

Udall-Harkin-Merkley Rules Reform Package

Blocking a vote with a filibuster used to be rare and reserved for extreme situations. Today, major bills, non-controversial bills, sometimes multiple steps on the same piece of legislation, and even non-controversial nominees face filibusters. There have been more filibusters since 2006 than the total between 1920 and 1980.

Senate rules are supposed to allow for substantive debate and to protect the views of the minority – as our founders intended. Instead, they are abused to prevent the Senate from ever voting on, and sometimes even debating, critical legislation.

Our reform resolution helps increase transparency, restores accountability, and fosters debate.

- **Clear Path to Debate: Eliminate the Filibuster on Motions to Proceed**
Makes motions to proceed not subject to a filibuster, but provides for two hours of debate. This proposal has had bipartisan support for decades and is often mentioned as a way to end the abuse of holds.
- **Eliminates Secret Holds**
Prohibits one Senator from objecting on behalf of another, unless he or she discloses the name of the senator with the objection. This is a simple solution to address a longstanding problem.
- **Right to Amend: Guarantees Consideration of Amendments for both Majority and Minority**
Protects the rights of the minority to offer amendments following cloture filing, provided the amendments are germane and have been filed in a timely manner.

This provision addresses comments of Republicans at last year's Rules Committee hearings. Each time Democrats raised concerns about filibusters on motions to proceed, Republicans responded that it was their only recourse because the Majority Leader fills the amendment tree and prevents them from offering amendments. Our resolution provides a simple solution – it guarantees the minority the right to offer germane amendments.

- **Talking Filibuster: Ensures Real Debate**
Following a failed cloture vote, Senators opposed to proceeding to final passage will be required to continue debate as long as the subject of the cloture vote or an amendment, motion, point of order, or other related matter is the pending business.
- **Expedite Nominations: Reduce Post-Cloture Time**
Provides for two hours of post-cloture debate time for nominees.

Post cloture time is meant for debating and voting on amendments – something that is not possible on nominations. Instead, the minority now requires the Senate use this time simply to prevent it from moving on to other business.

