

THREE THINGS: A CALL TO ACTION FOR VOTING RIGHTS [UPDATE-2]

[NB: check the byline, thanks. Update(s) at the bottom of the post. /~Rayne]

It's time to go to the phones and demand your elected members of Congress not only support civil rights but fulfill their oaths of office.

Before I forget, here's what you're going to need:

Congressional switchboard: (202) 224-3121
or use Resist.bot

You may also look up your senators' local offices online and call the one closest to you.

When you call you're going to remind them the people are guaranteed under the Constitution a republican (little r) form of government under Article IV, Section 4:

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government...

The text may specifically say the states are guaranteed this, but it means that every state and in turn its citizens shall be assured their government is of, by, and for the people, with government's powers arising from their consent. No closed clique will govern opaquely for narrower interests.

To that end every citizen must be assured the right to vote as part of that guarantee. We expect our elected officials to deliver on that, not to act like some star chamber.

Call and demand this through the support of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the For the People Act, letting no procedural rule like the filibuster get in the way of the greater obligation to fulfill their oaths.

John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, S.4 (JLVRAA) undoes much of the damage done to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 caused by the Supreme Court's absurd decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013).

Because of *Shelby County v. Holder*, states have been able to violate citizens' voting rights as states are no longer held to a federal standard to ensure they do not discriminate against voters.

This violates the 14th Amendment and its Equal Protection Clause; depending on the state in which U.S. citizens resided, they may not be assured the same voting rights as citizens in other states.

The JLVRAA:

- Prevents states from reverting to discriminatory polling policies including but not limited to literacy tests and poll taxes with a new federal preclearance policy evaluating polling changes;
- Establishes adequate advance notice to citizens of changes to voting rules by states;
- Allows the U.S. Attorney General to assign observers where racial discrimination against voters is most likely;
- Not only requires federal approval for policies impacting the ability to cast a ballot or register to vote, but ensures availability of language assistance for ESL voters as well as fairness in redistricting.

This bill does not replace the 1965 Voting Rights Act but works hand in glove with it to protect every citizen's right to vote.

The For the People Act, S.1 also supports the

1965 Voting Rights Act by:

- Expanding automatic voter registration to every state;
- Restoring voting rights to Americans who have completed their felony sentences;
- Establishing independent redistricting commissions in every state to end partisan redistricting.
- Changes ethics and campaign finance rules to reduce improper and unethical influence on legislation.

You'd think this would be a no-brainer piece of legislation.

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This video by David Pepper offers the clearest explanation I've found as to why the filibuster must go when it comes to voting rights.

VIDEO: the filibuster is a procedural rule. Such a rule does not excuse violating the oath every Senator takes to protect the Constitution—and that oath is directly implicated when it comes to legislation to protect democracy itself.

The oath trumps.

WATCH: pic.twitter.com/sMKsohClUp

– David Pepper (@DavidPepper) January 12, 2022

Our rights are guaranteed by the Constitution. Our elected members of Congress have a duty to ensure the guarantee is fulfilled as part of their oath of office.

Their oath is NOT to changeable, non-permanent procedures which have benefited a narrower class of citizens.

Insist your senators fulfill their oath and end

the filibuster for any civil rights legislation including the JLVRAA and Freedom to Vote Act.

This applies equally to every member of Congress, no matter what state or party affiliation; they've sworn the same oath to defend and uphold the Constitution.

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Perhaps I could have written a shorter hortatory post; if I'd felt less than I do about this I might have, but these bills are essential to the preservation of our democratic republic.

Bottom line: call your senators and demand they fulfill their oaths by passing the JLVRAA and Freedom to Vote Act, ending the filibuster as necessary to pass these bills.

Congressional switchboard: (202) 224-3121
or use Resist.bot

Now go – get in good trouble. Let us know how you did in comments.

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UPDATE-1 – 5:00 PM –

Looks like there may have been a breakthrough on a procedural basis:

□BREAKING: Senator Schumer announces plan to push through filibuster and proceed with voting rights legislation using a procedure known as “messages between the Houses” in a caucus memo.

Here's what you need to know□□

– Democracy Docket (@DemocracyDocket)
January 12, 2022

Fingers crossed this works. Can't be certain we have 50 senators supporting these two bills yet.

If your senators are Republicans or Independents, call them anyhow. All 100 senators swore the same oath.

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UPDATE-2 – 1:00 P.M. 13-JAN-2022 –

Last evening Michael Li of the Brennan Center noted the two voting rights bills have been consolidated, which may make the “message between the Houses” procedure much easier.

The Freedom to Vote Act and John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act are now the “Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act” <https://t.co/KjhnM45C00>
[pic.twitter.com/9Tf86gAQXo](https://t.co/KjhnM45C00)

– Michael Li  (@mcpli) January 13, 2022

This morning Democracy Docket’s Marc Elias noted a change adding anti-subversion wording:

MEDIA: There was a @nytimes analysis yesterday that argued that Freedom to Vote Act didn’t do enough on election subversion. After that, Dems released the NEW Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act—which has new, excellent anti-subversion provisions.

Please do not confuse the two.

– Marc E. Elias (@marceelias) January 13, 2022

So the new “Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act” isn’t just a consolidation but an improved bill.

I need to confirm the improvement may get around that corrupt twit Sen. Marsha Blackburn’s block of three election security bills which were intended to prevent foreign interference and tampering with electronic voting machines over the internet. (By the way, racist Blackburn is up for re-election in 2025. Ditch her, Tennesseans.)

The problem even with the procedural maneuvering remains Sen. DINO Sinema who has given a speech

this morning which Sen. McConnell praised. That should tell you all you need to know.

Keep calling your senators including GOP senators. The ones who are more centrist like Murkowski in Alaska may be amenable – especially Murkowski given the percentage of voters in her state who are Native American.