



Pass H.R.1/S.1 Talking Points

2020 ELECTION CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION – INSTEAD IT'S BEING UNDERMINED

- ★ The 2020 election cycle demonstrated that our democracy CAN STILL DELIVER thanks to dedicated voters, civil servants, and engaged citizens. Regular people make our democracy work.
- ★ It was the highest percentage voter turnout since the election of 1900 IN SPITE of a deadly pandemic; over 70% of votes were cast early or by mail. Options to access the ballot make a difference in how our democracy works—voters want to engage and WILL if given the opportunity.
- ★ The election also exposed the fragility and vulnerabilities of our systems: Blatant attempts to undermine voting rights and suppress the vote. Lack of protections against voter intimidation at the polls. Confusion and uncertainty caused by incessant litigation and differing rules. Obstructionist state election rules passed by severely gerrymandered state legislatures. Obscene levels of political donations from known and unknown sources. Rampant misinformation exploiting voter confusion and partisanship.
- ★ Severe damage was done to our democracy and the legitimacy of our elections during the last election cycle. Tens of millions of Americans have been lied to and conned into believing that the 2020 presidential election was stolen through massive voter fraud. Republican state legislatures are already using this disinformation campaign as cover [to pursue new laws to make it harder to vote](#) – in other words, new voter suppression laws.

BROKEN SYSTEMS RESULT IN DYSFUNCTIONAL GOVERNMENT

- ★ The breakdown of our democratic systems over years has brought us to an impasse: And now we are facing congressional gridlock, inadequate, delayed COVID relief legislation despite a devastating economic crisis, extreme hardship by the most vulnerable, and exploding COVID infection rates and deaths.
- ★ Our government is hobbled and no longer able to serve the people. Instead of legislating, we see partisan gridlock, manipulation of political rules for partisan advantage, corruption, inability to meet the needs of the nation, policy sacrificed to politics. This is unacceptable and a major legislative fix is needed.

THE SOLUTIONS ARE AT HAND

- ★ To create the kind of change voters want to see in our democracy, we urge the passage of H.R.1/S.1— the For the People Act — a once-in-a-generation democracy reform package to clean up our political system, get big money out of politics, hold elected officials accountable for corruption, expand and protect voting rights, and create a democracy that values the voices of all Americans.
- ★ The people are ready and eager for Democracy reforms—these ideas are overwhelmingly popular on both sides. The integrity of our nation's democracy needs to be among the first crises addressed in 2021.



- ★ H.R.1/S.1 will modernize and secure our elections through automatic voter registration, standardize absentee and early voting rules, and prohibit common voter suppression practices.
- ★ H.R.1/S.1 would shore up our voting systems by ensuring jurisdictions have the resources they need to maintain their election infrastructure and proper standards, and it would require backup paper ballots in every state.
- ★ H.R.1/S.1 will bring transparency and accountability to our campaign finance system by disclosure of large donors—those who give \$10,000 or more—to organizations that spend money on elections.
- ★ Campaign finance reform will open up our political system to allow more people from diverse backgrounds to run and win competitive campaigns for office. A Small Donor Matching system would be funded by fees on settlements for lawbreakers and wealthy tax cheats. The fund would match donations under \$200 gifts by six-fold, amplifying the value of small donor support.

THE FAITH COMMUNITY HAS A STAKE IN DEMOCRACY REFORMS – IT'S AN URGENT MORAL ISSUE

- ★ We recognize that, on a practical level, only a healthy, well-functioning democracy can attend to any of the issues our faith calls us to address: systemic racism, climate change, hunger, violence, poverty, healthcare, and more. If we are ever going to see progress on the policy issues we care about, we must have a democracy that responds to the needs and priorities of voters - not wealthy donors and corporate interests.
- ★ People of faith are called to participate in the public square to help usher in a better world—part of this call is ensuring space for others to participate meaningfully as a matter of their human dignity. Advocating for meaningful democracy reforms affirms the dignity of each person.
- ★ Many of the values that our faith traditions strive to instill in our communities, our society and our nation can be modeled and inspired by our democratic systems. Ideas of equity, dignity, trust, participation, peace, communal responsibility, and civic love are embedded in the founding principles of this democracy.
- ★ We believe that democratic governance is the best existing system to peacefully hold a diversity of ideas, to enable healthy compromise among competing interests and to instill a sense of belonging among all its members.

TIMING IS CRITICAL--URGENCY TO PASS HR1/S1 NOW

- ★ The big lie of election fraud is being perpetuated to justify restrictive voting laws at the state level. We need baseline standards nationwide for access to the ballot to ensure that eligible voters are not disenfranchised in the 2022 election.
- ★ The Jan. 6th insurrection demonstrated the urgent need for leaders of integrity to pass reform policies that begin renewing faith in the fairness and security of our democratic systems.



MONEY IN POLITICS IS CORRUPTING

- ★ Total spending in the 2020 election cycle is estimated to have reached a record-shattering \$14 billion, more than twice the amount spent in the 2016 election cycle (which set the previous record), according to the Center for Responsive Politics.
- ★ 42% of that spending was on the part of ultra-rich individual donors. 22% was spending by super PACs, political parties, and other nonprofit dark money groups. This money largely consists of huge influence-seeking contributions that provide corrupting influence over federal officeholders and government policy decisions. GOOD NEWS is that small donors also participated in record numbers--making up 22% of the spending.

MANIPULATING DISTRICTS IS UNFAIR AND UNACCOUNTABLE

- ★ We know that the power of a vote to influence the outcome of elected leadership varies greatly because of gerrymandered districts that distort representation to ensure continued control by those in power. Districts should ideally represent communities of interest, gerrymandering has artificially divided up voters to manipulate power.
- ★ When politicians are assured of their power they do not feel accountable to constituents. Unaccountable decision-makers do not need to understand the issues that affect people they represent.
- ★ People represented by those policy makers are also given no reason to believe that their participation will make a difference, creating a death spiral of civic engagement and political accountability.