

restrictive voting provisions we have seen since that Supreme Court decision in *States like Georgia and Texas*.

In 2021, the Supreme Court weakened another critical section of the Voting Rights Act with a decision in a case known as *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, making it more difficult for plaintiffs to prevail in lawsuits against discriminatory voting laws, decisions, or procedures.

With these rulings, the Supreme Court has fueled State-led efforts to suppress voters, particularly voters of color.

Justice Elena Kagan wrote in her dissent to the *Brnovich* decision that “in the last decade, this Court has treated no statute worse” than the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

This year’s Presidential election will be the first general election since a wave of restrictive voting laws were passed in the aftermath of the 2020 election.

Mr. President, did you ever take a look at the videos and reporting of people standing in line and waiting to vote?

Did you ever notice, coincidentally, how many people standing in line are people of color? There always seems to be a lack of voting spaces for people of color when it comes to voting. Why is that? Well, I don’t think it is an accident. I think it is a conscious decision. And before the Holder decision—the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision—there was a requirement for preclearance for the practices that lead to that.

Voters in 27 States, more than half the country, will face restrictions on the right to vote they have never faced before because of the Supreme Court decision. Last year alone, State legislators in 14 States enacted 17 laws that made it harder for people—particularly people of color—to vote. As Members of Congress, we must defend our democracy from these coordinated attacks on the fundamental right we have as Americans.

Last week, a group of my colleagues and I reintroduced a bill bearing the name of John Lewis, whom I mentioned before, that would preserve and protect the rights of voters in America. This legislation will restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act. This bill honors the legacy of John Lewis and countless other Americans who have fought and some have died for the right to vote.

Last Congress, we tried to bring this legislation to the floor for a debate and a vote, but our Republican colleagues blocked it with a filibuster. This bill should unite Senators across the aisle, not divide us. In 2006, 98 Senators, Republicans and Democrats alike, voted to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act, with no votes in opposition. In 2006—not that long ago—98 Senators voted to reauthorize this bill. At the time, Senator McConnell, who just spoke on the floor, said that “this is a good piece of legislation that has served an important purpose over many, many years.”

That was the bipartisan support that greeted that bill in 2006. Yet, today, Senate Republicans have no interest in reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act to protect voters from efforts to suppress the right to vote.

Next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing to examine the continued need to restore and expand the protections of the Voting Rights Act. This hearing is an important step, but we desperately need legislation, not just a hearing. Every year that goes by without passing this critical law leaves voters vulnerable—particularly voters of color. That is why I am calling on my colleagues to join me in supporting the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

Congress has the power to restore voting rights, and we should do it because as John Lewis reminded us, “Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we call the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.”

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO HAL MALCHOW

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the incredible life of a dear friend and a great American, Hal Malchow, someone whom I think many of my colleagues on the Democratic side have known.

I first met Hal in 1985. I was visiting my dear friend from law school, Rob McDuff, in Oxford, MS. Hal and I were pretty young back in those days, both interested in politics, and the two of us really hit it off at a party that Rob hosted.

Now, Hal has long enjoyed a successful career as one of the country’s premier political consultants, but before that, he went to Millsaps College and then the McGeorge School of Law in California. He did practice law for a bit in Jackson, MS. But Hal’s real passion was never the law; it was always politics.

In fact, when young, aspiring lawyers would come to his office to get advice about following him into law, Hal was known to reach into his big, impressive wooden desk and pull out his latest rental car contract with Hertz.

“See that contract?” he would ask the enterprising, would-be attorney, slapping it face down on the table. “You go to law school, you are going to spend the rest of your career writing those kind of deals.”

So after a few years as a bond attorney in Mississippi, Hal turned his attention to politics. He took on three different candidates as a campaign manager and managed to lose all three races.

Undaunted, in 1984, Hal took on a new challenge. There was an up-and-coming young Congressman from Tennessee with a pretty good resume and a well-known family name who was thinking about running for the Senate. And despite his rather unimpressive

track record so far, Hal managed to get an interview.

“So,” Al Gore said to him, “I’ve got one question for you, Hal. If I hire you to be my campaign manager, how am I supposed to explain it to my supporters?”

The way Hal tells it, he looked Gore in the eye and said, “Everyone in Tennessee thinks you’re a lock for this seat. But you can tell them you’re taking nothing for granted because you hired the hungriest SOB in the country to run your race.”

Needless to say, Hal got the job, and Al Gore went on to the Senate that year. Soon, Hal moved to DC. Starting at his kitchen table in a small, one-room apartment, he managed to build the Nation’s largest voter contact firm, pioneering the use of advanced data analytics to revolutionize political targeting, launching experiments to measure and improve campaign tactics, and revolutionizing direct mail and fundraising.

He brought the notion of the “moneyball” approach to politics a decade before anybody else was doing it. That will be one of Hal’s greatest legacies to the Democratic Party and to American politics: the idea that spending decisions should actually be driven by data. He wanted to hold campaign consultants like himself accountable for being wise stewards of donor dollars. He measured success in effectiveness, hard proof that spending motivated voters one way or the other.

Hal worked on every one of my campaigns; and at one point or another, I suspect that Hal has worked with at least half of my colleagues on the Democratic side. But Hal was more than just a consultant; he is also my friend. I know him not only for his brilliant, strategic mind but as someone who is honest, loyal, and extraordinarily creative. My wife Lisa and I have looked forward to receiving his hilarious Christmas cards. He would create a different message and a different approach every holiday season.

In addition to writing a series of political books on moving and motivating voters, Hal is also an accomplished fiction writer. His writing career began when his then-8-year-old son approached him with an idea. Two years later, they completed the first draft of “The Sword of Darrow,” a highly acclaimed young-adult fantasy novel. In 2014, writing alone, he published a sequel, “The Dragon and the Firefly,” before penning two political thrillers, including “42 Million to One,” a finalist for a number of international and national book awards.

As that story illustrates, Hal is also a devoted father to his son, Alex. For many years, he served on the board of trustees at Alex’s alma mater, the Lab School. After his son was diagnosed with dyslexia, Hal dove into the challenges facing other children like Alex, eventually becoming the president of the International Dyslexia Association.

Hal is also the biggest Cheesehead I know. Hal was very proud of the fact—

even though he had grown up in Mississippi—that his grandfather was one of the original shareholders in the Green Bay Packers. And Hal has followed in his grandfather's and his father's footsteps as a Packers fan. For the last several decades, Hal has organized annual trips to Green Bay to watch the Packers play, and I was lucky enough to join him in November for what has turned out to be Hal's final football season.

Now struggling with the effects of Alzheimer's, Hal has approached his illness the same way he has approached life: with no bitterness. He said to me, the last time I saw him, "I'm the luckiest guy in the world, with the life I've lived." He tells me he has no regrets, so I can't have any either.

So Lisa and I will continue to keep Hal and his family—including Anne, Alex, and Astrid—in our thoughts and hold them close to our hearts during this difficult season.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Vermont.

ISRAEL

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, every day we are reminded of the worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Most of the infrastructure in the territory has been destroyed. Thousands of apartment buildings, schools, mosques, hospitals, shops, and markets have been reduced to piles of twisted metal and rubble, under which the bodies of an unknown number of people are buried.

Of the world's many humanitarian crises, the situation in Gaza is among the worst. This is due in large measure to the onerous impediments by the Netanyahu government to the delivery of sufficient food, water, medicines, shelter, and fuel.

Getting aid to those who are suffering and preventing starvation should be our most immediate and highest priority, along with obtaining the release of the hostages.

As I said when I spoke out for a cease-fire in November, an immediate and indefinite cease-fire is the only way to achieve these goals. I am very heartened by Vice President HARRIS's call for an immediate—if temporary—cease-fire to get aid in and hostages out, because the reality is, the supply of lifesaving aid has dwindled to a trickle.

Last week, the depth of the humanitarian emergency in Gaza exploded with the deaths of dozens of Palestinian civilians as they frantically tried to reach food supplies from aid trucks that were guarded by Israeli soldiers. People were trampled, people were run over by trucks, and they were shot.

It was a horrifying scene and a direct result of the Netanyahu government's failure to put in place workable procedures for the delivery of sufficient aid to starving people. As others have said, there is no legal or security justification for restricting humanitarian aid

to civilians who are caught in the middle of an armed conflict.

The more desperate people become, the more chaotic and precarious the security situation, the more likely there will be other senseless tragedies just like this.

I recently introduced a resolution, along with 15 of my colleagues, calling for the urgent delivery of sufficient humanitarian aid.

The Biden administration has repeatedly called for greater access for more aid trucks to Gaza, but the number getting through remains far below prewar levels. And I am encouraged, nevertheless, that President Biden has directed the United States to begin airdropping aid in—a decision made with the understanding that, while not enough by any means, it could save lives.

Israel now occupies Gaza. It has an obligation under international law—not to mention the moral responsibility—to feed and shelter Palestinians under its occupation.

Beyond the moral imperative, the path to peace, security, and stability would be enhanced dramatically by facilitating the delivery of essentials for survival to the Palestinian people whose fate is imperiled. But as we saw last week, that is not happening.

The Netanyahu government's rejection of U.S. and international appeals to meet the basic needs of innocent Palestinians trapped in Gaza and the resulting loss of innocent lives, is really the latest in a pattern that we have seen for years.

The United States has long supported—and the United States will always support—Israel as a free and Jewish democratic state. But candor requires acknowledging that we have an ongoing, serious difference with Israeli leadership.

It is the longstanding U.S. policy that the Middle East conflict can only be solved through negotiations to create two independent states of Israel and Palestine. President Biden has reaffirmed this.

But Prime Minister Netanyahu has publicly rejected a two-state solution, and he has even credited himself for actively working to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state. I will use his words. He couldn't have been more clear. He said:

I will not compromise on full Israeli security control over the entire area in the west of Jordan—and this is contrary to a Palestinian state.

The United States opposes settlements and the destruction of Palestinian homes, orchards, schools, and other infrastructure in the West Bank. It violates international law and is a severe obstacle to peace. Secretary of State Blinken has reaffirmed this.

Yet Prime Minister Netanyahu embraced the settlements. In 2017, he said:

We will deepen our roots, build, strengthen and settle.

In 2019, he said:

With God's help we will extend Jewish sovereignty to all the settlements as part of the land of Israel, as part of the state of Israel.

Under his leadership, settlements have expanded exponentially. Settlements bring extremist settler violence, some of it with firearms financed by American taxpayers.

Shootings of West Bank Palestinians, threats laced with hateful messages that if they don't leave their homes, they will be killed, and the destruction of land and other property have surged—surged—in recent months, including, in some instances, with Israeli soldiers passively standing by and watching.

It is the longstanding U.S. policy, codified by the Leahy law, that units of foreign security forces that violate human rights are not eligible for U.S. training or equipment or other assistance.

And according to multiple reports, that law has not been applied to the Israeli Defense Forces, despite numerous cases of shootings of Palestinian civilians.

We must face the contradiction of what we are doing. We are airdropping food to famine-stricken Gaza today and supplying bombs for Israel to drop on devastated Gaza tomorrow.

We call for humanitarian relief, but how can that call be meaningful when aid workers are killed in their effort to deliver it and Palestinians are killed in their effort to retrieve it?

It is time for us to acknowledge—all of us to acknowledge—what the entire world knows: It is impossible to deliver humanitarian aid in a very active war zone.

Israel is a great country, Jewish and democratic. Israel has been—and remains—our closest ally in the Middle East. For decades, Israel has been under attack by those who have sought to destroy it.

President Biden—and so many of us—understand the history of Israel and the history of the Jewish people. October 7 was the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. And we cannot ever let that happen again.

But both of our countries right now are on a wrong path. Israel must stop its indiscriminate attacks that are killing so many Palestinian civilians—women and children, the majority among them who perished.

And the United States must end its unconditional support when Israeli policies are wrong that are unjustified; that are causing so much suffering; and that, in the view of many of us, are doomed to fail in the goal of achieving lasting peace.

How many times do we have to be repudiated by Prime Minister Netanyahu on the use of indiscriminate force; on the recklessness of expanding West Bank settlements; on impeding the delivery of aid; on advocating an endless Israeli post-conflict occupation of Gaza? How long and how often will Prime Minister Netanyahu reject our policies but take our money before we say, "Enough"?

How many more than the 30,000 Palestinians already killed and the 70,000