

to build support across partisan, ideological, and regional lines. We worked to bring Americans together—not to push them farther apart.

They concluded:

We never demanded the end of the system of checks and balances. In the end, we won the battle by changing votes and not—

Not—

by breaking the rules.

These were leftwing activists writing less than 20 years ago.

So let's spell this out. Democrats want the American people to believe the filibuster was not a Jim Crow relic in 2005; it was not even a Jim Crow relic in 2020; just miraculously became a Jim Crow relic in 2021; briefly stopped being a Jim Crow relic last Thursday, but it is now back to being a Jim Crow relic this week.

Now, to be clear, the partisan election takeover bills that Democrats want to ram through this week are not—not—in any way successors of the civil rights legislation from the mid-20th century. It has been, is today, and will remain illegal to discriminate against voters anywhere in America because of their race—period. That is the law now.

Targeting Americans' online speech and sending government money to political campaigns is not about civil rights. It is about tilting the playing field. Weakening wildly popular voter ID laws and making it harder to produce accurate voter rolls is not about making voting easier; it is about making cheating easier. Changing the laws so that our partisan Attorney General can rewrite voting laws without even having to win in court is not about promoting justice; it is about short-circuiting justice. This is about one party wanting the power to unilaterally rewrite the rule book of American elections.

Now, interestingly, the Biden administration staff has gone out of its way lately to highlight my—my—long, strong record on real civil rights and real voting rights. The President's Press Secretary explained that I have "a pretty strong record of supporting voting rights." She is right about that. And that is exactly why I have no patience—none—for the unrelated partisan takeover that some Democrats are trying to rebrand with that banner.

The Democratic leader argues that his proposed elections takeover and his efforts to break the Senate are last resorts because of new State laws that passed in 2021. He says it is irrelevant that 2020 saw record turnout and—listen to this—94 percent said voting was easy because this debate is exclusively about what happened in 2021. But Democrats have been pushing these same policy charges in the same Chicken Little rhetoric since 2019, a year and a half before 2020 election, which Democrats now call a high-turnout success.

The Democratic leader gave an interview claiming that evil Republicans were trying to attack voting and dis-

enfranchise people. Of course, when Democrats went on to win the White House, the 2020 election went from presumptively illegitimate to exemplary and unquestionable overnight. Around the same time, mid-2019, Senator SCHUMER began floating a nuclear attack on Senate rules. It is completely untethered from the elections issue. He just thought breaking the rules would make for a livelier stint as majority leader.

Washington Democrats have wanted the power to rewrite the rules for political speech and election laws long, long before the events that are supposed to justify it, and the Democratic leader's effort to break the Senate long predates the latest pretext.

We have strong disagreements about the substance of these bills, but, even more broadly, we see decreasing trust in our democracy among both political sides. We have a sitting President of the United States shouting that U.S. Senators are on the side of Bull Connor and Jefferson Davis for refusing to shatter the Senate.

Was the Senate created to make these kinds of factional fevers worse or to help break the fevers? Does the Senate exist to help narrow majorities double down on divisions or to force broad coalitions to build bridges?

This fake hysteria does not prove the Senate is obsolete. It proves the Senate is as necessary as ever.

Republicans have supported this limitation on the majority's power both when we have been in the minority, which these rules protect, and when we have been the majority, which they inconvenience.

And last week, some of our colleagues across the aisle reconfirmed that they have the courage and the principle to keep their word and to protect the institution as well. But too many of our colleagues across the aisle still want to respond to a 50-50 Senate with a rule-breaking power grab.

Voting to break this institution will not be a free vote or a harmless action, even if their effort fails. An unprincipled attempt at grabbing power is not harmless just because it fails. Voting to break the Senate is not cost-free just because a bipartisan majority of your colleagues have the wisdom to stop you. It is amazing that our colleagues are this in thrall to radical activists.

We have inflation, a pandemic, rampant violent crime, a border crisis, and possibly a war on the European continent. But rather than work on any of that, Senate Democrats want to march their own legacies with a reckless—reckless—procedural vote they know will fail. A faction this desperate for unlimited short-term power is a faction that must be denied it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Wash-

H.R. 5746

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I care about the future of this institution, but right now, I care more about the future of our democracy. Our country has been the bedrock for democracies around the world. It has been the gold standard by which other countries wishing to achieve transparency and validation of their governments, have asked us to come and witness their elections.

Let's not forget what is great about a democracy. The power rests with the people. And when you have an election, it is the people who have spoken.

So whether it was F.D.R. and the New Deal, or Ronald Reagan declaring "Morning in America," the people had spoken, and the country went about the change that was implemented because of free and fair elections.

Trust me, there are countries who are jealous of this. They obviously run their countries by other means. They are less stable, and they are less egalitarian. And yet, if we think of the many great advantages of a democracy, nothing says it better than the people have spoken.

Yet now, we have a former President of the United States, Donald Trump, who has dared to say and continues to say the people haven't spoken. Donald Trump is not just like the guy at a football game who doesn't like the referee's calls. Donald Trump has taken it to a whole new level of basically, without evidence, saying his team didn't lose the game.

Can you imagine an NFL or college football structure where the coach says, "I don't like the ref's call. My team didn't lose the game. And I'm going to spend the rest of my time going, marching around to every football game and every community saying my team didn't lose the game."

Well, thank God college and professional coaches know better. They don't do this. And yet former President Trump keeps saying, I don't like the call of election officials, judges, Federal courts, never mind there were 60 decisions by different courts. I am going to protest the outcome of this election.

Never in the history of our country do I know a major race where someone declared they really didn't lose. What if everybody went around saying, I really didn't lose? What if our system of governments would be affected by that?

Well, it is getting to that level of absurdity. The Republican nominee in the 2020 Washington gubernatorial election lost by over 600,000 votes. Yet he claimed voter fraud. He lost by 56-43. And even though he lost by such a huge margin, he claimed voter fraud. He sued the secretary of state, who happened to be a Republican, in King County Superior Court. He only dropped the election fraud lawsuit after the court threatened his lawyer with making meritless claims.

Do we really understand this danger, the danger of people in our country, to

our economy, to our way of life if these falsehoods continue? We are not here, though, just because a former President cannot accept an election loss. He began sowing these seeds of distrust into our election system the minute he stepped onto the national stage.

We are here because the problem has become so serious that people are now trying to disenfranchise the voting rights of our fellow Americans. Some voter suppression tactics are being put in place because some believe the former President did not like the outcome of the election.

I want to be clear. There are people on both sides of the aisle that do believe in free and fair elections. There are Republicans in key election positions who stood up to the illegal tactics of the President when he tried to change the outcome of the last election. But what our country can't afford right now is the continuation of Trump-think to allow to erode the voting rights of our fellow Americans.

Voting rights have been hard fought and hard won. I know the President presiding understands this—first by women in 1920, then, later, protecting minority groups in 1965 with the Voting Rights Act. In 1970, we updated it, making standards helping to regulate Presidential elections—in 1975, saying we had to protect minorities. Both sides of the aisle agreed to this. And in 1992, we expanded it for bilingual education requirements. That passed with 75–20 votes. And again in 2006, the last time the voting rights was updated, we were in a similar situation. The Supreme Court had two cases and struck down part of the act, and we all came together to renew and reaffirm the constitutional protections for people in the United States of America. It passed 98–0.

There is nothing wrong with the John Lewis Voting Rights law before us. There is nothing wrong with the John Lewis Voting Rights law before us.

It is a bill with bipartisan support that tries to maintain, I think, a Federal minimum assurance that States don't suppress the rights of our fellow Americans. When Martin Luther King was fighting this fight, he said, "one man, one vote." He knew that this was about making sure that everybody had a chance to vote.

The John Lewis Act is a continuation of those rights in upgrading something that has been upgraded numerous times since 1965. That is why my colleagues Senator MANCHIN and MURKOWSKI called for bipartisan reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, a bipartisan call for reauthorization last spring of the Voting Rights Act. They said, "Inaction is not an option." They continued to say, "Congress must come together just as we have done in the past time and time again to reaffirm our long-standing bipartisan commitment to free, accessible, and secure elections."

And that is what we must do now. That is why there are 150 businesses

who support the John Lewis Act—companies like Microsoft and Google, Intel and Tesla, Target, PayPal. These are companies who know and understand, they want to do business in a democracy. As Tim Cook said, the right to vote is fundamental to our democracy.

American history is a story of expanding the right to vote to all citizens, and Black people in particular have had to march, struggle, and even give their lives for more than a century to defend that right, and we support efforts to ensure that our democracy and our future is more hopeful and inclusive than the past.

There are others—Best Buy—an election cannot be free or fair if every eligible voter is not given a fair chance to vote or if the law makes it harder to do so.

Now, I disagree with my colleague who was just on the floor because there is a lot of demeaning of the system. I am not going to spend a lot of time on this now because I have another segment here on the floor later, but I come from a vote-by-mail State, and I am proud of what our State has accomplished. So I do not appreciate the disinformation of Newt Gingrich when he says, "The biggest way with to expand voter fraud is to expand vote-by-mail."

He is wrong. If I could slash a red line and a red circle through this now, I would do so. But I will spend many minutes later on the floor talking to people why vote-by-mail is part of the solution and not the threat that he thinks it is.

Companies know that when it comes to our economy, we are greatly aided by being in a democracy, and that is why they don't want it eroded. It will cost us if we are a less stable place to do business. So why now do people refuse to engage on the John Lewis Voting Rights Act?

You know, I might be one of those people who would say, "Don't change the filibuster rule, we can wait."

Wait? Wait? For what? What are we waiting for? Our Capitol was attacked. We were attacked. People defending us were killed. For what? For what? A big lie, a big lie about our election.

I sat outside the Capitol on January 6 and listened to the President telling these lies I knew weren't true. I knew what he said wasn't correct about our voting laws because I know and understand them, and I certainly know vote-by-mail. But he said many lies that now many court decisions have all said are not true.

But the point is that Donald Trump and his followers keep following and they tell the people the election wasn't fairly decided, and now, they are trying to pass State laws eroding our constitutional rights to protect every American's ability to vote, and some here don't want to act.

Our democracy is under threat, and people are trying to undermine the credibility of our elections, and you don't want to act. Trump supporters

are literally trying to hoist a Jolly Roger flag over our democracy because they lost the election, and some people don't want to act. Some percentage of the Republican Party now believe that the election was wrongly decided, and some people don't want to act.

We have to have faith in close elections, and the best way to do that is not to suppress the vote but encourage and empower more people to vote in a safe and secure manner. We need to believe in our voting system, not believe that we can undermine it.

Democracies don't grow on trees. They need to be protected. They need to be defended. They need to be fought for. And with all the challenges we are facing—COVID, a changing economy in an information age, global migration, climate change—I am getting too many questions from my constituents about whether we are becoming a fascist nation.

Why am I answering those questions? Because Trump told a big lie and he got people to attack our Capitol and now he is ramping up fear and anxiety to the point where locals are changing their election laws and eroding our democracy? No, I can't stand by. I will vote to proceed and change. I will not stand by because my parents taught me better.

My father fought in World War II and reminded me constantly when I was growing up that if someone's rights were eroded, you better stand up because if you don't, they are coming after your rights next. And a threat to one was a threat to all.

My mom worked at the polls on election day. When she was a child, she played in her backyard and met an African-American woman who became her friend. When election day rolled around, my mom noticed that her friend had to wait outside in the cold to vote, where the White voters got to go inside and wait. My mom took her friend by the hand inside the polling place and said, "My friend's not waiting outside."

It earned my mom the nickname "Little Eleanor" after the First Lady of the period.

What might seem surprising is how much my mom liked her fellow Republican precinct committeemen. She felt like they were on the same team—Team Democracy: people who got the vote out. They may not agree on who they were voting for, but they agreed people should vote. And they were willing to live with the consequences. And believe me, my parents had a lot of—a lot of things that they had to keep fighting for, but they believed in democracy.

I remember my mom saying how uneasy she felt when she realized her friends and neighbors, seeing the results of her precinct, didn't support John Kennedy for President of the United States.

My parents were crushed when John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., were all assassinated, but they never lost faith in

the system, and they never said the system was rigged.

What we need to do now is to protect our democracy. We need to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. We need to say, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, that one man, one vote is what our country stands for, and it is the strength of our Nation.

One thing about January 6 that bothers me the most—it bothers me the most because I think about my father and his brother. My father quit high school to fight in World War II because his brother was already missing or in a POW camp. He knew he had to join the fight against the oppressions, the tyranny, the fascism that existed. He knew he had to join the fight to uphold the democracy of the United States.

This is a picture of what it looked like to be escorted back into this chamber on January 6. All I could think of when I saw this picture is, obviously, yes, support and gratitude for the military who supported us. But all I could think about was my father and his brother who fought in World War II for these rights, to uphold a democracy, so that I could stand for election and that my friends and neighbors could vote for me, and then I would come here in an environment where I was free to walk into the Capitol at any moment and cast a vote on behalf of the people that I represent.

And yet, on one fateful day, that all changed. And we were no different than some other country who had to use military force to support our democracy here in voting. That is not the way it is supposed to be. That is not what we are fighting for. Many Americans have fought to uphold the democracies of our Nation. The least we could do is pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. The least we could do is work in a mission together to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and show that our country believes in holding these important values of a democracy as utmost important. Let's vote to get this done. Let's move forward to show our country we believe in voting rights in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

H.R. 5746

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, Democrats have shamelessly alleged that a massive Federal takeover of elections is needed because of questions some Republicans raised after the 2020 election, so I come to the floor today to show that this whole argument predates the 2020 election.

(Mr. BOOKER assumed the Chair.)

This Democrat reasoning is despite the fact that their proposal predates the 2020 election. The bill that they want us to pass is a product of concerns that the Democrats had about the 2016 election being stolen from Hillary Clinton—also because of the 2018 elections. And, in fact, the Democrat proposal

was designed specifically to double down on false claims that Democrats lost certain elections in 2018 only because of rigged elections.

I have said it before, and I want to say it again: Evidence-free claims of voter suppression are as bad as election-free claims of voter fraud. Both voter fraud and discrimination in voting is illegal. Any claim of voter fraud or violation of voting rights should be resolved in our independent court system with evidence that can stand up in the courts.

And as I have mentioned before, the claims by some Trump supporters that a certain brand of voting machine-switched votes was lifted entirely from the Democrats' 2004 playbook. And you may remember that Democrat House Members challenged the electoral vote count of whether George W. Bush was officially and honestly reelected. And President Trump's questioning of his loss in Georgia was simply following in the footsteps of the losing Democrat candidate for Governor of that State just 2 years before who lost by a much bigger margin and never admitted that defeat.

That makes me wonder if Democrats' professed outrage comes from a sincere concern for Democratic reforms or if they are just upset that President Trump stole their playbook.

If Democrats really want to preserve Democratic norms, they would not be proposing the Federal Government overturning the current electoral process in all 50 States, on a purely partisan basis, with no attempt to even hear out Republicans' legitimate concerns.

The bills that we are talking about this week are being called democracy reform. Does democracy need reform? I support the American democratic system. It does not need a fundamental rewrite. The 240-year history of our great country under this Constitution ought to support that. It works, and it deserves our support. We should not denigrate American democracy for short-term political gain.

President Trump's candidacy in 2016 brought many Americans to the polls who had not voted recently, and there was a record turnout. In 2020, turnout broke the record yet again, both for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, and President Biden won that election.

In the 2021 election, there were unusually high turnouts for off-year elections to the benefit of Republicans and conservatives. You saw that, particularly in the State of Virginia, where the Republican candidates statewide were victorious, and you saw some surprising turnouts of opposition to Democrats who were reelected in the State of New Jersey.

Democrats accuse Republicans of wanting to keep people from voting. Why would we want to keep people from voting when we have been very successful in many large turnout elections very recently?

Plus, have you seen the polls today that show dissatisfaction with Democrats—a Republican deficit of five or seven points last year, with positive Republican versus Democrat polls this year.

So we ought to stop casting doubt about American elections, stop casting aspersions on commonsense election security measures like ID, supported by overwhelming numbers of Americans of all backgrounds. And by "all backgrounds," I mean even people whom we classify as minorities.

Let's work together to boost the confidence of all Americans in our elections. Let's start rejecting claims that the only way the other party can win is by rigging elections. Let's retire the short-term strategy of falsely claiming that one of the two parties is a threat to democracy. That, in and of itself, is a very undemocratic position to take. This kind of rhetoric damages civil society and erodes faith in our democracy. For the sake of our country, please stop it.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, when Democrats last had the majority and proposed blowing up the Senate rules and the historic way that the Senate has worked, I gave a series of speeches explaining how the father of the Constitution, James Madison, intended for the Senate to be a deliberative body; in other words, a break on the hot passions that occur in the House of Representatives. I repeated my deeply held opposition to gutting the Senate process, even when my party took control of all three branches—and it would have been politically expedient in the short term.

I don't know how many times President Trump brought up doing away with what we call the filibuster or the 60-vote requirement. It was even followed by a lot of our Republican Party grassroots wanting to overcome Democrats' use of the cloture rule to block the Republican agenda during those 4 years. But I spoke out strongly against it.

In 2017, over half of the current Democrat Senators signed a letter calling for preservation of the current rules requiring the 60 votes to stop debate for considering the legislation, despite the use of the nuclear option for nominees.

I agree with President Biden's position in 2005. Reflecting on the same understanding that I have of the Constitution and the role of the Senate as envisioned by James Madison, then-Senator Biden said this:

That is the . . . reason . . . we have the . . . rule. So when one party . . . controls all levers of Government, one man or one woman can stand on the floor of the Senate and resist . . . the passions of the moment.

Even Senator SCHUMER, the majority leader, said, at that time, gutting the cloture rule would be a "doomsday for democracy"—doomsday for democracy. Now it seems like Senator SCHUMER invites that doomsday.