

Durbin, Others Agree To Compromise On John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Joe Manchin (D-WV) today released a bipartisan compromise on the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*. This proposal – which builds on the version introduced earlier in October – reflects months of bipartisan negotiations and seeks to garner broader support in the Senate.

Durbin, Leahy, Murkowski, and Manchin are committed to continuing their work on this compromise bill that will serve as a substitute for the introduced version of the

legislation. The bipartisan compromise bill was crafted to build support of Senators of both parties, and it stays true to the same bipartisan blueprint followed by Congress in each of the five times it has previously enacted legislation to update and reauthorize the *Voting Rights Act of 1965*.

“In our nation, there is no freedom more fundamental than the right to vote. Yet over the past several years, there has been a sustained effort to chip away at this right. I am pleased we have reached a bipartisan compromise to move forward on this legislation named after our late friend and colleague John Lewis, which will protect this ‘precious, almost sacred’ right. And I am hopeful that more Republicans will follow Senator Murkowski’s lead in defending every American’s access to the ballot box,” Durbin said.

“I am proud to continue Congress’s long legacy of bipartisanship that dates back to the enactment of Voting Rights Act of 1965. Protecting our foundational right to vote is bigger than party; it is about our democracy. As we have done many times before, we must put aside our differences and come together to preserve what is most precious about our country: a system of self-government of, by, and for the people. That is what this bill does. Decades from now, when history tells the story of today’s current threats to democracy, let it also tell the story of senators who rose above the fray to protect the right that gives democracy its very name,” Leahy said.

“Voting rights are fundamental to our democracy and how we protect them defines us as a nation. I have supported this particular legislation in previous Congresses and continued to work with my colleagues on it, because it provides a framework through which legitimate voting rights issues can be tackled. This year, our bill incorporates the Native American Voting Rights Act, which addresses some of the long-standing obstacles that American Indians and Alaska Natives face. Every American deserves equal opportunity to participate in our electoral system and political process, and this bill provides a starting point as we seek broader bipartisan consensus on how best to ensure that,” Murkowski said.

“Ensuring our elections are fair, accessible and secure is essential to restoring the American people’s faith in our Democracy. That’s why my colleagues and I have come together to introduce the bipartisan John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. The Voting Rights Act has been bipartisan since 1965. I commend my friend and colleague Senator Lisa Murkowski for keeping that bipartisan tradition alive despite partisan efforts on both sides of the aisle to prevent that from happening. In the weeks and months ahead, I am committed to building support for this bipartisan compromise that addresses the threats to voting rights across our nation without infringing on states’ rights so that it can move through regular order with bipartisan support, just as it has done for the last 56 years,” Manchin said.

The full text of the compromise bill can be found [here](#). A summary explaining changes made to the *John Lewis VRAA* as introduced earlier in October can be found [here](#).