

KEY VOTE ALERT



March 4, 2021

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is deeply concerned about efforts to alter or subvert the rules or precedents of the Senate in a way that would weaken the deliberative and collaborative process that has proven so critical to the development of sound public policy. **The Chamber will include in our “How They Voted” Congressional scorecard any votes during this Congress that: (1) attempt to overturn the non-partisan counsel of the parliamentarian in order to change the application of the Byrd Rule for reconciliation measures or (2) seek to change cloture rules applicable to legislative measures.**

The Byrd Rule and cloture rules serve a critical role in ensuring that legislative proposals are considered in a deliberative manner that involves discussion between members of the majority and minority parties. Removing these requirements and attempting to pass legislation on a partisan, majoritarian basis is likely to result in rushed, ill-considered legislation that lacks the buy-in necessary to create durable, long-term policy. Such changes would also further erode what is already very diminished trust in our democratic institutions.

Of the 11 federal elections from 2000 to today, nine of have resulted in a change in control of the House, Senate, or White House. On four separate occasions, the result was unified party control. Imagine if major portions of federal policy constantly changed on a purely partisan basis every time one or the other party finds itself in unified control of the government. It is difficult to overstate the negative impact this would have on economic growth and investment, job creation, and the rule of law.

It is also critical that our elected officials are judicious in exercising their ability to block or slow legislation, especially legislation that enjoys the clear support of a majority of elected officials and that has been subject to open debate and amendment. Of course, key to this is the ability of members of both parties to offer relevant substantive amendments to legislative proposals.

The legislative process can be frustrating, which is exactly how the framers intended it. But working through the process to build consensus through open debate and amendment is fundamental to our democracy and the rule of law, both of which are essential to our free enterprise system.

The Chamber looks forward to working with members of Congress from both parties to find ways to achieve real and lasting solutions to the problems confronting America and entrusted to our elected representatives.

Sincerely,

Jack Howard
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

