



“History is waiting on us”:

Senator Reverend Warnock Introduces Freedom to Vote Act, Speaks on Senate Floor to Urge Colleagues to Act on Voting Rights

U.S. Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA) spoke on the Senate floor, calling on every single one of his colleagues to support the Freedom to Vote Act, which will improve access to the ballot box, advance election integrity reforms & protect the nation’s democracy from emerging threats.

The Freedom to Vote Act, legislation that includes the Preventing Election Subversion Act and Voters on the Move Act, two specific provisions championed by Senator Warnock, improves access to the ballot for Georgians and for Americans, advances commonsense election integrity reforms, and protects our democracy from emerging threats. Importantly, this proposal reflects feedback from state and local election officials to ensure that the people responsible for implementing these reforms are able to do so effectively. This bill also elevates the voices of Georgia and American voters by ending partisan gerrymandering and rooting out the undue influence of special interest money in our politics.

The legislation, which was introduced and co-sponsored by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Alex Padilla (D-CA), and Jon Tester (D-MT). Many of the co-sponsors joined Senator Warnock on the Senate floor to underscore the importance of this legislation.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SENATOR WARNOCK’S FLOOR SPEECH:

- Our work is a testament to Democrats’ commitment to protecting access to the ballot box for every eligible voter. I think it’s important to remind us that we were blocked from debating this issue in June. It bears repeating so that the American people understand that that’s what got stopped in June – not the actual bill, but the ability to debate the bill on the Senate floor.
- But I’m proud that our group was able to come together – we decided we were not about to let this fight to protect voting rights die in this Congress. That passing voting rights is the most important thing we can do in this Congress. Because if we are going to lengthen and strengthen the cords of our democracy, that won’t just happen. We will have to work for it. We will have to fight for it. We will have to stand up for it. And that’s what we intend to do.
- The Freedom to Vote Act will improve access to the ballot for all eligible Americans by setting national standards for absentee voting, early voting and in-person voting; it will make sure that [ballot] drop boxes are available for workers; it will enable the work that is so necessary to strengthen our democracy. This bill will end partisan gerrymandering – yet another way in which the voices of ordinary people are squeezed out of their democracy; and it will advance commonsense reforms to secure our elections.
- I say, at least give this bill a chance. Come let us reason together. Let’s talk about it. Let’s have the voting rights discussion that we didn’t have in June – it’s not too late. Let’s have the discussion the American people deserve. Let’s have an open debate and input from both sides. Here on the floor of the United States Senate. That’s why we were sent here!
- I know that for those that have been in this body for a while, there’s a sense in which, you know, you offer up proposals and they don’t always make it and you fight another day. When I look at what’s going on across our country, I think that if we don’t address what’s happening right now, we will have crossed a Rubicon that imperils our democracy for years to come.
- And I’m not about to sit here silently and allow that to happen. Too many people died. Too much blood was shed. Too many sacrifices made. Too much is at stake. And it’s beneath the legacy of the greatest deliberative body on the planet to refuse to even have a debate about voting rights.
- We’ve got some things done this year, but I believe if we don’t pass voting rights, history will rightly judge us harshly. The folks who sent us here are counting on us. History is waiting on us. Our children are watching us. And a great cloud of witnesses – John Lewis; a white woman named Viola Liuzzo who died fighting for voting rights; Abraham Joshua Heschel; Medgar Evers – a great cloud of witnesses urging us on to march towards the mark of the high calling. The high calling of our democratic ideals: a nation where every voice is heard and every vote counts.