

# [***If It Wants To Beat MAGA, Democratic Party Has To Dump Sinema, Menendez | Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BD6-3DJ1-DY68-1005-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Sinema and Menendez are dragging the Democratic Party down, but we don't have to let them.

**Body**

To defeat Trump and MAGA this year, [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) need to practice what they preach. [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kamala-harris?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) started this campaign year strong with a message centered on defeating MAGA extremism, and fighting for democracy and abortion rights. But Democrats undermine that message and court a second Trump presidency by shielding two anti-democratic senators, [*Kyrsten Sinema*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kyrsten-sinema?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) (I-Ariz.) and Bob Menendez (D-N.J.). The party is at a crossroads: clean house, or risk it burning down.

Sinema and Menendez are dragging the [*Democratic Party*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democratic-party?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) down, but we don't have to let them. Democrats can sever ties with these senators. The good news is, they have great options in both New Jersey and Arizona.

In New Jersey, Rep. Andy Kim jumped into the race to challenge Menendez soon after the gold bar bribe indictment dropped. Kim is a pro-democracy congressman—a former senior Obama administration official who came into office in the Blue Wave of 2018 and [*became a national symbol of democratic integrity*](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/behind-viral-photo-rep-andy-kim-cleaning-midnight-after-riots-n1253519) for his humble act of personally helping to clean up the Capitol in the aftermath of the January 6 insurrection.

Kim currently has the public support—leading in the polls by double digits. Unfortunately, [*the force of the Democratic establishment*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/28/biden-new-jersey-senate-primary-00138221) has lined up behind the governor's wife, Tammy Murphy. It's a free country, for the time being, and competitive primaries are part of a healthy democracy. But New Jersey Dems have a choice to make: will this year's primary be an optimistic story of Democrats stamping out corruption in their own party, or will it be the story of a Democratic governor and his allies using the party apparatus behind the scenes to install his own wife as senator? Which story smells like integrity? Which story reeks of corruption? What story do Democrats want to be talking about in the months leading up to November?

And while the primary unfolds, Democrats in Washington should do something about the incumbent. Right now, this very week, a senator who has been credibly accused by the [*FBI*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fbi?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) of taking bribes from foreign governments is receiving classified briefings and attending committee hearings like nothing happened. Menendez does so at the pleasure of the Democrats in the [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), who could end this politically damaging embarrassment at any time.

In Arizona, the choice is even simpler. Congressman [*Ruben Gallego*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ruben-gallego?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is the only Democrat running for Sinema's Senate seat. Sinema left the party in 2022. Her self-defenestration came after she sank Biden and the Democrats' democracy reform bill, which would have ended gerrymandering, instituted major campaign finance reforms, and secured voting rights. Days before that vote, I was marching in Phoenix with Indivisible groups from across the state, led by members of [*Martin Luther King Jr.*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/martin-luther-king-jr.?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s family, calling on Sinema to pass the bill. Gallego gave a rousing speech to the pro-democracy marchers. Sinema didn't attend—instead [*she sided with Republicans to kill the bill*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/01/14/kyrsten-sinema-filibuster/). Months later, she similarly helped scuttle [*President Biden's effort*](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-says-he-supports-overriding-filibuster-protect-abortion-rights-2022-06-30/) to pass national abortion rights legislation shortly after the [*Supreme Court*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/supreme-court?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) struck down *Roe v. Wade*.

Given Sinema's departure from the Democratic Party and her attacks on its agenda—never mind the [*private jets*](https://newrepublic.com/post/178544/kyrsten-sinema-taxpayer-money-private-jet-travel)—it's no surprise that the Arizona Democratic Party [*passed a resolution*](https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/kyrsten-sinema-democrats-arizona/) pledging to support the winner of the Democratic primary in the state. The statewide Indivisible network, which includes more than 20 locally led constituent groups across every congressional district in the state, has also endorsed Gallego. But nationally, Gary Peters, the head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, has declined to pledge support for Gallego.

You read that right: the only Democrat in a senate race in one of the most competitive states in the country currently does not have the support of the arm of the Democratic Party charged with electing Democrats to the Senate.

I can't believe I have to write this: Democrats should support the Democratic candidate. This isn't rocket science. This is barely even ***politics***—it's just common sense.

Gallego isn't the only one on the ballot in Arizona. Joe Biden is too—in a state he won in 2020 by only about 10,000 votes. A well-funded Senate candidate with unified Democratic support will drive turnout for President Biden and other Democrats down the ballot to help retake the House.

If Biden and Harris run a successful campaign this year, the election will be a referendum on the anti-democratic extremism of Trump and his MAGA supporters. This is a smart strategy. Voters reject abortion bans. They reject election deniers. They reject corruption. [*Pundits criticized*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/03/politics/biden-democracy-speech-midterms-issues/index.html) Biden for closing the 2022 campaign with this message, but it resulted in the best midterm performance for a first-term president in modern American history. No need to reinvent the wheel.

As powerful as this message is, it's undermined by the Democratic Party's continued support of Sinema and Menendez. Democrats cannot credibly say they stand for the rule of law when they accept a sitting senator under FBI indictment for hiding gold bar bribes in his bathtub. Democrats cannot credibly say they're going to codify abortion rights while giving a pass to the senator who helped kill the Democrats' own abortion rights bill.

As if 2024 couldn't get any weirder, integrity and political expediency go together this year. Democrats should accept that, embrace it, and win.

*Ezra Levin is the co-founder and co-executive director of Indivisible.*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2353234/kyrsten-sinema.jpg)

**Graphic**

Kyrsten Sinema

Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

WASHINGTON, DC - JANUARY 25: Sen Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ) speaks to reporters during a vote in the Senate Chambers of the U.S. Capitol Building on January 25, 2024 in Washington, DC. Senators continue to negotiate a deal to pass a bipartisan Ukraine funding bill paired with immigration and border security reform package.

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