

Dear Mr. President:

Since your first day in office, the American people have benefited from your tireless work to deliver the relief American families and businesses need to “Build Back Better” because of the COVID-19 crisis and the destruction caused by the previous Administration.

Exacerbating the challenge to end the pandemic and build back our economy is the relentless assault on our most sacred values and institutions of self-government. You are familiar with the data: 19 states enacting over 30 laws to restrict access to the ballot, undisclosed dark money financing efforts to slow and stall your agenda, partisan gerrymandering denying millions of Americans fair representation and the sabotage of future elections by harassing, interfering with, or taking away the authority and responsibilities of our country’s local, trusted election officials.

We cannot build back better if our institutions of self-government are allowed to be destroyed.

As you know, Senate Democrats have voted on the Freedom to Vote Act, which was recently introduced as compromise legislation to the For the People Act (H.R. 1/S. 1). It is being led by Leader Schumer along with Senators Manchin, Klobuchar, Merkley, Kaine, King, Padilla, Warnock, and Tester.

The Freedom to Vote Act is the most significant anti-corruption, voting, and government reform package since Watergate. It will protect the voice of all Americans by ensuring access to the ballot box for everyone no matter their zip code, ending dark money, stopping partisan gerrymandering, and protecting our elections from sabotage. The Freedom to Vote Act’s new provisions to keep election workers, election officials, and voters safe makes it even more vital that we pass this legislation as soon as possible.

As you know, with Leader Schumer’s encouragement, Senator Manchin has patriotically endeavored to persuade 10 Republican Senators to join the unified Democratic Caucus to allow debate on the measure. Sadly, despite Senator Manchin’s very earnest and genuine outreach, the Republican Caucus will stand in lockstep with Mitch McConnell and prevent even consideration of this critical bill.

If Senate Republicans fail to even allow the Senate to debate the Freedom to Vote Act, it is at that point Senate Democrats must immediately start a conversation about ways to restore the Senate. As you know better than anyone, Mr. President, the Senate has a long tradition of being a place of serious debate and deliberation. Senate Democrats must embrace a path to restore this fine tradition, instead of allowing the current incarnation of the filibuster to serve to stifle legislative business. This is not without substantial precedent. The Senate, under the control of both parties, has navigated this before: cutting taxes, fast-track trade deals, appointing judges and closing military bases.

As Senator Manchin has said previously about protecting voting rights, “inaction is not an option.” We’ve already seen extremists lead an insurrection attacking the citadel of American

democracy, and Republicans continue to push the “Big Lie” to destabilize our institutions and norms. Election officials are being threatened with violence and even death.

At this moment, we humbly ask that you encourage the Senate to restore its finest traditions of debate and deliberation and to develop a rational approach to the consideration of legislative business, starting with the Freedom to Vote Act.

As American citizens, we are deeply concerned about the direction our country is headed and strongly believe these threats are only going to get worse if we don’t act immediately to protect our democracy. We need your personal leadership and the full force of your Administration to engage in the work to get this legislation enacted, whatever it may take.

With the deepest respect and appreciation for all of your leadership during these particularly challenging times,

Trey Beck
Joe Ben Bevirt, Joby Aviation
Lisa Blau
Cedomir Crnkovic
Matt Cohler, Benchmark Capital
Ron Conway, SV Angel
Abigail Disney, Co Founder, Daphne Foundation
Susan Lord Disney, Chair of the Board, Roy and Patricia Family Foundation
Tim Disney, Chair of the Board, California Institute of the Arts
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(Signatories are representing themselves personally, organization names are FYI)