

**BILL SUMMARY: S. 2747**

# FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

A BILL TO IMPROVE BALLOT ACCESS FOR ALL AMERICANS, ADVANCE COMMONSENSE ELECTION INTEGRITY REFORMS, AND PROTECT OUR DEMOCRACY FROM EMERGING THREATS.

## OUR POSITION

Our democracy is not a given; it has been contested since our nation's founding and must be fought for, defended, and constantly expanded. The right to vote represents the lifeblood of our democracy; it is what gives democracy its legitimacy and power. Morally, suppressing the right to vote is a direct assault on both our civic equality and our Christian conviction that all people are made in the image of God.

## HIGHLIGHT OF SUPPORTERS

- Sojourners
- AFL-CIO
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
- American Federation of Teachers
- American Sustainable Business Council
- Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- Brennan Center for Justice
- Center for American Progress
- Church World Service
- Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
- DC Vote
- Faith in Public Life
- Faithful America
- Franciscan Action Network
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Government Accountability Project
- Hip Hop Caucus
- Hispanic Federation
- Indivisible
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Council of Jewish Women
- NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
- Unidos

## LEAD SPONSORS

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)	Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)	Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)
Sen. Angus King (I-ME)	Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT)
Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)	Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA)

## CURRENT SPONSORS:\*

Senate: 42

\*as of 01.12.22

## WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO

The Freedom to Vote Act of 2021 will address recent threats to our democracy by protecting access to the ballot, ending partisan gerrymandering, countering undemocratic and dangerous election subversion efforts, and helping to eliminate the undue influence of dark money in our elections. This bill incorporates feedback from state and local election officials as well as the American people to ensure the right to vote in free and fair elections.

If passed, this bill would:

- Advance voter access by implementing reliable state best practices for voter registration and election administration to ensure all Americans can easily exercise their freedom to vote regardless of where they live. This includes making Election Day a federal holiday and strengthen voter list maintenance standards;
- Promote confidence in elections, stop partisan election subversion, and protect against election interference, both foreign and domestic. This includes measures to prevent state election subversion and protections for election records and infrastructure, as well as ballot tabulation; and,
- Prevent partisan manipulation of the redistricting process, establishes uniform disclosure standards for money in politics, and empowers states to make critical investments in their election systems. This includes measures to combat secret money and election interference, a ban on partisan gerrymandering to ensure every American is represented fairly, and state election assistance.

## WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ENACT THIS LEGISLATION

- No matter where we live or what our background, Americans want fair elections, where we all have the freedom to vote and make our voices heard on important issues such as providing affordable health care, creating good jobs, and ensuring quality education.
- Unfortunately, the very foundation of our democracy—free and fair elections—is in danger. At least 19 states passed 34 laws restricting access to voting. More than 440 bills with provisions that restrict voting access have been introduced in 49 states in the 2021 legislative sessions.
- Any law that restricts the sacred right to vote is unjust because it denies citizens their agency and voice. Put in theological terms, unjust laws assault the imago Dei, the core belief that every person is made in God's divine image. What is true for unjust laws, is also true for unjust rules—particularly the current filibuster.
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been extended three times since it was introduced, with bipartisan support and under Republican presidents like Nixon and both Bushes. In fact, Senator McConnell and fifteen other current Republican Senators voted to extend the VRA by a margin of 98-0 in 2006;
- Even Strom Thurmond, staunch opponent of Civil Rights legislation in the 50s and 60s, who used the filibuster to cudgel efforts to bring equality to all, eventually supported Voting Rights legislation. What is the current excuse for inaction and chaos today?

## ISSUE STAFF

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