

turn them in. This has been shown to be a recipe for mischief and election fraud. Yet they want to institutionalize it, and they want to say that the States cannot prohibit it.

These proposals would do more to protect our Democratic colleagues' jobs than to safeguard American voting rights.

What really concerns me and, I imagine, the American people as they learn more and more about what is in these bills is how much damage the Democratic Party is willing to do in order to secure a partisan victory. Not only are our colleagues trying to seize the authority given under the Constitution to the States to manage their own elections, they are willing to take a wrecking ball to the U.S. Senate itself and particularly the Senate rules. Somehow, protecting the foundation of our democracy has turned into ignoring the Constitution and blowing up this institution.

I need to clarify that not all 50 Senate Democrats are on board with this plan. Thank goodness, two of our colleagues have been clear in their outright opposition to eliminating or weakening the filibuster—the requirement that legislation, before it passes, must have bipartisan support rather than purely partisan bills like our Democratic colleagues want to pass without any support on the Republican side.

While there are two of our Senate colleagues from West Virginia and Arizona who have been public about their opposition to blowing up the Senate and to breaking Senate rules in order to accomplish a partisan objective, I imagine there are others unnamed who share the same concerns privately.

I hope our friends on the other side of the aisle will remain steadfast in their commitment to our Constitution and the norms and rules of this institution. If our colleagues are willing to go this far in the pursuit of raw political power, I would hate to think about how they would use it if they were to succeed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ELECTIONS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, when Tennesseans go to the polls and cast their vote, they do so with the hope that the person whose name appears on their ballot will do what is best for their community. They expect that person to show respect for the Constitution and the rule of law and to protect the integrity of our most important institutions.

The people place a great deal of trust in us, and I don't think it is too much

to ask that we return the favor by recognizing that there are limits to how far the Federal Government can expand its reach. Many of my Democratic colleagues, however, would disagree with me on that premise. They returned to Washington this week ready to squander the people's trust on yet another power grab.

The election bill they are prepared to break the Senate rules to pass has failed multiple times, under multiple titles, and in different packaging. This has gone on for the last 20 years. But this latest round has one thing in common with all the other drafts that found their rightful place in the trash can: It has nothing to do with protecting the ballot box.

This is not a voting rights bill; it is a sweeping takeover of our democracy and a shocking attack on the constitutional authority of the States to determine the time, place, and manner of elections. That is right. This is not in statute; it is article I, section 4 of the Constitution.

I have said it before. I will say it again. These proposals read like something concocted by someone who has never stepped foot behind the scenes of their local polling place. It is concocted by people who probably have never spent 10 minutes as a poll worker carrying out and implementing an election, and they absolutely have never served a term on a local election commission.

It seems that our friends across the aisle are looking at all of these local elected and appointed officials who work elections and are saying: We think that you just are incapable and inept to carry out an election.

How disrespectful can you be?

The Federal Government has got to come in and save the day and take away the ability of your local elections registrar to carry forward an election.

I hope my colleagues will think about the message that they are sending because there is nothing in these proposals that would help your State and local leaders secure elections, and, in fact, many provisions would actually weaken the checks already in place against voter fraud.

This is the opposite of how it should be. It should be easy to vote and hard to cheat, not the other way around. And the people of this country and elected leaders have been saying no to the Federal takeover of elections for the past 20 years. But here we are again having to once again stand up against this desperate attempt to undermine voters and empower cheats and criminals by mandating ballot harvesting while rejecting voter ID requirements. That is in their bill—got to do it, got to allow ballot harvesting. That is where shenanigans happen.

We can't have voter ID requirements—no, no, no. We don't want anybody at the ballot box having to prove who they are. But be ready to show that ID if you want to get on a plane, if you want to get in a government

building, if you want to go buy a bottle of wine. Be ready to show that ID, prove your age, and prove who you are.

Their bill would also centralize power over elections in the hands of faceless, unaccountable bureaucrats—that is right—not your friends and neighbors working the polls and making decisions and serving on local election commissions. You will never know the people who say, “Hey, you are too stupid to figure out how to run these elections,” because the Democrats are going to take all the power and authority away from your local friends and neighbors and send it to bureaucrats here in DC.

And they would embrace a one-size-fits-all rule book that any seasoned election worker knows will throw polling places into chaos.

In my home county in Tennessee, we have people who have worked these polls for years. They are dedicated. They are good people. I don't know their political party. I just know that they show up to make certain that our elections are free and fair, and I appreciate them.

Since the first iteration of this bill reared its head, the American people have seen it for what it is: an activist-driven, power-hungry solution in search of problems that do not exist. That is right; the problems don't exist.

The Democrats want you to believe that America as we know it will end if they don't pass this bill. They are acting like elections are in crisis. But do you know what? I think maybe it is the Democratic Party that is in crisis. They are staring at decades-high inflation, crime spikes, cascading public health failures, a southern border on the verge of collapse, embarrassing approval ratings, infighting so intense that watching the nightly news feels like you are watching a soap opera.

They can't get their arms around COVID. They can't figure it out. I just heard coming over here that the CDC is now going to mandate that insurance companies have to supply home testing kits for all of their enrollees. I mean, yeah, I think it is a party in crisis. And do you know what? The Democrats right now, they are desperate for a distraction. Oh, just give them something to change the narrative. And the benefit of this one, if they could pull this off, is that they won't have to worry about the American people holding them accountable for the fallout because they now will control the ballot process; they will control the election commissions.

And do you know what they are saying to the American public? Your vote doesn't count.

We have treasured one person, one vote. We have treasured fair, free, honest elections. And the Democrats are ready to throw it away for a power grab that is unprecedented and is incredibly disrespectful of the men and women in each of our counties who give of their time and work to hold these elections.

This is more than just another example of partisanship holding the Senate

hostage. And it is partisanship. It is “We have to do this, take away power from the people.”

Oh, isn’t it supposed to be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people? But, oh, I think my colleagues across the aisle have forgotten that. They think it is government for the powerful, government that is in control of one party and one party’s agenda. That is what they are thinking.

This attack on the integrity of our elections is a complete betrayal of the trust that the people have given elected officials because we have colleagues across the aisle who are basically looking at their constituents in their various States and saying: Your opinion does not count.

Think about that.

You are not good enough. You are not smart enough. You can’t handle it. So, hey—Federal Government—we are going to come and save you from yourselves. That is what they think.

It is their constitutional prerogative to determine the time, place, and manner of their own elections. That is what is given to the State legislatures. It is their prerogative, and it is not the job of Congress or the President or a battalion of unelected, faceless, nameless, unaccountable bureaucrats to burn down the goalposts when things at the ballot box don’t go their way. But that is exactly what the Democratic Party is trying to do this week.

So you never will be able to complain to them. They want to hold all the cards. The purpose of this latest power grab isn’t to make the people feel secure. Its purpose is to inject hysteria into what should be a very serious conversation about actually protecting the vote.

Everything the people hear from the Democrats this week will have been scripted to minimize truth and maximize chaos. Remember, they want you to believe that elections are in crisis.

“We have to fix it.”

But, fortunately, Tennesseans and the American people know better than to believe what they are hearing on the nightly news and to believe what is coming from the Democratic Party. They also know there is only one reason a political party would work this hard to make elections easier for them to manipulate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote scheduled at 5:30 commence immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 612, Alan Davidson, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

Charles E. Schumer, Maria Cantwell, Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Gary C. Peters, Chris Van Hollen, Jeanne Shaheen, Tina Smith, Sheldon Whitehouse, Thomas R. Carper, Mazie K. Hirono, John W. Hickenlooper, Edward J. Markey, Jack Reed, Jacky Rosen, Tammy Baldwin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Alan Davidson, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted “Nay.”

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 64, nays 30, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 3 Ex.]

#### YEAS—64

|              |              |            |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin      | Heinrich     | Reed       |
| Bennet       | Hickenlooper | Romney     |
| Blumenthal   | Hirono       | Rosen      |
| Blunt        | Inhofe       | Rounds     |
| Booker       | Kaine        | Schatz     |
| Brown        | Kelly        | Schumer    |
| Burr         | King         | Shaheen    |
| Cantwell     | Klobuchar    | Sinema     |
| Capito       | Leahy        | Smith      |
| Cardin       | Lee          | Stabenow   |
| Carper       | Luján        | Sullivan   |
| Casey        | Manchin      | Tester     |
| Collins      | Markey       | Tillis     |
| Coons        | Menendez     | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley      | Warner     |
| Duckworth    | Moran        | Warnock    |
| Durbin       | Murkowski    | Warren     |
| Fischer      | Murphy       | Whitehouse |
| Gillibrand   | Murray       | Wicker     |
| Graham       | Padilla      | Wyden      |
| Grassley     | Peters       |            |
| Hassan       | Portman      |            |

#### NAYS—30

|           |        |         |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| Barrasso  | Cornyn | Cruz    |
| Blackburn | Cotton | Daines  |
| Boozman   | Cramer | Ernst   |
| Braun     | Crapo  | Hagerty |

Hawley  
Johnson  
Kennedy  
Lankford  
Lummis  
Marshall

McConnell  
Paul  
Risch  
Rubio  
Sasse  
Scott (FL)

Scott (SC)  
Shelby  
Thune  
Toomey  
Tuberville  
Young

#### NOT VOTING—6

Cassidy  
Feinstein

Hoeven  
Hyde-Smith

Ossoff  
Sanders

(Mr. HEINRICH assumed the Chair.)  
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The yeas are 64, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

#### TRIBUTE TO JACK BRAMMER

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, when Jack Brammer interviewed me in 1984 for one of the first profile pieces of my political career, I quickly saw the high quality of his reporting. He was even-handed, fair, and honest—and has remained so throughout his 43 year career as the Lexington Herald-Leader’s statehouse reporter. Jack has always been among the best journalists in the Commonwealth. Today, in honor of his retirement, I recognize him for standing at the pinnacle of Kentucky journalism for over four decades.

Jack Brammer is a lifelong Kentuckian. A native of Maysville, he joined the Lexington Herald-Leader in 1978 and has covered State politics ever since. We met in 1984 during my initial race for the U.S. Senate. Though many considered me an underdog, facing off against an entrenched incumbent, Jack took extensive time to interview me for his Herald-Leader profile. He even visited my parents in Shelbyville, sitting with them for hours to discuss my background and upbringing.

In today’s era of journalism, when so much reporting takes place via text, tweet, and email, Jack’s methods might seem startlingly old-fashioned. But he kept up his same dogged style, always going above and beyond to deliver the complete, unabridged truth to Kentuckians. He is a journalist in the best mold of the profession: unafraid to report the facts, presented without editorializing, and allowing his readers to come to their own conclusions. I will miss Jack’s steadfast commitment to the truth, which can often seem sorely lacking in today’s fast-paced, cut-throat media industry.

In his 43 years on the statehouse beat, Jack covered nearly every major