



Press Release

ICYMI: Why Do We Still Have the Filibuster?

ANDREW EVANS | MARCH 26, 2021

Senate Democrats are considering whether to eliminate the filibuster in order to pass their agenda, including several controversial health care policies. But why has the filibuster lasted this long? AAF's Director of Health Care Policy Christopher Holt answers this question in today's Weekly Checkup column: Far from being a protection for the *minority*, the filibuster is actually a useful tool for the *majority*, he argues.

An excerpt:

Without the filibuster, Senate Majority Leader Schumer won't have a procedural excuse to avoid bringing more divisive and controversial progressive priorities that divide his conference to the Senate floor, and Democratic senators won't have procedural cover if they oppose those policies. Republicans didn't eliminate the filibuster in 2017 (or in 2001 for that matter) in part because their slim majorities weren't sufficiently unified on policy for the filibuster to matter. Repealing the ACA didn't fail in 2017 because of the filibuster; it failed because 50 Republicans couldn't agree on the policy specifics. Similarly, the ACA debate occurred with a 60-seat Democratic majority. In that case as well it was policy disagreements among Democrats, not procedural hurdles, that ultimately blocked progressive priorities such as a public option. Blaming minority obstruction is often preferable—at least to party leaders—to putting inter-party policy disagreements on full display.

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