

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 22, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
U.S. Senate Majority Leader  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

Voting rights reforms and investments to Build Back Better are cornerstones of President Biden's agenda. We are concerned that the Senate has completed its anticipated legislative business for the year without finding a path forward on these priorities. As champions of voting rights in Congress, we write to express serious concern about the year ending without a path forward on advancing voting rights reforms. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 1, For the People Act, 293 days ago and passed H.R. 4, John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, 119 days ago. The Senate has yet to pass any voting rights legislation and it is increasingly urgent that the Senate position itself to do so. We ask you to expeditiously work with your fellow Senators to use all tools at your disposal to get voting rights legislation signed into law.

We are grateful that you and other Democratic Senators have been hard at work since the House passed its voting rights bills to ensure the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act can get Senate majority support. However, as you know, neither the will of the majority of Americans nor of Senators themselves is enough to pass legislation in the Senate, where at least 60 votes are required to consider most legislation. That is why you are to be further commended for working to find bipartisan support among Senators for these measures. Unfortunately, even on the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, only one Republican senator voted to stop the bill's blockade. After months of compromises, Republicans have not come to the table on voting rights in numbers sufficient to overcome the existing filibuster.

We cannot afford to wait any longer for a supermajority of senators to come together to guarantee basic voting rights. In 2021, over 425 bills restricting voting rights were introduced across our country, and too many states passed restrictive legislation into law. Ending 2021 without voting rights reform will allow some state legislatures to continue their efforts in the new year to limit the right to vote. Meanwhile, failing to end partisan gerrymandering will allow some states to finalize maps that enshrine profound partisan imbalances for the next decade. Finally, as a practical matter, state and local election authorities need time to properly implement any reforms passed with midterm elections less than a year away. We have no time to lose to ensure people have access to the ballot box and have a fair voice in selecting their representatives.

In 2020, the people elected House and Senate majorities dedicated to restoring, defending, and upholding their fundamental voting rights. The 2020 election showed us that when voting is made accessible, the American people will show up in record numbers to exercise their right to vote and make their voices heard. The Senate majority must ensure the chamber lives up to its

ideal of being a great deliberative body by allowing voting rights legislation – and other legislation of importance – to be vigorously debated and then advanced. We can no longer allow Senate procedure to stand in the way of ensuring people have their voice heard, and we ask that you do what is necessary to advance the Freedom to Vote Act and John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Sincerely,



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



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Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

CC:   The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
      The Honorable Michael Bennet  
      The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
      The Honorable Cory Booker  
      The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
      The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
      The Honorable Ben Cardin  
      The Honorable Tom Carper  
      The Honorable Bob Casey  
      The Honorable Chris Coons  
      The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto  
      The Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
      The Honorable Dick Durbin  
      The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
      The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
      The Honorable Maggie Hassan  
      The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
      The Honorable John Hickenlooper  
      The Honorable Mazie Hirono  
      The Honorable Tim Kaine  
      The Honorable Mark Kelly

The Honorable Angus King  
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
The Honorable Ben Ray Luján  
The Honorable Joe Manchin  
The Honorable Ed Markey  
The Honorable Bob Menendez  
The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
The Honorable Chris Murphy  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Jon Ossoff  
The Honorable Alex Padilla  
The Honorable Gary Peters  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
The Honorable Jacky Rosen  
The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
The Honorable Brian Schatz  
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema  
The Honorable Tina Smith  
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
The Honorable Jon Tester  
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
The Honorable Mark Warner  
The Honorable Raphael Warnock  
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
The Honorable Ron Wyden