

What this does do is it is killing jobs. It is killing people and killing the jobs of people who worked their tail off in the prior 12 months.

Now, I don't know why this is controversial. The Senate, on a bipartisan basis, just passed a Congressional Review Act measure striking down President Biden's vaccine mandate. On a bipartisan basis we already decided we don't believe in what the President is doing.

We have got families and businesses all across this country that are struggling to keep up with the cost of inflation, and the government should be doing everything it can to reduce inflation and get the economy going.

Look, I know what it is like to go hungry because groceries cost too much. I watched my mom and my dad struggle for years. When prices rose, my mom took in odd jobs. When she struggled, we didn't have as much food on the table.

It is the responsibility of the Federal Government to improve the economy and help families get ahead. We know the vaccine mandates are absolutely causing prices to rise. When prices rise, people are getting hurt, and they are making interstate commerce much more difficult.

So instead of taking action to help families and curb inflation, the Biden Administration is taking every possible step to make it harder for them to put food on the table and afford to live in this country.

The President has already said that this must be handled at the State level. I agree. And the Federal Government can take a step in this direction by ensuring vaccine passports won't be required for interstate commerce.

They shouldn't be required to get on a plane. They shouldn't be required to carry goods across State lines.

Even our Nation's healthcare providers know that mandates don't work. They stopped doing it in most cases. Just last month we saw hospitals across this country delay or suspend their vaccine mandates because they knew it was killing jobs.

We know that Biden's unconstitutional mandates are going to make it more difficult to retain staff and deliver quality care to their patients. I don't understand why my colleague wants to give the government more power, more power, more power—upholding regulations that are causing prices to rise and forcing people to choose between keeping their jobs and getting a vaccine.

We ought to give people the freedom to live their lives, to do exactly what my colleague just said: If a business wants to require a vaccine, they should require that. But if they don't, the government shouldn't be doing that. Our government should be giving people information, and let them make the decisions they want to make.

I trust American families. I trust American businesses. They are smart enough to make informed decisions

about their health. But my colleague's objection is bad for American families and bad for business owners, and I hope she will reconsider her objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

ANNIVERSARY OF JANUARY 6

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, tomorrow will mark the first anniversary of one of the darkest moments in our Nation's history. One year ago tomorrow, a mob attacked this building. A mob of Americans, incited by a sitting U.S. President, was determined to prevent the peaceful transition of power that is the hallmark of our representative democracy. A mob of Americans savagely attacked and overwhelmed the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police departments, smashed their way into this sacred space, and disrupted the joint session of Congress fulfilling its constitutional duty to count the electoral college ballots awarding the Presidency to Joe Biden.

January 6, like December 7 and September 11, is a date which will live in infamy.

I refer to the U.S. Capitol as a sacred space because it is so much more than a building where the Senate and House of Representatives meet and conduct business. It is the embodiment of our ideals, our aspirations and hopes, not just to Americans but also to all of humanity.

In the 1960 essay on "national purpose" for the New York Times and LIFE magazine, Archibald MacLeish wrote:

There are those who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American Dream.

Insurrectionists desecrated this sacred space and everything it stands for, including liberty, self-government and the rule of law. The Architect of the Capitol can measure the damage they did to this building in millions of dollars. The damage they did to our moral standing in the world is inestimable.

I want to take this moment to acknowledge and pay tribute to the thousands of people who work in Congress or cover it for the press and continue to suffer from the trauma of January the 6th. I am talking about the brave police officers who protected us. They engaged in a battle that one officer described as "medieval."

And 140 of them, including Metropolitan Police Department officers, suffered physical injuries. One of them, Officer Brian Sicknick, died. I imagine all the officers who defended the Capitol bear the psychological scars of the attack.

Four officers—Howard Liebengood, Jeffrey Smith, Gunther Hashida, and Kyle DeFreitag committed suicide in the aftermath. But I am also talking about the staff who work here in the Capitol, in the Senate and House Chambers: the doorkeepers, the Parliamentarian's office, the bill clerk, the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD staff, the floor

and cloakroom staff, and so many others. Many of them had to shelter in place. They had to barricade themselves in offices, hoping the police would get to them before the insurrectionists did.

I am talking about the committee and legislative staff in our DC offices and back in our State and district offices, who watched the attack in horror and disbelief and feared for the safety of their friends and colleagues, who answer the phones and hear death threats and obscenities.

I am talking about the food service workers, custodial staff, and other Architect of the Capitol and Sergeant at Arms employees who were caught in the mayhem and then immediately went to work cleaning up the mess, repairing the damage, and providing other essential services, all in the midst of a raging pandemic.

I am talking about those reporters who documented the insurrection at great personal peril after Donald Trump spent the previous 4 years calling them the enemies of the people and openly encouraged his supporters to attack them at his rallies.

Congress could not function without this community of patriotic and hard-working Americans. This community is hurting. On New Year's Day, the Washington Post ran an article entitled "Shaken by the Jan. 6 attack, Capitol workers quit jobs that once made them proud." "Quit jobs that once made them proud"—what a terrible thing, what a loss to our Nation.

The danger our Nation faced on January 6 has not dissipated. As the New York Times editorial board stated a few days ago, "the Republic faces an existential threat from a movement that is openly contemptuous of democracy and has shown that it is willing to use violence to achieve its ends."

The leader of this movement, of course, is Donald Trump. The organizing principle is the Big Lie that Democrats "stole" the election. The mindset is what historian Richard Hofstadter called "the paranoid style in American politics," which "produces . . . strivings for evidence to prove that the unbelievable is the only thing that can be believed."

The response to nearly nonexistent voter fraud is to engage in massive voter suppression. The objective is not election reform; it is election repeal.

It is important to understand that the insurrection on January 6 was not a spontaneous event. As Ed Kilgore wrote in a New York magazine article entitled "Trump's Long Campaign to Steal the Presidency: A timeline," "The insurrection was a complex, years-long plot, not a one-day event. And it isn't over."

Rightwing media personalities and QAnon conspiracy followers feverishly and cynically stoke the movement for their own gain. Elected Republican officials, fearful of Donald Trump's wrath or eager to curry favor with him, enable it.

In 1950, Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine issued her “Declaration of Conscience” in response to another authoritarian bully, fellow Republican Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin. Senator SMITH was no fan of the Truman administration, but she said the following:

[T]o displace it with a Republican regime embracing a philosophy that lacks political integrity or intellectual honesty would prove equally disastrous to the nation. . . . I do not want to see the Republican party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny—Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear. I doubt if the Republican party could do so, simply because I do not believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest. Surely we Republicans are not that desperate for victory.

I do not want to see the Republican party win that way. While it might be a fleeting victory for the Republican party, it would be a more lasting defeat for the American people. Surely it would ultimately be suicide for the Republican party and the two-party system that has protected our American liberties from the dictatorship of a one-party system.

I urge my Republican colleagues to follow the example of Margaret Chase Smith. There is nothing conservative about advocating force over the rule of law. There is nothing conservative about pledging loyalty to a man over upholding the U.S. Constitution.

I understand that many Americans are disinclined to believe that the President of the United States would blatantly lie to them, but it is exactly what Donald Trump has been doing since he claimed that millions of people who voted illegally cost him the popular vote majority in the 2016 election. In fact, his lies go back even further, to his vile birther claims about President Obama.

We have the opportunity and the imperative for a course correction to save our Republic, and that is to restore, expand, and protect voting rights.

The Senate must consider S. 2747, the Freedom to Vote Act, and S. 4, the bipartisan John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

On multiple occasions, Senate Democrats voted unanimously just to begin considering these bills to protect people’s right to vote, which has come under sustained assault. Each time we have tried to proceed to these measures, every Republican Senator has voted to sustain a filibuster. Senate Republicans put gridlock and partisanship before the rights of voters. They are blocking the Senate from having a chance to consider options and amendments and do what the Founding Fathers intended us to do: debate and legislate.

Within the next few days, our Republican colleagues in the Senate will have yet another opportunity, a chance to do the right thing. Many Senators have worked diligently to come up with compromise legislation that still

preserves the essential elements of S. 1, For the People Act, that the House of Representatives has already passed.

And President Biden is absolutely correct that we need to enact voting rights legislation to repair the damage the Supreme Court did to the Voting Rights Act. President Biden rightly calls efforts to limit ballot access across the country as a 21st century Jim Crow assault. He warned Americans that the Republican efforts to restrict voting rights as a result of their selfish challenge of the 2020 election results represent “the most significant test of our democracy since the Civil War.”

In many States, Republican legislatures and Governors have responded to the falsehoods of the 2020 election by restricting voting accessibility. Donald Trump’s Big Lie has directly led to disenfranchisement and suppression of the right to vote of millions of Americans.

I urge my colleagues and my fellow American citizens to reflect on the state of our democracy and the rights we hold so dear. A blatant attempt to falsify an election and persistent efforts to deny the American people access to the ballot box has eroded American democracy to a dangerous level and undermined the freedom and liberty that so many Americans have fought to defend and advance.

After elections are over and we win, we celebrate. We celebrate the fact that we have garnered the support of the majority of the voters. If we don’t win—I think many of us have been involved in campaigns where our candidates have not been successful—we go to work and try to attract more voters in the next election so we can celebrate a victory. That is what participation in a free society is all about. That is what democracies are about.

And repressive, autocratic regimes never accept the will of the people so they look at ways in which they can undermine the voting record, what the voters want, and the voters’ will.

We should all celebrate the record number of people who cast their ballots in the 2020 Presidential election. More Americans cast their votes for the Presidential candidate than ever before.

After the election, both Democrats and Republicans conducted numerous reviews at the Federal, State, and local levels. Those reviews verified the simple fact that there was no widespread corruption or election fraud; that the will of the people prevailed; and Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were duly elected.

Congress and Vice President Pence counted the electoral votes for President and Vice President and did their duty under the Constitution on January 6, notwithstanding the armed insurrection at the Capitol.

But that did not stop Donald Trump from promoting the Big Lie, and that, in turn, has prompted Republican-led States to make it harder for people to cast their votes. The Brennan Center

has pointed out that we are in the middle of the worst assault on voting rights since Jim Crow.

So what are these laws doing? They are making it more difficult for people to register to vote. They are making it more difficult to vote by mail. They are making it more difficult to vote in person. Republicans apparently believe that demographic trends will prevent them from winning elections so they are surgically attacking the voting rights of people—mostly people of color—they believe will not vote for them.

We have States that have 100 percent voting by mail. There has been no indication of fraud in voting by mail. But now, some States have shortened the time for requesting mail-in ballots, making it more difficult for individuals to vote by mail. They are making it more difficult for people to deliver their ballots by limiting the availability of ballot drop boxes, all because they think that will be utilized more by people who will not vote for them.

The Republicans in charge of these States want to make it harder for people to vote in person too—stricter signature requirements, reducing the number of places where people can vote, purging voter rolls simply because a person didn’t vote, and the list goes on and on and on; all of these making it more difficult for people to register to vote or be eligible to vote who are more likely to vote for their opponents. Some of these States are even opening up the possibility that election officials can substitute their judgment for the will of the people.

The Freedom to Vote Act provides a basic Federal floor on protecting the right to vote. The legislation includes commonsense items such as automatic and online voter registration, uniform early voting, same-day voter registration, voting by mail and drop box standards and uniform national standards for voter identification.

The Freedom to Vote Act ends political gerrymandering by creating non-partisan redistricting commissions, requires voter-verified paper ballots and reliable audits, and ends the dominance of Big Money in political systems by increasing disclosure and transparency.

S. 2747 includes two provisions I authored: First, it includes the Democracy Restoration Act, which deals with laws that many States passed at the end of the Civil War that are still on the books that disqualify a person convicted of a felony from voting for the rest of his or her life. The definition of “felony” can be quite general in many States so the impact of these laws fall disproportionately on people of color, which was its intent. There are States where one out of five Black Americans have been disqualified from voting because of a felony conviction, even when that individual has served his or her sentence and has returned to society. We need to remove that disqualification on voting.

I am proud that S. 2747 also includes my Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act. Spreading false or misleading information or intimidating the electorate remain regularly employed and effective methods to keep individuals, particularly Black Americans and racial minorities, from voting. Advancements in communications, including the rise of social media platforms, have made it easier for bad actors to use these strategies. My provisions prohibit individuals from knowingly deceiving voters about the time, place, eligibility or procedures of participating in a Federal election. It criminalizes intentional efforts to hinder, interfere with, or prevent another person from voting, registering to vote, or aiding another person to vote or register to vote.

The late John Lewis of Georgia was a dear friend and a former colleague. We first won election to the U.S. House of Representatives on the same day. Representative Lewis recalled an important lesson that he learned from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when he said that “each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up, and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act. And each generation must do its part.”

Well, we need to follow Congressman Lewis’ admonition. We can do our part by passing the bipartisan John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, S. 4. Congress has a historic and bipartisan tradition of coming together across party lines to safeguard and strengthen the right to vote, which is the bedrock of our democracy.

Congress passed and the States ratified the 15th Amendment after the Civil War, which declared that “the rights of citizens of the United States to vote should not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

The 15th Amendment also states that Congress—Congress—has the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

That is exactly what the Senate is trying to do with the John Lewis legislation. The bill would restore key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the Supreme Court severely weakened in its *Shelby County v. Holder* decision.

Fifty-seven years ago, Congress designed the Voting Rights Act to protect equal access to elections for all eligible Americans and passed the measure to respond to widespread disenfranchisement—particularly of racial and language minorities—between the post-Civil War period and the 1960s.

S. 4 would require the Federal pre-clearance for certain changes to voting laws and procedures. It would block changes that restrict the right to vote, particularly changes that disproportionately disenfranchise minority communities. The bill would allow plain-

tiffs and the Justice Department to bring lawsuits that deny or abridge the voting rights of minority voters and restore legal tools needed to enforce nationwide, permanent Federal bans on voter suppression efforts targeting minorities.

We cannot pass voting rights legislation as long as the Senate Republicans continue to filibuster even just to proceed to S. 2747 and S. 4. Inaction on voting rights is not an option as we prepare for our 2022 elections, which must be free and fair so that the American people have faith in our elections and their outcomes, particularly after the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6.

We need to change the filibuster rule. As President Biden just said before the holidays, “If the only thing standing between getting voting rights legislation passed and not getting it passed is the filibuster, I support making the exception of voting rights for the filibuster.”

I agree with President Biden. We cannot take action to safeguard voting rights if we don’t start right now. States are already drawing their 2022 political boundaries to comply with population changes from the 2020 census, and we cannot start our work unless my colleagues allow us to proceed to this issue on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I urge my colleagues not to filibuster the right of the U.S. Senate to start the debate on protecting voter integrity, where each Member will have the opportunity to debate the issue and offer amendments. Many Senators have offered suggestions about how we can improve these two voting rights bills. Collectively, we have a chance to come together for the American people, something they elected us to do.

We will not reach a consensus if we cannot even proceed to the bills. I will support changing the Senate rules, returning the Senate to its historic role of debating and voting on critical issues.

Voting rights legislation needs to be debated in the Senate and voted upon by a majority vote in the U.S. Senate.

Our noble experiment representing democracy is in grave danger. Let us come together and protect the integrity of the Senate, respond to the threat we saw on January 6 of last year, and take up and pass voting rights legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ANNIVERSARY OF JANUARY 6

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, January 6, 2022, marks 1 year since the attempted coup at our Nation’s Capitol.

I am deeply grateful for the Capitol Police for their heroic acts on that dark day. The American people will always remember the sacrifices they made to protect our democracy.

But marking this date has another purpose, too. The January 6 insurrection made painfully clear that Amer-

ican democracy is seriously at risk. In November of 2020, American citizens braved a deadly pandemic to cast their ballots. But following that election, the defeated President refused to commit to a peaceful transfer of power.

Instead, he falsely sowed doubt about the legitimacy of the election and inflamed his most dangerous supporters to attack this Capitol. His attempts to cling to power through lies and violence were a violation of his oath of office and a grave abuse of power that can never be tolerated in a free and democratic society.

We mark this anniversary not only to reflect on that dereliction of duty, but also to call out the ongoing efforts to undermine our democracy.

Threats to our democracy are not new. For years, in State after State, Republican legislatures have passed laws making it harder to vote, all on a purely partisan basis with simple majority votes. They have imposed strict voter ID requirements and purged voter rolls to disenfranchise minority voters. They have made it harder to vote by mail and register to vote. They have gerrymandered districts for partisan political gain.

Over the past year, these shameless efforts have become even more brazen. Just as the former President was clear that he wanted to overturn the results of the 2020 election, Trump and his allies are entirely transparent about their goal of overturning future elections. Today, Republican opponents of democracy are exploiting every possible avenue to allow their party to maintain control, even if that means overturning the will of the American people.

Rather than putting a stop to these attacks on voting rights, the Supreme Court has enabled them. The Roberts Court gutted the core of the Voting Rights Act, which is why Republican legislatures right now can pass anti-voter laws with ease.

Last year, they destroyed what was left of the country’s landmark voting rights law, making it nearly impossible to block laws with racially discriminatory effects. They twice overturned key protections against dark money in our elections, and they gave a green light to partisan gerrymandering.

The Senate must not turn a blind eye while the Federal judiciary and State legislatures lead an all-out assault against free and fair elections in America. It is clear that Donald Trump’s Republican Party is embracing an increasingly authoritarian movement.

In 2006, the Voting Rights Act was reauthorized unanimously in the U.S. Senate. And yet today, only one Republican supports the Voting Rights Act, and none have endorsed the Freedom to Vote Act. The Senate filibuster means that MITCH MCCONNELL gets a veto and Congress cannot protect the sacred right to vote unless Republican politicians agree, all while they are actively undermining our democracy in State after State.