

Un-PAC: Youth-led voting rights group confronts Sen. Johnson's hypocritical stance on the For the People Act

Posted on Friday, Apr 16, 2021

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MADISON, WISCONSIN — Yesterday, organizers representing thousands of young people across the state and across the political spectrum met with Senator Ron Johnson's Office to discuss their support for the For the People Act (H.R.1/S.1), a comprehensive democracy reform bill that addresses voting rights, campaign finance, and ethics laws.

During the meeting with Johnson's staff, the young activists were told, "[Senator Johnson] does very much endorse the idea of changing and/or updating, and improving certain aspects of voting, whether it be on what you need to do at the polls the day of, or how things play out in the days and weeks leading up to the election, but the crux of HR1/S1 is the nationalization, so to speak, of election laws, and that's where you lose Senator Johnson right away... and I think that's where you lose a lot of Republicans."

In fact, Congress has the power, granted by the Constitution ("Elections Clause") to govern on matters of federal elections. All of the reforms proposed in S.1 pertain to federal elections, and as such, this bill represents no violation of state or local rights. A [strong majority of Americans](#), including a majority of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats, support the For the People Act. Although the democracy-strengthening bill is overwhelmingly bipartisan amongst the electorate, this isn't reflected in the Senate; so far, no Senate Republicans in the have co-

sponsored the bill.

Sophia Halloran, a student organizer with Un-PAC, shared a personal testimony about how her family has been impacted by laws regarding voting accessibility before asking, “What is the Senator doing right now to make sure that our democracy doesn’t crumble and to make sure that our elections are secure?”

The youth organizers, who have been calling, tagging on social media, and emailing Johnson for weeks, were given the following response: “He’s waiting for the authors of the bill to open up the bill for changes.” After further questioning to the Senator’s Wisconsin Legislative Director about what changes the Republican Senator (who [tweeted about “election irregularities” in Wisconsin just 2 hours after the meeting](#)) would like to see in the legislation and if he would support the bill once these changes were enacted, the young people were met with the response: “the bill needs to be gutted. Honestly the bill has to be gutted, and, and taken in bits and pieces.”

S.1 includes various statutes that instate automatic voter registration, expand early voting, simplify absentee voting, modernize the U.S. voting system, and reduce the role of dark money in politics.

Another Un-PAC youth organizer, Christopher Fischer, who attended the meeting concluded: “...the fact that the Senator’s office could not offer any improvements to the bill as is, displays to young people that Ron Johnson has no plan.”