

# THE BATTALION

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## Judges redraw 13 congressional districts

HOUSTON (AP) — Federal judges on Tuesday drew new boundaries for 13 of the state's 30 congressional districts and ordered new elections to be held in them this fall.

Scrapping the results of primary and runoff elections in those districts, the three-judge panel issued redrawn maps to conform with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling outlawing racial gerrymandering.

Their action means nearly half the state's House races will have special elections in November that will operate like open primaries. Runoffs, if needed, will be held in December.

The judges said their only choices were to redraw the boundaries or allow illegal elections to take place.

"This court had to determine whether to order an interim districting plan, or to permit the 1996 congressional elections to proceed under the current, albeit unconstitutional districting scheme for yet another cycle," the judges wrote.

"The court's plan endeavored to affect as few as possible of the state's

voters, and outside the boundaries of Districts 18, 29, 30 and immediately adjacent districts, relatively few voters have been moved into new or unfamiliar districts," they wrote.

The Supreme Court in June said the 18th District seat in Houston held by Democrat Sheila Jackson Lee, the 29th in Houston held by Democrat Gene Green and the 30th in Dallas held by Democrat Eddie Bernice Johnson were unconstitutional.

The judges redrew those districts and 10 others for a total of seven in the Houston area and six in the Dallas area, affecting one third of Texas' 9.7 million registered voters.

"(The redrawn districts) hurt Democrats and help Republicans," said Green, who planned to appeal the judges' order. "Those decisions ought to be made by elected officials, not a three-judge panel."

Pending any appeal or stay of the judges' order, the special election will coincide with the Nov. 5 presidential election. Candidates must file by Aug. 30.

The Texas Secretary of State must certify the names on the ballot by Sept. 5, according to the judges' order.

A runoff election will be held Dec. 10 in districts where no candidate wins a majority of the November vote.

The incumbents in the 13 districts include House Majority Leader Dick Arney, his deputy Tom DeLay and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer, three powerful Republicans in districts that probably will continue to be GOP-dominated.

With the new elections, some incumbents who had faced no primary or major-party general election opposition now could find themselves drawing rivals. That includes Ms. Lee, Archer and Republican Sam Johnson in the Dallas area, analysts said.

And challengers in some affected districts could find themselves running in communities where they haven't campaigned before, rushing to build

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## Redistricting changes electoral fortunes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional candidates and other politicians pored over Texas' revised redistricting map Tuesday, seeking to decipher how electoral fortunes will change now that new elections have been ordered in nearly half the state's 30 House races.

The decision by a three-judge federal panel in Houston to redraw lines in 13 districts — cancelling election results from the March primaries and April runoffs in those districts — significantly alters the election landscape.

The immediate effect of the judges' order, stemming from their 1994 ruling

that three majority-minority districts were unconstitutionally drawn, is to throw into turmoil races in the 13 districts clustered in the Houston and Dallas areas.

Republicans hailed the judges' decision. "No longer will the citizens of our state be forced to endure a system that is racially unjust and immoral," said Edward Blum, one of the Republican plaintiffs who challenged the constitutionality of the three majority-minority districts.

Democrats weren't pleased.

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## Classes to start on Labor Day

By Tauma Wiggins  
THE BATTALION

Labor Day for most Bryan-College Station residents means rest and relaxation, but for Texas A&M students, it's time to hit the books again.

On Sept. 2, all Bryan-College Station area schools, post offices and libraries will close for Labor Day, but A&M will hold its first day of classes for the fall semester.

Cliff Lancaster, the A&M chancellor's chief of staff, said if classes were canceled for Labor Day, the only other option would be to shorten a different student holiday.

"We could swap and get Labor Day off, and then only have four instead of five days for spring break," Lancaster said. "But I don't think students would want that."

Some A&M students would prefer to have the day off, but not if it means sacrificing their Christmas or spring break holidays.

Holly Frey, a senior psychology major, said the idea of going to school on Labor Day is unappealing, but it is better than having a shorter Christmas break.

"I thought it (Labor Day) was a national holiday," Frey said. "I don't like the idea, but if I can go to school on Labor Day and get off one day earlier to go home for Christmas and see my

parents, I don't mind."

Registrar Donald Carter said A&M students have no classes on July Fourth, Thanksgiving or Spring Break.

Lancaster said A&M is required to observe certain holidays and, as of three years ago, Martin Luther King Day.

These days are the only official holidays during the academic year, but students also get other days off, such as reading days.

Sallie Sheppard, associate provost for Undergraduate Programs and Academic Services, said the issue of whether to observe the Easter holiday is raised every year.

"The government declares Easter a holiday, but no one wants to use it as a holiday," Sheppard said. "Now Good Friday is always a reading day, but it's not a holiday. It's a catch-up day for students to read and study."

Sheppard said the most recent change in the student calendar is the "redefined day," which is not a holiday.

She said Dec. 9 and 10, which are dead days, will be redefined days to make up for the missed classes from the previous week's Thanksgiving holiday.

The Academic Operations Committee will meet today to decide on the 1997-98 academic calendar.



Pat James, THE BATTALION

## PERMANENT MARKER

Pat Beck, a tattoo artist at The Arsenal in Bryan and an A&M graduate, inks a design on a customer Tuesday evening.

## HOME is where the heart IS

### Gramm returns to B-CS to discuss welfare

By Ann Marie Hauser  
THE BATTALION

Sen. Phil Gramm spent yesterday in College Station visiting Texas A&M and discussing his welfare reform ideas.

The Gramm Amendment will deny cash assistance and food stamps to convicted drug felons at the state and federal levels.

Gramm said welfare reform will serve as a deterrent in fighting the war against illegal drugs and violence in America.

"It's not right to be giving welfare to people that are selling drugs in public housing or taking the babies' food stamps and trading them for drugs," Gramm said. "If we're trying to help someone help themselves, they can't do it while using drugs."

Al Jones, Brazos County judge, said violators should not receive welfare.

"I certainly support the initiatives that he is taking," Jones said. "People not willing to obey the law should not be the benefactors of our generosity."

Gramm presented the progress of the welfare program from 1970 to the present using various charts and graphs.

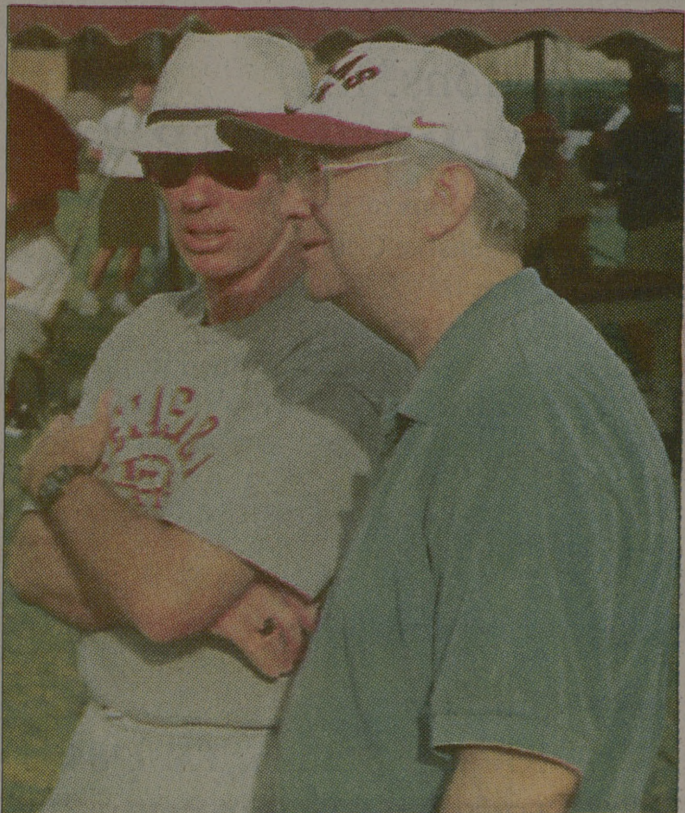
Gramm said \$5.2 trillion has been spent on welfare programs since the mid-1930s.

"Since the mid-1930s we have invested the equivalent of the entire value of all the buildings, all the plants, all the equipment, all the production capacity of America in trying to help people escape poverty," Gramm said. "There are more poor people today than when we started."

Besides denying welfare to drug felons, four additional elements were outlined for welfare reform. Welfare recipients who are physically and mentally stable must work, whether in on-the-job training or community service.

Under the new program, welfare recipients can receive benefits for a maximum of five years as they work toward financial independence. States will have complete flexibility

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Dave Winder, THE BATTALION

Phil Gramm visits with A&M football coach R. C. Slocum during evening practice Tuesday.

## University prepared to handle bomb threats

By Melissa Nunnery  
THE BATTALION

The University Police Department receives approximately two to three bomb threats a year on campus. The College Station Police and Fire departments are prepared to deal with those threats.

Bob Wiatt, director of University Security and Police, said no bombs have been found, despite the threats over the last 13 or 14 years he has been working at UPD.

"We do have them (bomb threats) on occasion — usually two or three a year — around final exam time in areas where exams are being given," Wiatt said. "That's just trying to get people

out of taking their tests."

According to UPD bomb-threat procedure, threats do not always lead to immediate evacuation.

When a bomb threat is called in to a building, the person in charge of the building is notified and employees check places such as trash cans and restrooms for anything suspicious. The building is not evacuated unless a device is found or it is deemed necessary to evacuate for safety reasons.

The policy states that routine evacuation would only lead to more threats because most threats are hoaxes.

Lt. Scott McCollum of the College

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## TWA investigators focus on debris closest to airport

EAST MORICHES, N.Y. (AP) — Suitcases found Tuesday in an underwater cluster of debris from TWA Flight 800, may bolster the theory that a bomb in the front cargo hold brought the plane down.

Divers used handheld sonar to look at the sunken bits and pieces, a Navy source said, describing the wreckage as "less concentrated and smaller" than the chunks of fuselage retrieved from other underwater wreckage areas further along the plane's flight path.

Because the wreckage nearest Kennedy Airport probably fell first from the plane July 17, it could tell investigators where the explosion originated on the aircraft.

A prime theory is that a bomb was placed in the front cargo hold, where

luggage was stored, a source close to the investigation has told The Associated Press. Determining that suitcases were the first items blown from the plane could support that theory.

Navy Adm. Edward Kristensen confirmed that suitcases were found amid the small pieces of debris. But National Transportation Safety Board Vice Chairman Robert Francis noted that luggage had also been retrieved from other wreckage fields where larger pieces of the plane were found. Together, the wreckage fields are spread over 5 miles, he said.

Francis also said Tuesday that investigators untangling the cockpit wreckage found intact instrument dials

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