



Amalgamated Transit Union

10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1706
(301) 431-7100 Fax (301) 431-7117

Office of the International President

January 13, 2022

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

On behalf of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the largest union representing public transit workers in the U.S., I am urging you to support the *Freedom to Vote Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, turning aside any procedural rules that make it impossible for the majority of United States Senators to protect our fundamental right to vote.

ATU is a strong union that does more than just negotiate contracts. We help workers become active citizens who stand up for their democratic rights. Yes, we are union of transportation workers, but even before that, we are Americans. Our country was built on the foundation of free and fair elections. The people get to choose who will represent and lead them. While we may disagree with some elected officials on policy matters such as transit funding or labor rights, if the person was elected fairly, we respect their right to take those positions. The remedy to win a battle with a politician who is not in your corner is to defeat them at the ballot box. But that process of course assumes that the election is fair.

Tragically, in state legislatures all throughout the nation, voting rights are under assault. States are getting rid of drop boxes and severely restricting mail-in voting. Absentee ballots are becoming increasingly hard to request. In some states, water cannot even be distributed to people waiting in line to vote. It is voter suppression on steroids. Working families are affected the most by these outrageous Jim Crow era laws that are being resurrected to silence people, especially in communities of color where many ATU members live.

In some states, legislatures are actually considering bills that would allow them to overturn free and fair elections. This is beyond suppression; it's nullification -- the equivalent of torching the U.S. Constitution. These lawmakers are fixing the game. If they succeed, America as we know it will cease to exist. We will no longer be a Democracy. We will be ruled by tyrants. Our ability to change our leaders and the course of our lives will end.

Unions know all about voter suppression. Workers trying to vote in union elections often face intense voter suppression campaigns by their employer. We listen to bogus claims about the dangers of voting by mail, as employers cite "fraud and coercion." Workers are forced to attend "captive audience" meetings to convince them to vote against the union. Companies place massive pressure on workers living in poverty with their families and tell them lies about what it means to join a union. We have to deal with

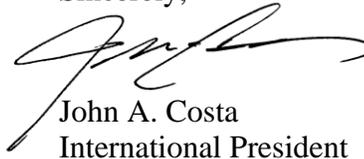
rules that prevent us from helping each other cast ballots. Just like with the general population, people of color, students, the elderly, and people with disabilities are the usual targets and victims of this suppression.

ATU opposes all efforts to deter or deny eligible voters from registering and/or casting their vote in a manner that is most convenient for them. We also strongly oppose any legislation that would nullify legally-cast votes and take away the rights of people to choose their elected representatives at any level.

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. While protecting filibuster rules is certainly serious Senate business, if we don't do everything we can to preserve our democracy, what will we have left to defend?

On behalf the ATU members in West Virginia, we urge you to fix the Senate and pass the *Freedom to Vote Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



John A. Costa
International President

c: David E. Sayre, PR/BA ATU Local 1742, Charleston, WV



Amalgamated Transit Union

10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1706
(301) 431-7100 Fax (301) 431-7117

Office of the International President

January 13, 2022

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sinema:

On behalf of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the largest union representing public transit workers in the U.S., I am urging you to support the *Freedom to Vote Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, turning aside any procedural rules that make it impossible for the majority of United States Senators to protect our fundamental right to vote.

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poverty with their families and tell them lies about what it means to join a union. We have to deal with rules that prevent us from helping each other cast ballots. Just like with the general population, people of color, students, the elderly, and people with disabilities are the usual targets and victims of this suppression.

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On behalf the ATU members in Arizona, we urge you to fix the Senate and pass the *Freedom to Vote Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



John A. Costa
International President

c: Robert J. Bean, PR/BA, ATU Local 1433, Phoenix, AZ