

Democrats renew court packing calls, blast the Supreme Court's final two decisions of term

President Biden accused Supreme Court of doing 'severe damage' to voting rights.

Democrats on Thursday expressed their displeasure with the Supreme Court's final decisions of its 2020-2021 term, accusing the justices of doing "severe damage" to the political system and in some cases re-upping their calls to pack the court with liberal justices appointed by President Biden.

One decision was on a challenge to Arizona election laws, including a ban on ballot harvesting. The other was about a California law that required nonprofits to disclose their largest donors to the state government for law enforcement purposes.

The court upheld the Arizona laws - which liberals saw as voting rights restrictions and conservatives saw as election security measures - and struck down the California law on the grounds that it chilled free speech.

Biden weighed in on the Arizona decision in a statement that was remarkably critical of the Supreme Court for a sitting president.

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS ARIZONA VOTER FRAUD PROTECTIONS

"I am deeply disappointed in today's decision by the United States Supreme Court that undercuts the Voting Rights Act," Biden said. "In a span of just eight years, the Court has now done severe damage to two of the most important provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 - a law that took years of struggle and strife to secure."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said the court's decision in the Arizona case is part of an "unprecedented assault on voting rights" from the court before also tearing into the court over the California case.

"The decision in *Americans for Prosperity* further harms our democracy by

allowing the suffocation of the airwaves caused by big dark special interest money,” Pelosi said. “This torrent of dark money silences the voices of voters and prevents passage of commonsense, bipartisan and popular legislation - from gun violence prevention to climate action to LGBTQ equality. It is fundamentally anti-democratic, and it cannot go unanswered.”



In this April 23, 2021, file photo members of the Supreme Court pose for a group photo at the Supreme Court in Washington. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito wrote the majority opinions for the court’s final two cases of its term. (Erin Schaff/The New York Times via AP, Pool, File) (Erin Schaff/The New York Times via AP, Pool)

The California case was called *Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Bonta*, while the Arizona case was titled *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*.

“Having to identify one’s own polling place and then travel there to vote does not exceed the ‘usual burdens of voting,’” Justice Samuel Alito wrote in his opinion upholding the Arizona laws.

SUPREME COURT SAYS CALIFORNIA RULE REQUIRING NONPROFITS TO REVEAL DONOR NAMES IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

“Our cases have said that disclosure requirements can chill association'[e]ven if there [is] no disclosure to the general public,” Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in

the majority opinion for the California case. “While assurances of confidentiality may reduce the burden of disclosure to the State, they do not eliminate it.”

Some Democrats were even harsher in their responses to the court’s final rulings of its term, lashing with demands to pack the court. Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., responded specifically to the Arizona ruling, saying that the alleged reduction of voting rights stemming from the decision should necessitate adding Democrat-appointed justices.

“Today’s ruling is another blow to voting rights. We have no time to waste to protect the right to vote. We must abolish the filibuster and pass the For the People Act and John Lewis Voting Rights Act,” he said. “And we must expand the Supreme Court.”

VIRGINIA TRANSGENDER STUDENT WINS AS SUPREME COURT REBUFFS BATHROOM APPEAL

“And still some people have the nerve to question whether Court expansion is necessary,” Rep. Mondaire Jones, D-N.Y., also said in response to the Thursday rulings.

“Expand the damn court,” he also said.

Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., also tweeted in support of expanding the court. And Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., who has resisted calls to pack the court in the past, said he is at least in favor of Democrats getting rid of the legislative filibuster to counteract the Supreme Court’s decision on the Arizona voting laws.

“If Mitch McConnell could abolish the filibuster to appoint 3 extreme right-wing Supreme Court justices who just voted to gut the Voting Rights Act, you know what? Democrats can and should abolish the filibuster to save democracy and make it easier, not harder, for people to vote,” Sanders said.

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Republicans, meanwhile, lauded the Supreme Court for its rulings.

“This is an obvious victory for the First Amendment and for free speech,” Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., said of the California case. “California’s anti-speech policies were un-American hogwash, and everyone from conservatives like Americans for

Prosperity to liberals like the American Civil Liberties Union came together to oppose this bullying and intimidation.”

“Ballot harvesting—particularly when practiced by political activists—should be illegal,” Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., said of the Arizona case. “I was proud to join my colleagues in an amicus brief in support of Arizona’s election integrity measures, and I’m glad the Supreme Court has ruled in favor.”

Tyler Olson covers politics for FoxNews.com. You can contact him at tyler.olson@foxnews.com and follow him on Twitter at [@TylerOlson1791](https://twitter.com/TylerOlson1791).

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