Exhibit 14 to Davis Intervenors’ Opposition to Plaintiff State of Texas’ Motion for Summary Judgment

Letter from Senator Davis to Senator Kel Seliger (May 10, 2011)
May 10, 2011

The Honorable Kel Seliger
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Chairman Seliger:

As you know, I represent Senate District 10, which includes virtually every minority neighborhood in the City of Fort Worth. Senate District 10 also includes a large part of the City of Arlington and other smaller communities where both the African American and Hispanic populations are growing rapidly. Southeast Fort Worth, which serves as the political core of Senate District 10, is the third largest concentration of African American residents in the State of Texas. The City of Fort Worth and Senate District 10 also include one of the largest concentrations of Hispanic Texans not located on or along the border.

As the elected representative of so many minority residents, I have a responsibility to support and defend their interests before the Legislature. In light of this, I want to express my grave concern that my constituents have not been allowed to fairly participate in the redistricting process and, as a result, their rights under the US Voting Rights Act are being badly undermined.

The Senate Redistricting Committee has failed to adequately allow my constituents to provide comments or to be informed about the redistricting process or to offer views to the Legislature on the appropriate configuration of Senate Districts. The Redistricting Committee has not held any public hearings in the City of Fort Worth within any reasonable proximity of the minority neighborhoods in Senate District 10.

Moreover, I have not been provided information, access or input during important redistricting deliberations. By excluding my input as the elected representative from Senate District 10 during the deliberative process, you are excluding hundreds of thousands of minority residents in Senate District 10, thereby denying them their rights under the law.

Specifically, I asked to see maps being considered by you, your staff and apparently other Members on several occasions – most recently by direct request to you on Monday May 2nd, Tuesday May 3rd and Friday May 6th. Your committee clerk attended a meeting with me, yet intentionally failed to bring a map for me to review, in spite of my specific request that he do so. Your only visit to my office regarding this matter was late in the same day that I met with your committee clerk, which I understand you intended as a courtesy visit, but not one where you brought a map or were responding to my request to see a map. As it was late in the day on Friday, and as I had indicated to your committee clerk, I had already departed for the airport to return to the district when you stopped in.
In the meantime, I am aware that repeated meetings have been held with other Members of the Senate and that particular attention is being paid to the Members of the Senate in North Texas who represent Anglo-controlled districts. Your committee clerk personally told me that lawyers are reviewing draft plans. Clearly, the redistricting process is moving forward without the input of those representing large minority communities in Texas. Your failure to provide minority constituents in Fort Worth and Tarrant County the same access and level of participation as Anglo constituents is a profound and unfair denial of important and legally protected rights.

Just today I was allowed to review an already completed and predetermined proposed SD10 map that will be rolled out just hours from now in a Senate Redistricting Committee meeting which drastically alters the current coalition district and radically divides and undermines the minority communities of Tarrant County. This meeting does not represent any semblance of meaningful participation by me or the minority communities of Senate District 10.

As you know, I have provided both you and your committee clerk maps that I intend to formally offer as alternatives to the map that the committee will present which radically violates the protected coalition district and commits retrogression. Both of the proposed maps demonstrate that the large and concentrated minority population in North Texas can support at least two effective minority opportunity Senate Districts in North Texas – Senate District 10 and Senate District 23 – and that failure to retain two effective minority voter controlled districts in a new Senate map will violate the Voting Rights Act. In addition, of course, should you ignore these proposals and the Legislature ultimately enacts a plan reducing the voting strength of minority citizens in Senate District 10, you will have knowingly and deliberately undermined the voting rights of minorities in our state.

Please know that I remain prepared to work constructively with you to ensure the voting rights of the minority citizens I represent. We both have a legal and moral responsibility to head off a partisan redistricting plan that would cynically rob entire communities of their voting strength.

Sincerely,

Wendy Davis
Honorable Wendy Davis
Texas Senate, District 10