Senate Republicans Use Filibuster to Block Democrat-Backed Voting Bill

[Senate](#) Republicans blocked a Democrat-backed election-related measure via the filibuster on June 22, potentially setting up a battle over the 60-vote legislative procedure.

Senators voted 50-50 in the equally divided upper chamber on advancing the "For the People Act," a sweeping bill that would change U.S. voting laws. The bill was co-sponsored by every Democrat except Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), who called it too partisan and proposed his own election-related measure, although Manchin ultimately voted to allow debate on the bill.

Manchin said earlier on June 22 that he would vote to approve the measure because he wanted the Senate to debate talks with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and "found common ground with my Democratic colleagues on a new version of the bill that ensures our elections are fair, accessible, and secure."

During the Senate session, Vice President Kamala Harris presided over the vote. However, she wasn't able to cast the tie-breaking vote, as Republicans invoked the filibuster, which needs 60 votes to be overcome.

The Republican move to allow the Senate to debate the bill will likely trigger a more intense pressure campaign against Manchin and fellow moderate Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) to eliminating the filibuster—a move that Manchin and Sinema both staunchly oppose.

President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats have said that passing the "For the People Act" is needed, after GOP-led state legislatures passed election integrity measures of their own in recent months.

Prior to the vote, Biden wrote on Twitter that the bill warrants being passed because "democracy is in peril."

"We need to protect the sacred right to vote and ensure 'We the People' choose our [leaders]," he said.

Republicans have described the bill as a partisan power grab that would fundamentally change how federal elections are conducted.

Republican senators continued with that line of reasoning on June 22, with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) leading the way on the floor.

McConnell said that Republicans would invoke the filibuster because the "Senate is only an obstacle when the policy is flawed and the process is rotten," while noting that the upper chamber "is no obstacle to voting laws done the right way."

Speaking from the Senate floor on June 22, Schumer criticized Republicans and asserted that former President Donald Trump's claims about the 2020 election "threatens to envelop one of America's major political parties." That's why, according to the Senate leader, there are so many Republican-led states passing more voter laws.

However, even if the bill had advanced, Democrats have their own divisions. Until June 22, it wasn't clear that they would be united on the vote until Manchin, considered to be a moderate, announced he would support debate on the measure. The senator had previously said that he wouldn't back the bill because it would lack GOP support.

Manchin has proposed adding provisions for a national voter identification requirement, which many Democrats opposed.

Another moderate, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), said she supported some aspects of the legislation, but said the measure would add too many bureaucratic hurdles.

"It will make elections more difficult, expensive, subject to federal micromanagement," Murkowski [told](#) The Associated Press.

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