Twitter Thread by Jake Sherman



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■■ @PunchbowlNews AM:

What is @LeaderMcConnell doing?

Unless you've been living under a rock with noise-canceling headphones on, you know that the left has been clamoring for Schumer to blow up the legislative filibuster.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell Progressive groups are spending $$ it to happen. @AJentleson has made a cottage industry out advocating for the elimination of the 60-vote threshold. @AOC wants it gone. @BarackObama too. Even Harry Reid says it's a matter of when, not if, the filibuster is gets thrown out.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama So what is McConnell's first ask of Schumer? To guarantee Schumer won't do the very thing that most of his party wants to see him do.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama And that's what's holding up the entire Senate -- McConnell's ask of Schumer to guarantee he won't blow up the filibuster. The chamber can't efficiently function without an organizing resolution, and without some clarity on the filibuster, they won't have an organizing resolution

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama And that's why @JoeBiden nominees are moving slowly in the new president's first week. Despite being in the minority, Republicans still technically chair committees.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden It's not clear when McConnell and Schumer will cut a deal. Everyone was very polite this week, but each day that goes by ratchets up the pressure on the two leaders.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden This is news: @SpeakerPelosi told donors on a Zoom call Thurs that she wanted to pass Biden's Covid relief bill in two weeks using budget reconciliation. But Pelosi has to wait until mid-Feb now because the Senate isn't yet organized.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi So what's the way out? What is McConnell's endgame here? Schumer's? McConnell will push Schumer as far as he can, but the Kentucky Republican knows Schumer can't give in on this, not in his first showdown as majority leader.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi The harder McConnell pushes, in fact, the more it helps Schumer by making McConnell look unreasonable. This becomes more true the longer it goes on, so McConnell has to judge this carefully.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi Schumer and the White House also know that if the New York Democrat caves to McConnell here, then Biden's progressive legislative agenda is dead before it even gets rolled out.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi McConnell, for his part, has several arguments, some institutional, some political. First, whatever goes around, comes around. Democrats weakened the filibuster on nominations in 2013 to push through Obama's executive-branch nominees.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi And then, in 2017, Republicans went nuclear to put Neil Gorsuch on the Supreme Court. So if Democrats do this now, they'll pay a price the next time there's a GOP president and GOP Congress.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi Second, without the filibuster, the Senate will continue to morph into the House -- the majority just rolls over the minority.

@PunchbowlNews @LeaderMcConnell @AJentleson @AOC @BarackObama @JoeBiden @SpeakerPelosi Third, if Democrats get rid of the filibuster, then 2022 senators in swing states -- read Mark Kelly -- are going to have to take some politically tough votes..

ourth, McConnell notes that 26 Senate Democrats and now Vice President Kamala Harris signed a 2017 letter saying they wanted to keep the 60-vote threshold.

There are several Democrats who are on McConnell's side right now: Sens. Joe Manchin (W-Va.), Jon Tester (Mont.), Kyrsten Sinema (Ariz.) and a few others. But if this standoff drags out, even these Democrats might begin to side with Schumer.

In the end, the two leaders may have to settle for a verbal agreement, a truce of sorts. Schumer commits to keeping the filibuster, as long as McConnell agrees to work in a reasonable manner.

Alternatively, Schumer could just blow up the filibuster as part of the organizing resolution, if he can get all his Democrats in line.

Or a bipartisan group of senators may get tired of waiting and force the leaders into a deal.