

# **Biden says those who oppose Democrat voting rights bill are on the side of Jefferson Davis**

The president argued that the legislation was needed to 'defend our democracy.'

President Biden Tuesday said lawmakers who oppose the Democratic-led effort to overhaul how the country conducts elections are choosing to be on the side of historical villains such as Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

Biden, in an unusually vitriolic speech by a president who casts himself as uniting the nation and healing its wounds, suggested Republicans who oppose Democrat-backed election changes stood in opposition to democracy itself.

"So I ask every elected official in America, how do you want to be remembered?" Biden said during remarks from the Atlanta University Center Consortium, on the campus of Clark Atlanta University and Morehouse College. "Do you want to be on the side of Dr. King or George Wallace? Do you want to be on the side of John Lewis or Bull Connor? Do you want to be on the side of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis?"

Biden's remarks come as the president and Vice President Kamala Harris began an effort to push through the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, two Democratic-led pieces of legislation aimed at overhauling the U.S. election system.

**GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE CALLS FOR ELECTION REFORM, SAYS NONCITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO VOTE**

He pointed to previous Republican support of extensions to the Voting Rights Act, which prohibited racial discrimination in voting laws, lamenting that some of the same Republicans are now opposing the new legislation.

The president argued that the legislation was vital to "defend our democracy," painting the vote on the bills as a defining moment in the history of the country.

But Republicans have fiercely opposed both pieces of legislation, arguing they are

designed to favor Democrats and would strip the states of their constitutional right to dictate how they conduct elections.

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The fierce opposition led Republicans to block four attempts to vote on the voting rights legislation in 2021, causing some Democrats to call for an end to the legislative filibuster in the Senate.

Though Biden has previously resisted efforts to end the legislative filibuster in the Senate, he used the speech to endorse the idea of suspending the filibuster in order to hold a vote on the voting rights bills.

“I support changing the Senate rules in whichever way they need to be changed to prevent a minority of Senators from blocking action on voting rights,” Biden said. “When it comes to protecting majority rule in America, the majority should rule in the United States Senate.”

But Republicans have argued such a move would effectively kill the filibuster entirely as both parties suspend the rule when they have the majority to advance important pieces of their agenda.

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Republicans have also threatened to bring bills to the floor that would force tough votes for vulnerable Democrats ahead of the midterm elections if only 51 votes were needed to advance legislation, noting that some centrist Democrats support various Republican proposals, such as resurrecting the Keystone XL pipeline.

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