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Updated: Elections Chair Cain retreats on HB6, the omnibus elections bill, canceling hearing for now

It appears Chairman Cain created a lethal point of order on the bill by not stating a time certain for the committee to return from a lunch recess. The fix for that is to reschedule the hearing and start over

After a serious procedural error, *Texas House Elections* Chair **Briscoe Cain**, R-Deer Park, canceled the hearing for his *House Bill 6*, the omnibus election reform bill opposed by Democrats and voting rights groups and considered a top Republican priority.

Chair Cain recessed the committee for lunch after a brief standoff with Democrats.

After facing questions from Representatives **Michelle Beckley** of Carrollton and **John Bucy** of Austin, Vice Chair **Jessica González**, D-Dallas, who was presiding over the committee as Cain laid out his bill, recognized *Criminal Jurisprudence* Chair **Nicole Collier**, D-Fort Worth.

While Collier is not on the committee, it is of course common for non-committee members to be able to ask questions.

But Cain refused, essentially grabbing the gavel back from Vice Chair González, and attempted to recess for lunch, prompting a tug of war between the two of them.

Chair Cain tried to recess for lunch and then move on to witness testimony, leaving Collier unable to ask questions. The committee ended up recessing abruptly.

When they returned, Cain announced the hearing was over. It turns out he had not announced a time certain for the committee to return from the break or even say they were recessed subject to the call of the chair.

That would create a lethal point of order on a highly contentious bill.

“The fix for that is to schedule a new hearing for it and start over,” as *QR* editor **Scott Braddock** tweeted. Cain said he would look forward to setting a new date for a hearing on HB6.

This is the second time this week a major elections bill was blocked from being heard. Democrats delayed *SB 7* by *Senate State Affairs* Chair **Bryan Hughes**, R-Mineola, by tagging elections bills one after another. That hearing has been rescheduled for tomorrow.

Voting rights groups and proponents of the Texas GOP's priority bills still plan on testifying tomorrow in a jam-packed State Affairs hearing.

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