



Written by [James Murphy](#) on December 8, 2023

Dems Look to Grant Voting Rights to Convicted Felons; 16-year-olds

On Wednesday, congressional Democrats put forth new legislation known as the Inclusive Democracy Act. Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) introduced the legislation at a Capitol Hill [event](#).

Pressley, a member of the so-called Squad of far-left Democrats, claimed that the bill will “end the stain of felony disenfranchisement in America.” Welch claimed that current voting laws are from the “Jim Crow era” and disproportionately affect black Americans and women.



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Pressley blamed the GOP and the Supreme Court for a voting system that she claims denies voting rights to minority populations — particularly those who are incarcerated.

“Too often, citizens behind the wall and those with a record are wrongfully stripped of their sacred right to vote and denied the opportunity to participate in our democracy. With Republicans and the Supreme Court stopping at nothing to undermine voting rights and exclude Black and brown folks from participating in our democracy, we must protect and expand access to the ballot box — including for incarcerated citizens,” [Pressley declared](#).

Although the proposed [legislation](#) does not specifically address it, Pressley also hinted that she would like to see the voting age lowered to sixteen.

“As a Boston City Councilor, prior to my time here in Congress, I was proud to advocate for expanded access to the ballot box, requiring that ballots be made in multiple languages, expanding early voting in local elections,” Pressley said. “And in Congress I led efforts and legislation to lower the federal voting age to sixteen, and urged the DOJ to aggressively protect voting rights and to fight against voter suppression.”

Pressley also blasted former President Donald Trump while declaring that the prohibition on voting for those convicted of a felony is tantamount to a Jim Crow era policy.

“When the former occupant of the White House can lead a violent insurrection and still run for president while nearly five million citizens can have a criminal record and not even cast a ballot, Jim Crow is not behind us,” Pressley said.

Welch also claimed that the current voting laws are antiquated and a remnant of the Jim Crow era.

“Our democracy is at its strongest when everyone can equitably take part in it. Yet millions of Americans are denied their right to engage in our democratic process as a result of antiquated state felony disenfranchisement laws that disproportionately impact Black Americans and women,” Welch declared. “This bill is all about helping disenfranchised voters who have been systemically robbed of



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their right to participate in our democratic process. I'm going to keep working to strengthen and modernize the Voting Rights Act and combat practices like gerrymandering designed to deprive marginalized communities of their right to vote. Laws from the Jim Crow-era have no place in modern America, and we must always vigorously oppose and condemn those who scheme to exclude marginalized communities from participating in our democracy."

And according to Pressley, American democracy is at stake: "Our democracy is on the line, and the stakes could not be higher."

Because in America we live in a constitutional federal republic, Pressley's assertion that "our democracy is on the line" is patently false. I propose different legislation, called "The Know What Form of Government in Which You Participate Act." My act would prohibit politicians such as Pressley and Welch, who don't understand that they are not in a democracy, from voting on or introducing new laws until they take a class and prove that they understand the system they are taking part in.

With a GOP controlled House of Representatives, the Inclusive Democracy Act has little chance of moving forward. But the fact that it's been introduced with great fanfare is another reason why it's so important to keep Democrats from gaining meaningful majorities in either house of Congress. In many ways, the Republicans aren't always much better, but at least they are less likely to propose dreadful legislation like this.

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