



## Democrat “For the People Act” to End Electoral College, Give Puerto Rico the Vote

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) has introduced legislation, along with Senator Tom Udall (D-N.M.), that he contends will make America a more democratic nation. Left unsaid is his unstated goal to make the Democratic Party more likely to win elections.



In a press release released late last week, Merkley said, “The idea of democracy is simple and obvious even to young kids on a playground — whoever gets the most votes should win. But way too often, that’s not how our system of government is working. And we see the results all around us — the privileged and powerful taking care of themselves while most people work longer hours for the same pay at best, while costs keep going up.”

Merkley added, “We need real, equal representation if we want a government that responds to the big issues impacting working families’ lives, like health care, housing, education, living-wage jobs, and climate chaos. It’s time to end the undemocratic electoral college, and to ensure a pathway to full voting representation for all American citizens, regardless of whether they live in Portland or Puerto Rico.”

The release detailed Merkley’s “package of bills” in his For the People Act, intended to implement the Blueprint for Democracy plan he unveiled in January, which claimed to “take on voter suppression, gerrymandering, dark money, and unequal representation in our democracy.”

Included in Merkley’s “package” is a constitutional amendment to abolish the Electoral College, and elect the president by direct popular vote. He explained that “the Electoral College does not fit our ‘We the People’ model of government; it is profoundly unfair. In just the past two decades, we have now seen two elections where the majority of voters supported a candidate who did not become the President, due to the Electoral College.”

Merkley also wants to establish a commission “to provide voting representation to American citizens in D.C., Puerto Rico, and the territories of Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.” His justification for this is that there are four million Americans living in those territories who are not represented in Congress. “They should have the opportunity to have their voices heard in Congress.”

He also is concerned about the removal of non-voters from the rolls of registered voters. The SAVE VOTERS Act would only allow for the removal of a person from the rolls if there is a change of



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residential address to a place outside the registrar's jurisdiction in which the voter is registered, or in the case of death.

Merkley's proposals would also establish "minimum requirements for early voting." Specifically, the legislation would require a 15-day early voting period preceding the date of the election when individuals may vote in federal elections. The bill would also dictate access to public transportation, so more voters could make it to the polls. Another provision would order states to develop and implement ways to ensure that voters do not have to wait longer than 30 minutes in line to cast their ballots.

After all, we do not want voting to be too difficult, or otherwise those who would vote for the Democratic Party agenda might leave and go home without voting.

Finally, the bill would require the publication of the names of all donors to political campaigns — including to "independent" campaigns, or what is often dubbed "dark money."

What Merkley wants to do — along with those who think like him — is fundamentally change the form and purpose of the governmental system created by the Founders. If all of his "reforms" were implemented, the United States would be less of a republic than it is today, and, as he so openly advocates, more of a "democracy."

But the Founders did not want a democracy. When Benjamin Franklin left the 1787 constitutional convention, he told a person who inquired as to what form of government had been created, "A republic — if you can keep it." He did *not* say that the Constitution had created a *democracy*.

This is not semantics. Democracy and republic are not two words that mean the same thing. In *The Federalist*, No. 51, James Madison wrote, "If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure." The purpose of government was not to make sure the desires of the majority prevailed over those of the minority, but rather, "Justice is the end of government."

This was not a view unique to Madison among the Founders. One need only read the Declaration of Independence to see this. While Thomas Jefferson was the principal author, he was one member of a committee that included Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. It was approved by the entire Congress on July 4, 1776, so it expressed the views of all as to the purpose and role of government.

According to the Founders, then, the purpose of government is to "secure" the rights endowed upon us by our Creator. The only *just* powers of government are those that accomplish that objective: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

In other words, while legitimate governments must have the consent of the governed, governments can only exercise *just* powers — powers to protect the unalienable rights of the citizens.

Democracy, on the other hand, could be described as two wolves and a sheep voting on what's for dinner.

Once one understands the proper role of government — to protect our lives, liberty, and property — then it is quite understandable as to why we have an Electoral College, with presidents elected by a state-by-state popular vote rather than one national popular vote. The Electoral College exists to protect the rights of the sheep — the minority — from the wolves, who with their majority vote could run roughshod over the rights of the minority. If the purpose of government were to make sure the will of



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the majority prevailed, rather than to protect the rights of individuals, then why bother with a Bill of Rights, since it should be up to the majority what happens to us?

In addition to all of that, Merkley was deceitful in his press release, when he stated, “In just two decades, we have now seen two elections where the majority of voters supported a candidate who did not become the President, due to the Electoral College.” That is not true. In 2000, Democrat Al Gore captured 48.4 percent of the popular vote, and in 2016, Democrat Hillary Clinton received 48.2 percent. That is *not* a majority. Yet, to demagogues such as Merkley, these two results justify ditching the Electoral College method of choosing a president that has served us well for over 200 years.

As Alexander Hamilton put it in *The Federalist*, the system of choosing the president was widely supported at the Constitutional Convention, noting that while it was not perfect, it was “excellent.”

When Merkley notes that there are four million American citizens in D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands, all he can see are more votes for his agenda of redistribution of wealth and the rest of the radical left-wing Democratic Party agenda, which has little regard for the individual rights or property of Americans.

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