

H.R.1 Memo

Background

H.R.1 (For the People Act of 2021) was introduced in the house on January 4th of 2021. It was sponsored by democratic representative from Maryland John Sarbanes. The House [approved](#) HR1 on March 3, 2021 by a 220-210 vote with all but one present Democrat in favor and all present Republicans voting against the bill. 222 Democrats signed on as co-sponsors. The corresponding Senate bill, S1, was introduced on March 11, 2021. However, on June 22, the Senate was ten votes shy of the 60 needed to proceed with debate on the bill.

Content

The bill mainly addresses election reform— access, security, and [integrity](#). It is comprised of [ten](#) titles: election access, election integrity, election security, campaign finance transparency, campaign finance empowerment, campaign finance oversight, ethical standards, ethics reforms, congressional ethics reform, presidential and vice presidential tax transparency.

- Access: simplifies voter registration and mandates mail-in ballots.
- Security and integrity: requires states to create independent redistricting commissions to protect against gerrymandering, establishes the National Commission to Protect United States Democratic Institutions in the legislative branch, and further regulates cybersecurity and the sharing of intelligence information (to list a few of the most significant proposals).
- Campaign finance: expands prohibition on foreign national spending, additional disclosure requirements for fundraising, additional disclaimers on certain political advertising, and a distinct campaign funding system for some federal offices. The bill broadly addresses ethics in all three branches.

Democratic Support

In a joint statement, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Administration Chair Zoe Lofgren, and Democracy Reform Task Force Chair John Sarbanes made the following [argument](#) in favor of the bill: “during the 2020 election, Americans had to overcome rampant voter suppression, gerrymandering and a torrent of special interest dark money just to exercise their right to vote...H.R. 1 will protect the right to vote, ensure the integrity of our elections, hold elected officials accountable and end the era of big, dark, special-interest money in our politics.” Democrats like the bill because it aims at promoting fairness in the election process by making it easier to vote through relaxed registration requirements, expanded early voting, and mail-in ballots. It also represents an actionable plan in response to the highly publicized 2020 [‘election fraud.’](#)

Republican Opposition

In opposition is Senate Minority Leader Mitch [McConnell](#), who said, “this weeping federal takeover would be exactly the wrong response to the distressing lack of faith in our elections that we’ve recently seen from both political sides.” House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, echoed McConnell when saying, “H.R.1 politicizes the FEC by turning it from an evenly divided commission into a partisan one and also by creating a speech czar.” Republicans fear implementation of the bill will drain public funds and actually make it harder to protect against voter fraud because it does not implement voter IDs or check voter rolls against change-of-address forms.