

In the summer of 2021, the House of Representatives passed a bill on election reform with overwhelming support from Democrats and no Republican votes. When the same legislation was discussed in the Senate later on in the year, the Democrats had a majority to pass the bill but could not obtain enough Republican votes to end the debate. As long as debate continued, there could be no final vote on the legislation. As a result, the bill did not become law, despite having the minimum number of supporters to win a floor vote if one were to be held.

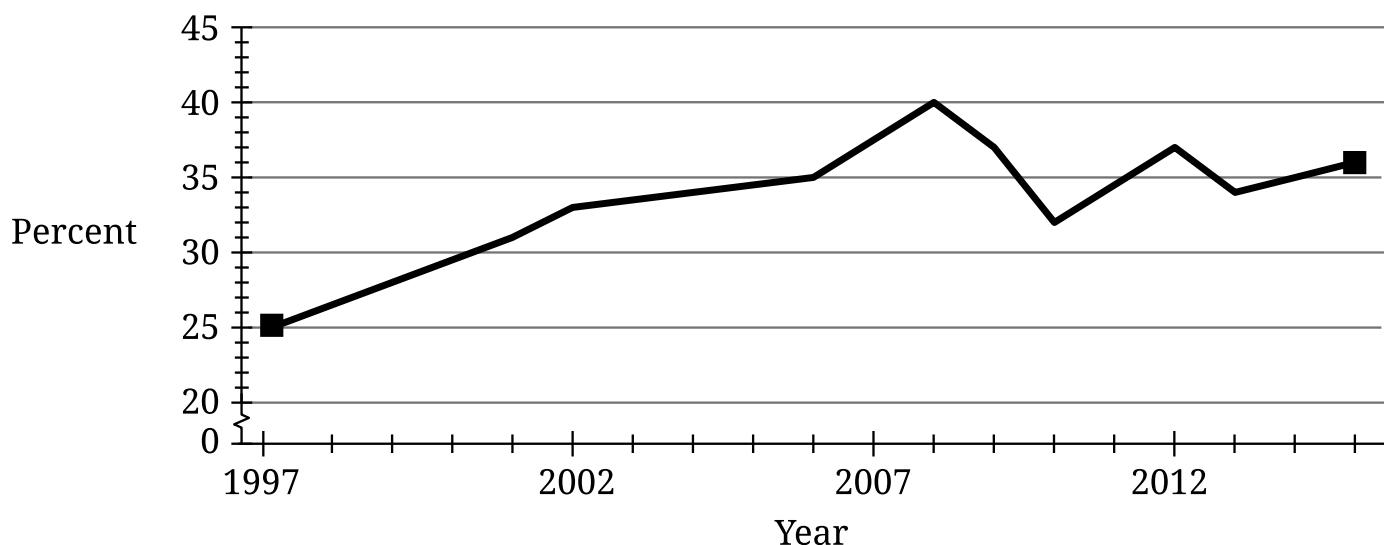
Disappointed by the outcome, some of the bill's supporters suggested that the problem was not the legislation but the rules of the Senate. Groups pressured the Senate leadership to consider revising the rules to make it easier for the chamber to pass legislation, similar to the rules currently in place in the House of Representatives.

Opinions on changing the Senate rules varied. Some Republican and Democratic senators supported the rule change. Others in both parties opposed it, voicing concerns about the long-term consequences of changing the rules. One senator noted that because any party could be in the minority in the future, any changes to the rules should still ensure that all senators continue to have input.

1. Respond to parts A, B, and C.

- A.** Describe the Senate procedure at the center of the controversy in the scenario.
- B.** Explain how the procedure described in part A makes passing legislation more difficult in the Senate compared with the House of Representatives.
- C.** Explain how the senators' actions in addressing the election reform bill illustrate the concept of partisanship.

Percentage of Americans Who Believed Climate Change Would Pose a Serious Threat in Their Lifetime, 1997 to 2015



Source: Gallup, October 2021

2. Respond to parts A, B, C, and D.

- A. Identify the percentage of Americans in 2010 who believed that climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime, according to the data in the line graph.
- B. Describe a trend in the data shown in the line graph.
- C. Draw a conclusion about how a trend in the line graph could be used by an interest group to influence policymaking.
- D. Explain how the overall trend shown in the line graph could be a result of political socialization.

Question 1: Concept Application**3 points**

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- A** Describe the Senate procedure at the center of the controversy in the scenario. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- During debate, a senator can use the filibuster to prolong the debate and delay or even prevent a vote on a bill.
- The Senate requires a supermajority to bring debate to an end before a vote can be held on a bill.
- The cloture rule requires that at least sixty senators vote to end debate, which must happen before a bill is brought to the floor for a final vote.

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- B** Explain how the procedure described in part A makes passing legislation more difficult in the Senate compared with the House of Representatives. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Passing legislation is harder in the Senate because senators can use the filibuster to delay or even prevent a vote on a bill whereas the other chamber has limited debate time that moves the bill through faster.
- Passing legislation in the Senate is harder than in the House because in the Senate it requires a supermajority to invoke cloture. The House lacks a cloture rule and only requires a simple majority to break debate.
- There are strict rules regarding time and relevance in the House, which limit the ability of members to obstruct the passage of legislation. Those same rules do not apply to debate in the Senate.

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- C** Explain how the senators' actions in addressing the election reform bill illustrates the concept of partisanship. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- While the Democrats had a simple majority of the seats in the Senate, strict voting along party lines meant they did not have enough votes to bring about cloture and bring the bill to the floor for a vote.
 - Republicans practiced partisan voting when they voted against ending the filibuster in this scenario. By voting together, they were able to prevent the Democrats from achieving their policy goals even though the Republicans had a minority number of seats in the Senate.
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