Bill" that he voted for — Flood was heckled and shouted down throughout the televised town hall.

Attendees cursed at the congressman. They called him a fascist and a liar. Police escorted one man from the recital hall after he chanted "Free Palestine" for more than five minutes.

Flood, meanwhile, defended himself and the law, which he acknowledged is not "perfect" while stumping for its most controversial measures, including more than \$1 trillion worth of cuts from Medicaid over the next decade along with cuts to federal nutrition aid.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office's estimated the package would cost more than 10 million Americans their coverage under the government insurance program that covers about 346,000 low-income Nebraskans.

Flood noted the law includes \$50 billion for rural health providers and that Nebraska lawmakers worked last year to secure about \$900 million in previously untapped federal health funds through what are known as provider taxes.

"I can tell you we're going to see an influx of money into Nebraska

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## States grapple for political advantage in Congress

**BILL BARROW, NADIA LATHAN AND MICHAEL R. BLOOD**  
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — The two most populous U.S. states — California and Texas — are grappling for political advantage ahead of the 2026 elections, setting up a national proxy war as Democrats and Republicans vie for control of Congress in the latter half of Donald Trump's second presidency.

In Texas, Democrats on Tuesday again prevented their state's House of Representatives from moving forward, at least for now, with a redrawn congressional map sought by Trump to shore up Republicans' 2026 midterm prospects as his political standing falters. It was the second consecutive day that absent Democrats forced a quick adjournment by denying the GOP majority the required quorum to take votes.

In California, Democrats encouraged by Gov. Gavin Newsom are considering new political maps that could slash five Republican-held House seats in the left-leaning state while bolstering Democratic incumbents in other battleground districts. The move is intended to counter any GOP gains in Texas. The two states' existing maps put Democrats within just three seats of reclaiming a U.S. House majority after the midterms.

Also on Tuesday, Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott asked the state's highest court to remove the Democratic House leader from office, escalating efforts to end the holdout blocking redrawn U.S. House maps sought by Trump.

Bypassing lower courts, Abbott filed a rare emergency petition straight to the all-Republican Texas Supreme Court just three days into a walkout by Democrats.

It hinges on what even some Republicans acknowledged is an untested legal theory that the absent lawmakers have effectively forfeited their office by refusing to come to the Texas Capitol.

The lawsuit from Abbott, a former state Supreme Court justice, seeks the removal of state House Democratic Caucus Chairman Rep. Gene Wu, who is one of dozens of members of his caucus staying in Chicago. The governor asked the court to rule by late Thursday afternoon.

Wu did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The overall fight, which threatens to spill over to other statehouses, demonstrates Trump's aggressive view of presidential power and his hold on the Republican Party. It also tests the historical balance of powers between the federal and state governments, with

Texas and California having long played leading roles in shaping that dynamic.

For years, the two states have set competing political and cultural curves, dueling over jobs, innovation, prestige and ideology against the backdrop of Republican domination in Texas and Democrats' control on the more liberal west coast. The two states have produced presidents and vice presidents and influential House leaders. Now, the rivalry is at the center of the two major parties national scramble to frame their approaches on redistricting as fair and impartial, while skewering the other as ruthlessly partisan.

"We are entitled to five more seats" in Texas, Trump insisted Tuesday in a CNBC interview. He pointed to California's existing maps, which are drawn

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