DESPERATE DEMS MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER

Zhou Biden's "voting rights" speech in Atlanta (1/11) has been widely criticized for dishonesty and demagoguery, but its real significance involves what it told us about the increasing panic that pervades his Democrat Party.

Biden's sudden pivot from the Build Back Better Act (BBB) to "election reform" betrays a very real fear that his party will lose its tiny majorities in Congress big time unless they seize control of our national elections.

For well over two centuries the states have played the primary role in the administration of congressional elections, as the Constitution specifies. Yet Biden and the Democrats now insist that this time-tested system somehow constitutes a threat to democracy itself.

This is self-evidently false, considering that it is the same system that gave the Democrats their small but real majorities in the House and the Senate. Yet, in his Tuesday speech, Biden portrayed this purported menace in weirdly Manichean terms: "Will we choose democracy over autocracy, light over shadow, justice over injustice?"

The specific bills that Biden says will deliver us from evil are the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (S.4) and the Freedom to Vote Act (S.2747), both of which are stalled in the Senate due to their inability to garner the 60 votes necessary to overcome Republican filibusters.

Predictably, Biden reversed his oft-stated opposition to vitiating Senate filibuster rules:

> *"I believe that the threat to our democracy is so grave that we must find a way to pass these voting rights bills, debate them, vote. Let the majority prevail. And if that bare minimum is blocked, we have no option but to change the Senate rules, including getting rid of the filibuster for this.… The filibuster has been weaponized and abused.… Today I'm making it clear: To protect our democracy, I support changing the Senate rules, whichever way they need to be changed."*

This is a far cry from the position Biden took on the floor of the Senate in May 2005:

> *"At its core, the filibuster is not about stopping a nominee or a bill, it's about compromise and moderation. The nuclear option extinguishes the power of independents and moderates.… Moderates are important if you need to get to 60 votes to satisfy cloture; they are much less so if you only need 50 votes. Let's set the historical record straight. Never has the Senate provided for a certainty that 51 votes could put someone on the bench or pass legislation."*

Biden's cynical reversal on the filibuster highlights how desperate the Democrats have become. Indeed, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) admitted during a recent interview with CNN that nuking the filibuster was about nothing more than winning elections.

Schumer knows perfectly well that the two "election reform" bills he wants to pass contain a multitude of unconstitutional provisions. He also knows that, if he can get them passed soon, they will affect the outcome of November's midterm elections while the inevitable legal challenges crawl through the court system at the usual glacial pace. Consequently, Sen. Schumer has vowed to force a vote on changing Senate filibuster rules no later than Jan. 17.

This is when we'll find out how serious Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) are about preserving the 60-vote rule. They will obviously be under tremendous pressure to recant. Unless they suddenly decide to emulate Biden, S.4 and S.2747 are headed for the same legislative graveyard in which BBB now rests in peace.

Manchin and Sinema aren't alone in their reluctance to meddle with Senate rules in the dubious cause of "election reform." Politico reports that Sens. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) are unenthusiastic about altering the filibuster. Moreover, the harassment of Manchin and Sinema may have stiffened their resolve.

Dan Gainor writes at Fox News:

> *"Mobsters are known for their threats, intimidation and harassment. Ask any 'Sopranos' fan. Now the media and the left either embrace or support those very tactics.… Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) felt the brunt of the intimidation. But the left bullied Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) as well. Leftist so-called activists stalked Sinema into a bathroom and recorded*

> *video while they harassed her to vote their way. Then another 'activist' harangued her while she was flying on an airplane."*

Even worse, at a point when Biden badly needed the votes of Manchin and Sinema, he laughed off this kind of harassment.

When asked by Fox News reporter Peter Doocy about the activists who followed Sen. Sinema into a bathroom at Arizona State University and the people who harassed Sen. Manchin and members of his family on his boat, Biden responded flippantly, "I don't think they're appropriate tactics but it happens to everybody."

Then, after barely suppressing a chuckle, he continued, "The only people it doesn't happen to are people who have Secret Service standing around with them. So, it's part of the process." It's also part of the process for senators to vote against bills for revenge (e.g., John McCain).

In the end, Comrade Biden's "voting rights" speech in Atlanta failed to move the needle. Even Al Sharpton, no stranger to demagoguery, panned it: "Now, in this particular case, dealing with my friend and brother Joe, if he was trying to get votes, it was not the vote-getting speech."

This is why the Democrats are desperate. They need a leader who *can* move the needle, and they need some accomplishments to talk about on the campaign trail. They have neither, so they will pull out all the stops to federalize our national elections.

This is far more dangerous than anything the Democrats have done before. If the Dems get control of our national elections, we will become a one-party state like Venezuela, Cuba, or… California.

David Catron is a commentator for RealClearPolitics.