



NANCY PELOSI
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

TALKING POINTS
FROM SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NANCY PELOSI
SPEAKER.GOV

September 24, 2020

Talking Points: Democrats Unveil Package to Defend America From Trump's Abuses of Power; Continue Calls on Senate GOP to Stop Blocking COVID Relief the House Passed Four Months Ago

Democrats Unveil Sweeping Package to Protect our Democracy.

Since taking office, Trump has led a ceaseless campaign to systematically and shamelessly tear down the guardrails designed to protect our democracy and the rule of law. Day after day, he has placed his own personal, political interests above the national interest – eroding transparency, seeking to end accountability, enriching himself, targeting his political opponents, soliciting foreign interference in our elections and abusing the power of his office.

Trump's assault on norms and the rule of law is a stark reminder that democracy is not self-effectuating. After Watergate and the abuses of the Nixon Administration, Congress enacted a series of landmark laws and reforms to clean up government and prevent a future president from abusing the power of their office. Now, it is our responsibility to strengthen the bedrock of our democracy and ensure our laws are strong enough to withstand a lawless president.

That is why, this week, led by our Chairs, House Democrats unveiled the Protecting our Democracy Act: a landmark, comprehensive reforms package that will combat the President's assault on our democracy, prevent abuses by a future president and strengthen our democracy for generations to come:

- **Prevents presidential abuses** by blocking the abuse of the pardon power, ensuring that a president cannot 'run out the clock' in the courts if they break the law, and strengthening penalties for federal officials who violate the foreign and domestic emoluments clauses;
- **Restores our system of checks and balances, and strengthens accountability and transparency** by strengthening Congress's tools to enforce subpoenas, reasserting Congress's power of the purse, preventing political interference in justice, protecting the independence of inspectors general, strengthening congressional oversight of emergency declarations, protecting whistleblowers, providing accountability over acting officials and ensuring political appointees don't escape penalties for Hatch Act violations; and
- **Protects our elections** by requiring that campaigns report foreign efforts to interference in our elections, and by ensuring that campaigns cannot make use of dirt on a political opponent provided by a foreign national.

This reforms package is ready to go on day one, and builds on the work that House Democrats have undertaken to root out corruption, expand voting rights, and protect the rule of law. **It is our responsibility to ensure our democracy carries on for generations to come, even if Congressional Republicans refuse to act and instead enable Trump's abuses and the erosion of our democracy.**

Message Guidance from Leader Schumer's Office on the Passing of Justice Ginsburg & The Supreme Court Vacancy

Justice Ginsburg's death leaves a vacancy on the Supreme Court with just weeks left before a national election that could result in a different president. This vacancy could determine the future of the Supreme Court for generations, and make rulings that touch every aspect of American life.

- **Health Care:** Americans' right to healthcare hangs in the balance. President Trump is pursuing a lawsuit which would eliminate protections for more than 130 million Americans with pre-existing conditions, send drug prices soaring for seniors on Medicare and rip insurance away from millions.
- **Reproductive Freedom:** A woman's fundamental, constitutional right to make her own medical decisions; to control her own body, her right to choose – hangs in the balance.
- **Labor Rights:** The right of workers to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages hangs in the balance.
- **Climate:** The future of our planet, environmental protections and the possibility of bold legislation to address climate change hang in the balance.
- **Voting Rights:** Voting rights and the right of every American citizen to have a voice in our democracy hang in the balance.
- **Right to Unionize:** The right to join a union hangs in the balance.
- **LGBTQ+ Rights:** The right to marry who you love, hangs in the balance.

These rights and more are at risk and the stakes of this election and this vacancy concern the future of the fundamental rights of the American people.

Justice Ginsburg told her family that it was her "most fervent wish that [she] not be replaced until a new president is installed." The Senate has **never** confirmed a nominee to the Supreme Court this close to a presidential election.

With 200,000 Dead, Republicans Continue to Block COVID-19 Relief

This week, our nation passed the grim milestone of 200,000 deaths from the coronavirus. Nearly 7 million Americans have been infected. Millions of children are food insecure and families are facing eviction.

Democrats presented the solution to defeating the virus over four months ago, when we passed the Heroes Act, which reflects the needs of the American people and allocates the resources to save lives and boost the economy.

Yet Senate Republicans continue to press the pause button, refusing to pass the desperately needed relief needed to address the massive health and economic crisis gripping America:

- **Republicans reject our call for robust support for state, local, tribal and territorial governments** facing the health and financial burden of COVID-19, saying that the states should just go bankrupt.
- **Republicans and the President want to bully many schools into reopening** before it is safe to do so, endangering children and educators and creating new vectors for the virus to spread.
- **Republicans are ignoring the crisis of food insecurity**, providing zero funds for nutrition assistance – even less than the just \$250,000 they originally proposed for the 14 million children who do not have enough to eat – when experts estimate that tens of billions are needed.
- **Republicans are offering a grossly insufficient \$16 billion for testing and tracing**, when scientists say that at least \$75 billion is needed to crush the virus and safely reopen schools and the economy.
- **Republicans want to provide nothing for rental assistance**, leaving families stuck watching their rent bills pile higher and higher with no way to pay them.
- **Republicans are complicit in the President's attacks on access to the ballot box**, as they refuse to allocate the money needed to ensure that no one has to choose between their health and their vote this November.

Originally, House and Senate Democrats made clear we would be willing to cut a trillion dollars from the Heroes Act if the White House would add a trillion to their inadequate offer. In order to meet in the middle, we have now said we would be willing to go to \$2.2 trillion. **Yet, Senate Republicans and the**

White House continue to reject our offers to compromise – and instead the Senate GOP continues to move further away from what is needed.

Even now, as the coronavirus burns through our nation, President Trump's Republican enablers in the Congress want to help him to 'play it down,' instead of getting families the scale of help that they really need.

Time is of the essence, and Republicans must work with Democrats to help save lives and livelihoods now.

Trump Fans the Flames of Violence and Division

America faces a devastating national moment of pain and heartbreak, as deadly crises take their brutal toll on our country – from racial injustice and police brutality, to the coronavirus destroying lives and livelihoods, to failures of justice in education, jobs and the environment. **Yet, instead of facing the facts and healing our nation, Trump is working to sow chaos to distract from his failed leadership: spreading disinformation, using dog-whistle tactics and stoking distrust and division in our communities.**

Trump's behavior has stoked deadly violence across America – yet, again and again, he has been too weak to condemn the violence that he has encouraged, including at the hands of his own supporters. Trump has fanned the flames of hate for his political gain and refused to condemn violence from his own supporters.

- His top advisors say that more violence and chaos will help Trump politically.
- Trump defended one of his own supporters who murdered two protestors.
- Trump has repeatedly encouraged supporters to travel across the country to fight protestors in Portland and Kenosha, calling peaceful protestors 'thugs' and suggesting they would be shot.

Trump claims to be the 'law and order' president, but while crime fell under the Obama-Biden Administration, it is rising under Trump – and every day that he is in the White House, Americans are less safe.

Americans are less safe because of Trump's failed coronavirus response. Under his watch, America has had the worst coronavirus outbreak in the world, with more deaths and cases than any other country by far. We have learned that President was fully aware of the catastrophic nature of the virus but hid the facts and refused to take the threat seriously, leaving our entire country exposed and unprepared.

Trump has put Americans' health and economic security on the chopping block:

- Instead of making health care more affordable, Trump is in the Supreme Court trying to strike down the Affordable Care Act, which would take health care away from 20 million Americans and eliminate protections for as many as 133 million Americans with pre-existing conditions – in the middle of a pandemic.
- Instead of crushing the virus so the economy can reopen safely, Trump's failed coronavirus response has contributed to a future in which millions of small businesses are at risk of closing for good, up to 40 million Americans are at risk of being evicted, tens of millions are going hungry and nearly 30 million Americans are currently receiving unemployment benefits.
- Instead of protecting the financial security of seniors and families, Trump's latest plan to eliminate the payroll tax could deplete Social Security by 2023.

In the face of his failed policies and lack of a vision for the future, Trump's plan isn't to protect the American people – it is to double down on his scare tactics, root for chaos and violence in our communities and profit off the pain of our families, when we need healing in America. Americans deserve better.

GOP Senate Continues to Block Policing Reform and Equal Justice Legislation

America is experiencing a moment of national anguish, as we grieve for those killed by police brutality and racial injustice. **In June, led by the Congressional Black Caucus, the House passed the bipartisan George Floyd Justice in Policing Act: bold, unprecedented reforms to fundamentally transform the culture of policing by curbing police brutality, ending racial profiling, increasing transparency and accountability, as it saves lives.**

- Bans chokeholds;
- Stops no-knock warrants;
- Ends the qualified immunity doctrine that is a barrier to holding police officers accountable for wrongful conduct;
- Combats racial profiling;
- Mandates data collection, including body cameras and dashboard cameras; and
- Establishes new standards for policing.

The weak Senate GOP bill was rejected on a bipartisan basis. Leader McConnell should take up the House bipartisan bill and do so immediately, so that we can save lives.

###
