



# AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation  
of Labor and  
Congress of Industrial  
Organizations**

815 Black Lives Matter  
Plaza NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
202-637-5000  
aflcio.org

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**ELIZABETH H. SHULER**  
PRESIDENT

**FREDRICK D. REDMOND**  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**TEFERE A. GEBRE**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Michael Sacco  
Cecil Roberts  
Matthew Loeb  
Randi Weingarten  
Fredric V. Rolando  
Baldemar Velasquez  
Lee A. Saunders  
Terry O'Sullivan  
James Callahan  
DeMaurice Smith  
Sean McGarvey  
D. Taylor  
Stuart Appelbaum  
Bhairavi Desai  
Paul Rinaldi  
Mark Dimondstein  
Cindy Estrada  
Sara Nelson  
Marc Perrone  
Eric Dean  
Joseph Sellers Jr.  
Christopher Shelton  
Lonnie R. Stephenson  
Richard Lanigan  
Robert Martinez  
Gabrielle Carteris  
Mark McManus  
Elissa McBride  
John Samuelsen  
Vonda McDaniel  
Gwen Mills  
Charles Wowkanech  
Bonnie Castillo  
Warren Fairley  
Ernest A. Logan  
Capt. Joe DePete  
James Stevin  
Tom Conway  
John Costa  
Tim Driscoll  
Everett Kelley  
Anthony Shelton  
Ray Curry  
Edward A. Kelly  
Evelyn DeJesus  
Cheryl Eliano  
Matthew S. Biggs  
Roxanne Brown  
Arthur Maratea  
James A. Williams Jr.

January 13, 2022

United States Senate  
50 Constitution Avenue, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators:

The right to vote is fundamental for working people. It is how we express our voice as citizens and the ultimate defense against the power of wealth and privilege. Like millions of Americans, we are deeply troubled by recent attacks on our democracy and by the seeming inability of the U.S. Senate to confront them. Next week, on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 's birthday, you will have the opportunity to honor his legacy and secure the right to vote, by passing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. In the strongest possible terms, we urge you to vote yes on these bills and to turn aside any procedural rules that make it impossible for the majority of United States Senators to protect our fundamental right to vote.

During the past year, dozens of states have passed laws to restrict our right to vote, to make it more difficult to vote and to create new powers for partisan officials to overturn the will of the people. You are uniquely positioned to reverse this assault on our democracy by enacting federal minimum standards that will guarantee every American the right to vote and to have our vote counted. We expect you to act.

Current procedural rules enable a minority to block the Senate from even debating broadly popular legislation. These rules were conceived by segregationists determined to keep Black citizens from achieving equality, and they have been used over and over again to block debate on measures protecting workers' rights on the job. Their defenders claim the ability of a minority to filibuster and block the will of the majority promotes compromise. Recent history has proven, however, that the filibuster has had the opposite effect. It has been a constant source of gridlock, stifling debate and giving the minority free reign to ignore the will of America's people.

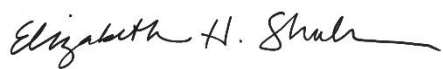
Worse, the filibuster has allowed anti-democratic state legislatures to diminish working people's right to vote without challenge by the U.S. Congress. Ironically, state legislatures are passing bills to restrict the vote with a bare majority, but the U.S. Senate cannot vote to protect these rights without a supermajority. As former Senator Robert Byrd famously said, Senate rules "must be changed to reflect changed circumstances." That means we must reform the filibuster to allow our democracy to continue to function.

Letter to United States Senate  
January 13, 2022  
Page two

To save democracy, to protect the rights of working people and to have a government that can secure a prosperous future for America, we need democracy in the U.S. Senate. The American labor movement has always stood up to defend our democracy, with our voices and our votes, at work and through our unions. Democracy is in our DNA. Our unions run, like our country, by voting and giving equal voice to members, on the job and in our communities. We expect no less of the U.S. Senate.

We speak on behalf of a unified labor movement. Working people's fundamental rights are at stake. It's time to fix the Senate and pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth H. Shuler  
President



Fredrick D. Redmond  
Secretary-Treasurer



Tefere A. Gebre  
Executive Vice President

Stuart Appelbaum  
RWDSU

Matthew Biggs  
IFPTE

Roxanne Brown  
USW

James Callahan  
IUOE

Bonnie Castillo  
NNU

Thomas Conway  
USW

John Costa  
ATU

Ray Curry  
UAW

Evelyn DeJesus  
AFT

Eric Dean  
Ironworkers

Mark Dimondstein  
APWU

Timothy Driscoll  
BAC

Cheryl Eliano  
AFGE

Cindy Estrada  
UAW

Everett Kelley  
AFGE

Edward Kelly  
IAFF

Matthew Loeb  
IATSE

Ernest Logan  
AFSA

Robert Martinez Jr.  
IAM

Arthur Maratea  
TCU/IAM

Elissa McBride  
AFSCME

Sean McGarvey  
NABTU

Mark McManus  
UA

Gwen Mills  
UNITE HERE

Sara Nelson  
AFA-CWA

Terry O'Sullivan  
LiUNA

Marc Perrone  
UFCW

Paul Rinaldi  
NATCA

Cecil Roberts  
UMWA

Fredric Rolando  
NALC

Michael Sacco  
SIU

Lee Saunders  
AFSCME

Anthony Shelton  
BCTGM

Christopher Shelton  
CWA

James Slevin  
UWUA

Lonnie Stephenson  
IBEW

D. Taylor  
UNITE HERE

Randi Weingarten  
AFT

James Williams Jr.  
IUPAT