



April 7, 2021

Dear Senator Kyrsten Sinema and Senator Mark Kelly,

As faith leaders and faith-based advocates in the state of Arizona, we write to you today about the urgent need for the For the People Act (S.1) to become the law of the land. Our faith calls us to correct injustices, support the most vulnerable, nurture human potential, root out systemic racism, and protect the health and well-being of all members of society. A broken democracy has clear and detrimental impacts for how our nation can collectively answer that call.

After harmful rulings like *Shelby* and *Citizens United*, we have seen the disturbing trends of voter suppression and dark money flooding our elections. They undermine the integrity of our democracy and enable oppressive systems to grow stronger. Millions of Americans--especially in marginalized, Black and Brown communities--are being stripped of the right to vote and we exhort our leaders to quickly pass federal protections of the sacred right to vote.

The election fraud lies that have been dispelled time and again and that largely targeted communities of color are now being used in many states to justify new laws to make it harder for those same communities to vote. Moreover, the redistricting process set to begin later this year could set the stage for another decade of extreme partisanship, locking in power for those currently in power. The recent physical attack on the U.S. Capitol grew out of a deeper assault on democracy that demonstrates just how strong the currents of white supremacy run. Our democracy is in peril and the well-being of our people—especially in communities of color—hangs in the balance.

The For the People Act (S.1) includes reforms to protect voting rights, to address the outsized influence of money in politics, curb unethical practices by elected leaders, and to ensure fair representation in Congressional redistricting. S.1 is the bold, comprehensive bill we need because the problems in our democracy are deep, systemic, and wide-ranging. The scope and size of the bill reflects the myriad issues that need to be addressed, and the ability to restore faith in democracy cannot be done through piecemeal changes.

The voting and election reforms in S.1, written by the late Rep. John Lewis, would set federal baseline standards of access for every eligible voter, regardless of where they live. In light of the current attempts by many state legislatures to aggressively restrict access to the ballot after the 2020 election, failure to pass these federal reforms would be unconscionable.

Grievously, the Arizona state legislature is a leader in the recent onslaught of restrictive voting bills after an election with record voter turn-out. We are calling on you, our U.S. Senators, to protect your constituents from these blatant attempts to disenfranchise Arizona voters. We urge you to take up the mantle of leadership in the Senate for our sake and the sake of millions of Americans similarly at risk of being disenfranchised by a return to Jim Crow-era voting laws.

Cosponsoring S.1 is not sufficient in these dire circumstances. We need leaders with the moral courage to take bold action in passing these reforms. Our democracy is too precious for S.1 to be blocked by procedural hurdles in the Senate. For people of faith this is not a matter of right versus left, but of right versus wrong.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned (100+ Arizona Faith Leaders)

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