Twitter Thread by Ezra Klein



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Democrats have a lot of good ideas to help people fast, and visibly. They have good ideas for deepening democracy, like the "For The People Act." But if they let Senate Republicans filibuster everything, they will lose in 2022, and they will deserve it.

A lot of them understand this. “I’m going to do everything I can to bring people together,” Senator @RonWyden, who will chair the powerful Senate Finance Committee, told me. “but I’m not just going to stand around and do nothing while Mitch McConnell ties everyone up in knots.”

“This is a fight not just for the future of the Democratic Party or good policy,” Senator @BernieSanders told me. “It is literally a fight to restore faith in small-d democratic government.”

“I’ve said to the president-elect, ‘reach out across the aisle...But don’t let them stymie your program,’” @WhipClyburn told me. “You can’t allow the search for bipartisanship to ruin the mandate the American people gave you.’”

“It’s not a question of if the filibuster will be gone, but when it’ll be gone,” former Majority Leader Harry Reid said. “You cannot have a democratic body where it takes 60 percent of the vote to get anything done.”

What Democrats need to do is simple. They need to help people fast, and visibly. They need to deepen the democracy they speak so stirringly about. And they need to win in 2022, because the worst policy outcome is to lose to this Republican party.

And they need to recognize that frustration with paralyzed government feeds demagogic populists who claim they're the only ones who can make the system work. The party that believes in government needs to make government work, not meekly accept its failures.

> Among the many tributaries flowing into Trumpism, one in particular has gone dangerously overlooked. In their book "Presidents, Populism and the Crisis of Democracy," the political scientists William Howell and Terry Moe write that "populists don't just feed on socioeconomic discontent. They feed on ineffective government — and their great appeal is that they claim to replace it with a government that *is* effective through their own autocratic power."

This is going to come to a head fast. Biden has proposed a $1.9 trillion rescue plan. It's a good plan that would help people, and because it will help people, it will help Democrats. Mitt Romney has already dismissed it as "not well-timed."

So it's not going to get the 10 Senate votes it needs to pass. What do Democrats do? Do they give up on their agenda, or do they give up on the filibuster?

Senate Democrats have said they will join House Democrats in pushing the democracy-expanding "For The People Act" as their first bill. But you can't use budget reconciliation for that. So do Democrats give up on democracy or listen to Obama and give up on the filibuster?

> After Representative John Lewis died, Obama used his eulogy to address those in Congress who called Lewis a hero but allowed the rights to which he had devoted his life to wither. "You want to honor John? Let's honor him by revitalizing the law that he was willing to die for. And by the way, naming it the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, that is a fine tribute." And, he continued, "if all this takes is eliminating the filibuster — another Jim Crow relic — in order to secure the God-given rights of every American, then that's what we should do."

There's lots more in the piece, of course. But Democrats have too often preferred the false peace of decorum to the true progress of democracy. If they choose that path again, they will lose their majority in 2022, and they will deserve it. https://t.co/H7nnSykgwM