



To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: June 2021
Re: New Survey Shows West Virginians Oppose Status Quo for the Filibuster

Since Joe Biden's election back in November, elected officials have spent a great deal of time, energy, and media coverage debating filibuster reform. A new Global Strategy Group survey of 500 registered voters, however, shows this debate is limited to the halls of Congress: Very few West Virginians are currently tuned into the filibuster conversation, and contrary to conventional wisdom, this deeply red state is not anti-reform. These voters view the filibuster as a partisan weapon and oppose the status quo, and there's space to drive even more support for filibuster reform in West Virginia.

Key findings from the survey are below.¹

Filibuster reform is not a top-tier issue in West Virginia

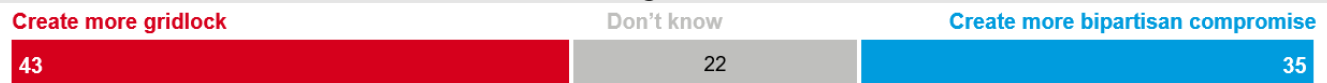
West Virginia voters don't particularly care about the filibuster. It's no secret that West Virginians have strong opinions, whether it's protecting miners or addressing the opioid crisis. But when it comes to the filibuster, few feel strongly: Only two thirds have an opinion and moderate voters – who will be key to any future electoral victories – are generally split on the filibuster (31% support reform/37% oppose reform, while 33 percent readily admit they don't know enough about the filibuster to even venture an opinion).

Further, less than one third of voters (28%) know Manchin has publicly spoken out against filibuster reform, underscoring just how removed West Virginians are from the issue.

To the extent they care, West Virginians back filibuster reform

West Virginians see the filibuster as a tool of gridlock, not bipartisanship. West Virginians may not know much or feel strongly about the filibuster, but they sense it is no longer serving its original purpose. When given even a simple neutral definition² of the filibuster, they say the filibuster is more likely to create gridlock on the issues they care about than it is to create bipartisan compromise.

Do you think the filibuster does more to create gridlock in Washington, D.C. or more to create bipartisan compromise in Washington, D.C.?



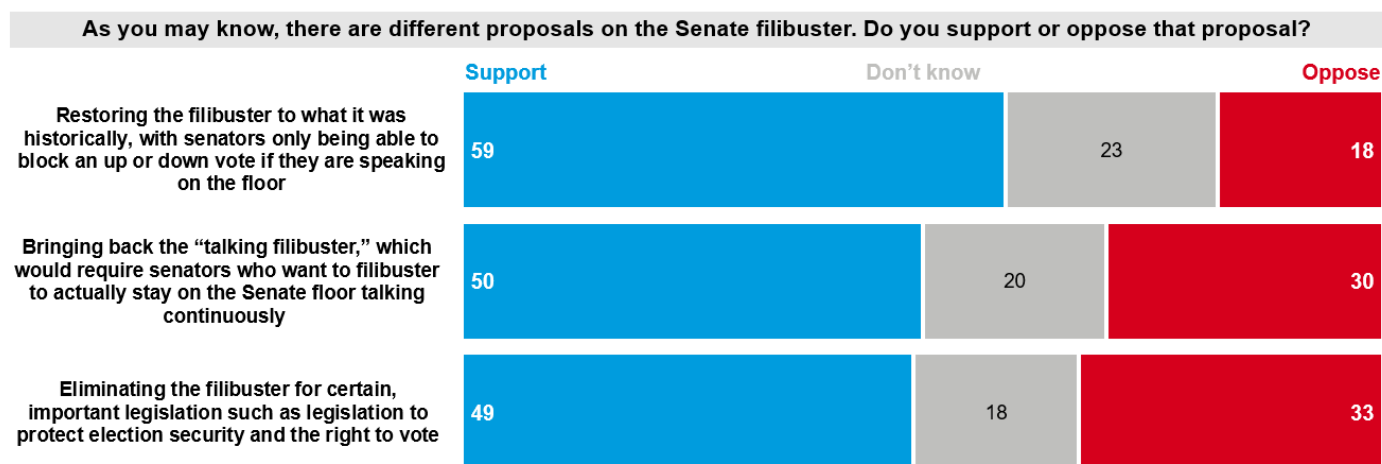
¹Global Strategy Group conducted a phone survey of 500 registered voters in West Virginia between May 10 and 16, 2021. The survey had a margin of error of +/- 4.4%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the populations of voters are properly represented, and the data was weighted to the actual 2020 results statewide.

²See appendix for full text.

Messaging drives even further support for filibuster reform

A single message drives a plurality to support reforming the filibuster. Consistent with what we have seen on a national level,³ West Virginians are receptive to messaging: After West Virginians hear a single positive statement about filibuster reform, they move toward supporting filibuster reform (46% support/41% oppose).⁴

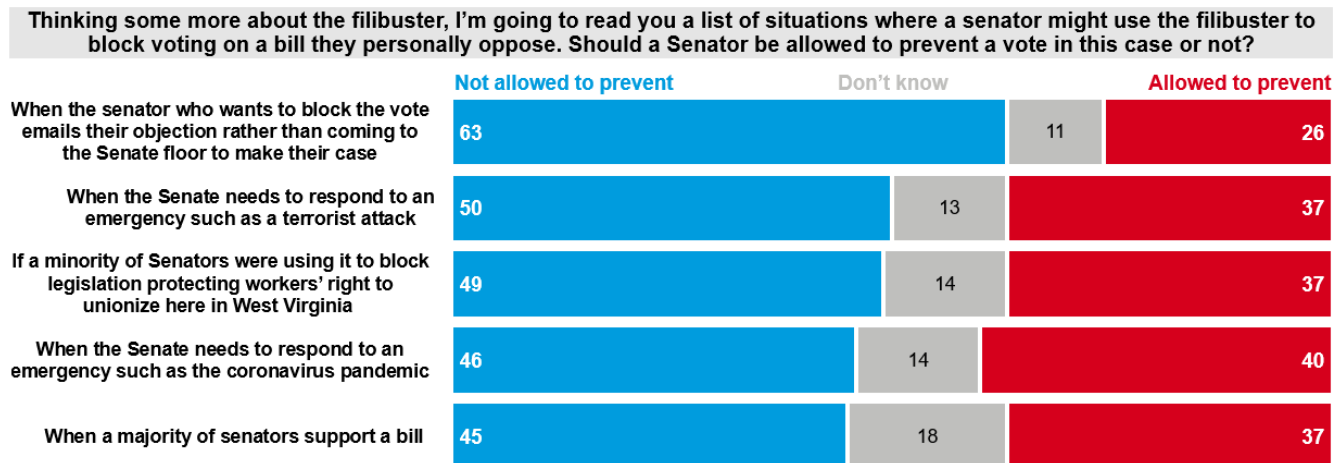
Specific proposals – especially those that highlight historic precedent – are even more popular. Even before they hear a statement in favor of reform, West Virginians back a variety of reform proposals. Talking about reform as restoring the filibuster to what it was historically is particularly powerful: Majorities of registered Democrats (61% support), Independents (53% support), Republicans (60% support), Biden voters (63% support), and Trump voters (58% support) all are supportive of “restoring the filibuster to what it was historically, with senators only being able to block an up or down vote if they are speaking on the floor.” At 59% support and only 18% oppose, restoring the filibuster to what it once was is more than twice as popular as filibuster reform’s main opponent, Mitch McConnell (25% favorable/56% unfavorable).



³ Results from a national survey on behalf of Fix Our Senate, conducted in April 2021 among a representative sample of 1,218 2020 voters, revealed that after a series of messages, 65% of voters nationwide support filibuster reform. For more information on the national poll, including most impactful messaging, see https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/6058c3e398627b1b0fd7dead/6099a3ee400711d55a080bfc_Fix-Our-Senate-filibuster-2.pdf

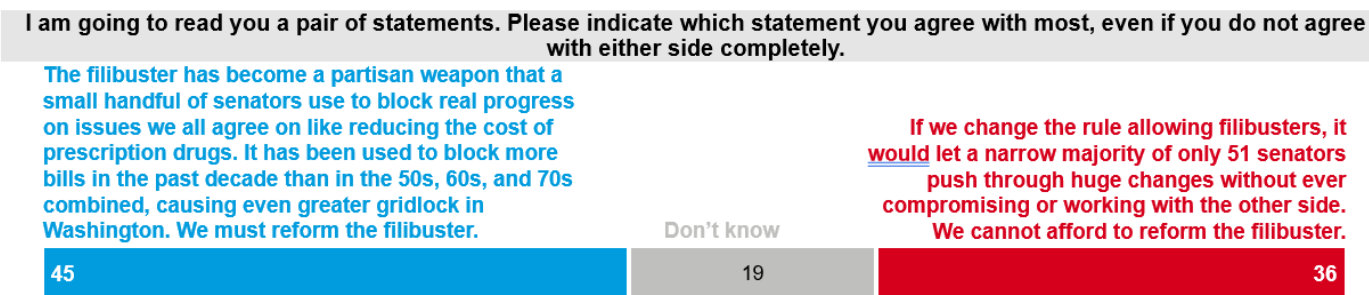
⁴ See appendix for full text

Highlighting how the filibuster currently works could drive even more opposition. West Virginia voters don't believe the filibuster should be allowed in a range of situations, from when the Senate needs to respond to an emergency such as the coronavirus pandemic (only 40% say the filibuster should be allowed in this situation) all the way to when the senator tries to block a vote by emailing their objection rather than coming to the Senate floor to speak (26% say should be allowed). Messaging that emphasizes the filibuster's wide-ranging power could drive even further support for reform, in West Virginia.

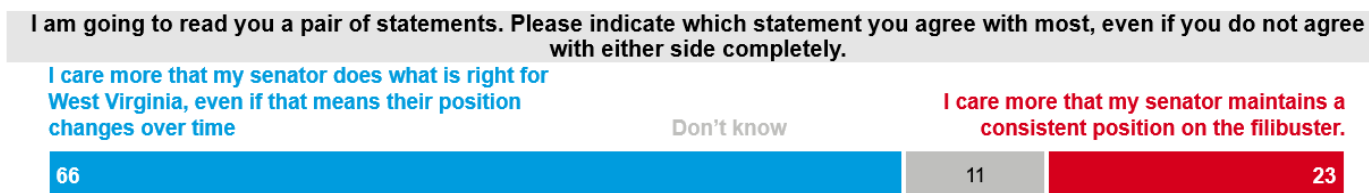


Senator Manchin has space to evolve on the filibuster

Republican arguments against reform lose out in West Virginia. When voters are presented with two arguments – one in favor of filibuster reform, arguing that it is a partisan weapon used to block real progress, and one against, arguing without the filibuster there would be less bipartisanship – the argument in favor wins out by nine points overall.



Voters want to see Senator Manchin do the right thing. Most voters are not only unaware of the Senator's current position, they also don't care if he changes his mind. They prioritize doing what's right for West Virginia regardless of what his position has been previously.



Supporting filibuster reform won't hurt Senator Manchin's standing. In a red state like West Virginia, it would be easy to erroneously assume supporting filibuster reform would hurt the Senator's future candidacy and legacy. But attacking Senator Manchin for supporting filibuster reform and DC statehood does not hurt Senator Manchin's standing with voters any more than the standard Republican attack he is likely to hear anyway. Roughly half of voters say they are less likely to vote for Senator Manchin after hearing an attack on him, regardless of whether the attack mentions that Senator Manchin "supports making Washington DC a state and abolishing the filibuster so Democrats can grab power and pass whatever legislation they want while ignoring the will of the people"⁵ (52% say they are less likely to vote for him when hearing this attack) or not (50% less likely to vote for him).

ABOUT THE POLL

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²Appendix: Simple filibuster definition language

As you may know, the filibuster allows senators to prevent the U-S Senate from voting on proposed legislation. It takes 60 of the Senate's 100 senators to end a filibuster, which means bills can be blocked even if a majority of senators support voting on them

⁴Appendix: Positive filibuster message

Americans want their representatives to work together and get things done. Instead, politicians have abused the system, using the filibuster to help themselves and hold legislation hostage for years. They have even used the filibuster to block bills with bipartisan, majority support, grinding the Senate to a halt when it should be working for the American people. Reforming the filibuster is the key to passing policies that reduce the power of corporate special interests, bring down the cost of lifesaving medications, get our economy back on track, and restore balance to our government so that the system works for us -not career politicians.

⁵Appendix: Statements tested about Senator Manchin

Statement tested with DC Statehood/Filibuster: Senator Manchin is too liberal for West Virginia. Senator Manchin voted for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden and has been a rubber stamp for Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's socialist agenda that caused a crisis at our southern border, increased taxes on hardworking families, and jacked up the price of life-saving medications. And to make matters worse, Senator Manchin supports making Washington, D.C. a state and abolishing the filibuster so Democrats can grab power and pass whatever legislation they want while ignoring the will of the people.

Statement tested without DC Statehood/Filibuster: Senator Manchin is too liberal for West Virginia. Senator Manchin voted for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden and has been a rubber stamp for Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's socialist agenda that caused a crisis at our southern border, increased taxes on hardworking families, and jacked up the price of life-saving medications.

⁵ See appendix for full text.