

Senators Block Democrat Party Efforts to Change Voting Requirements

Democratic Senators Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Joe Manchin of West Virginia are blocking the Democratic Party's efforts to change voting requirements and procedures for future elections.

One source says, "[Both senators] have faced heavy criticism for the opposition to eliminate or change the rule, which effectively requires most bills to have the support of 60 senators in a chamber that is currently split 50-50."

The filibuster "offers unique leverage to the minority political party in the Senate" and requires Democrats and Republicans to negotiate the passage of bills that will become national law.

During a press conference, a reporter made a comment about Sinema choosing between the filibuster and democracy. Sinema responded, "I've long been a supporter of the filibuster because it is a tool that protects the democracy of our nation. ... The idea of the filibuster was created by those who came before us ... to create community and to encourage senators to find bipartisanship and work together. To those who say, 'We must make a choice between the filibuster and X', I say this is a false choice ... [W]hen you have a system that's not working effectively ... the way to fix that is to change your behavior, not eliminate the rules or change the rules, but to change your behavior."

Reportedly, "Sinema's comments came the same day that the Senate parliamentarian ruled that Democrats can use budget-reconciliation rules just one more time this year. [These rules] allow senators to pass certain bills via a simple

majority instead of the 60-vote threshold required to avoid a filibuster.” One of Congress’s key bills, purportedly held up single-handedly by Sinema, deals with federal and local election processes.

The For the People Act of 2021 summary says the bill “addresses voter access, election integrity and security, campaign finance and ethics for the three branches of government. Specifically, the bill expands voter registration (e.g., automatic and same-day registration) and voting access (e.g., vote-by-mail and early voting). It also limits removing voters from voter rolls. The bill requires states to establish independent redistricting commissions to carry out congressional redistricting.”

Sen. Manchin appeared on Fox News Sunday to discuss various topics, including infrastructure and voting reform. Commenting on Biden’s infrastructure spending proposal, Manchin said, “I commend the president and Sen. Capito, my colleague in West Virginia, for continuing to work hard, they’re working hard trying to find a compromise. They’ve come a long way and they’re moving in the right direction. In the first five months of this year, we have operated more the way the Senate is supposed to operate, in a bipartisan way ... [but] people are continually trying to push us to more division.”

Manchin shared similar thoughts on voting reform when he said, “Voting is the bedrock of our democracy – open, fair, secured voting. We used to go around the world and explain and show and observe procedures in a democracy. And now, if we can’t practice what we preach, we’re going to basically do an 800-page overhaul of the voting rights – or what we call the For the People think there’s a lot of great things I agree [with] in that piece of legislation, but there’s an awful lot of things [in there] that basically don’t pertain directly to voting.”

When pressed further on voting to pass , Manchin reiterated,

“I think it’s the wrong piece of legislation to bring our country together and unite our country. And I’m not supporting that because I think it will divide us further. I don’t want to be in a country that’s divided any further than the one I’m in right now. I love my country and I think my Democrat and Republican colleagues feel the same.”

Manchin also said he fully supports the current administration and wants to move forward with bringing the country together.

In an op-ed, Manchin said, “Unfortunately, we now are witnessing that the fundamental right to vote has itself become overtly politicized. Today’s debate about how to best protect our right to vote and hold elections, however, is not about finding common ground, but seeking partisan advantage ... As such, congressional action on federal voting rights legislation must be the result of both Democrats and Republicans coming together to find a pathway forward or we risk further dividing and destroying the republic we swore to protect and defend as elected officials.”

He continued, “[Democrats have] attempted to demonize the filibuster and conveniently ignore how it has been critical to protecting [their] rights in the past. I have always said, ‘If I can’t go home and explain it [to West Virginians], I can’t vote for it.’ And I cannot explain strictly partisan election reform or blowing up the Senate rules to expedite one party’s agenda.” {eoa}

*For more than a decade, **Tiffany Benson’s** passion for writing has exceeded most of her interests. When she’s not catching up on politics or watching documentaries, she enjoys journaling, fiction and contributing to her blog: .*