



March 2, 2021

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the two million members of the Service Employees International Union (“SEIU”), I am writing to urge you to vote for H.R. 1, the For the People Act, and continue to prioritize structural democracy reform as a core pillar of your legislative agenda in the 117th Congress.

Our democracy remains vulnerable in the wake of the violent January 6 insurrection on the US Capitol and the explicit efforts in 43 states as of today to roll back what remains of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) by moving legislation that restricts voting access. These actions are fueled by unfounded and racist claims that the 2020 election was stolen, which is a direct attempt to delegitimize the historic turnout of tens of millions of Black, brown, white, Asian Pacific Islander, and Indigenous voters that shifted the balance of power in Washington, D.C. We need immediate, sweeping action to defend our democracy from these attacks. That is why we need to pass H.R. 1 and enact a critical set of reforms that would strengthen our system of voting and help restore the balance of power in our democracy to working people.

If passed into law, H.R. 1 would help make real the promise of free and fair elections by taking steps to both modernize America’s elections and make voting easier for all voters. This measure would enhance American democracy by establishing many critical reforms in federal elections including a requirement of at least 15 consecutive days of in-person early voting including weekends, for a minimum of 10 hours each day, and ensure that early voting polling places are accessible by public transportation. The bill would also require that voters be given a minimum of seven days’ notice if their polling place location is changed. The bill would further streamline our voter registration system by establishing automatic voter registration, same day registration, and online voter registration for voters across the country in federal elections. Under the bill, election administration would be modernized with new funding for election security and the reauthorization of the Election Assistance Commission (“EAC”), an independent and bipartisan commission that works to ensure reliable and secure voting equipment. With these reforms millions of everyday Americans will be able to participate more fully in our democracy and our elections will be more secure.

H.R. 1 includes much needed reforms that expand and uphold the right of all voters to participate in our democracy. H.R. 1 would affirm Congress’ commitment to restore the full protections of the VRA. The Supreme Court’s 2013 Shelby County v. Holder decision gutted the VRA and spurred a wave of restrictive voting measures aimed at suppressing voting in communities of color, and among poor people, and seniors. H.R. 1 would help restore the VRA’s promise to uphold voting rights for communities of color historically excluded from our democracy. In addition, the bill would offer a second chance to approximately 4.7 million people who have served their time, by restoring voting rights for citizens with past criminal convictions living in our communities.

Finally, H.R. 1 would make significant progress in reforming the nation’s campaign finance and ethics laws. The bill would replace the current campaign finance system

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that empowers corporations and billionaires with one that relies on small donors and public matching funds. H.R. 1 would end secret election spending and force disclosure of all election-related spending. In addition, H.R. 1 addresses our government ethics crisis by, among other things, requiring the development of a code of conduct for Supreme Court Justices to enhance accountability on ethics and recusal issues; overhauling the Office of Government Ethics to strengthen federal ethics oversight; establishing more robust conflict of interest requirements for government officials; prohibiting members of Congress from using taxpayer dollars to settle allegations of employment discrimination; and requiring presidents to disclose their tax returns.

SEIU members know that democracy works best when all citizens can freely access the ballot box, their votes are counted, and elected officials are reflective and accountable to communities that elected them into power. But we also know that our current system does not fulfill these democratic values and bold institutional changes are needed to put us on the path to becoming a true multi-racial democracy. H.R. 1, the For the People Act, is fundamental to rebuilding and advancing our democracy. This comprehensive legislative package—voting rights, campaign finance, and ethics reforms—takes important steps to preserve our democracy, while combating those efforts to undermine the will of the people in free and fair elections.

We strongly urge you to vote for H.R. 1 when it comes to the floor for a vote this week. We will add this vote to our legislative scorecard. If you have additional questions, please contact Isaiah Wilson at isaiah.wilson@seiu.org.

Sincerely,



Maty Kay Henry

International President

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