PETER DOOCY: Thank you, Jen. A couple follow-ups on yesterday. The President said he thinks the filibuster is a legacy of the Jim Crow era. Did he think that it was the legacy of Jim Crow era in 2005 when he defended the filibuster and said, altering Senate rules to help one political fighter over another could become standard operating procedure, which in my view would be disastrous.”

JEN PSAKI: Well, Peter. One of the things he talked about yesterday was the fact that between 1917 and 1971, the filibuster was used about 58 times. Last year — last year alone, it was used five times that many. It is not being used for the intended purpose. It is being abused. And yes, there are scenarios as it — as it relates to voting rights where it is — it is a pressing — if is — it is allowing for systematic racism in the country, so that's the concern he was expressing.

DOOCY: And a follow on that. There are some concerns on the right that, if you get rid of the filibuster, it effectively means one party rule. So is that what the President was getting at when he was asked about 2024, he said, “I have no idea if there will be a Republican party.”

PSAKI: Well, that certainly wasn't what he was getting at. Given as part of his answer, he conveyed that his objective and his hope is to work with Republicans. He wants to get work done for the American people. He wants to put in place solutions, put people back to work at the pandemic under control, make voting easier and more accessible, and it's really on Republicans in Congress to decide if they're going to be part of the solution or if they're going to be a part of obstruction. So, he's leaving it up to them to make the decision on what role they want to play in history.

DOOCY: On the border, the president said yesterday: “the vast majority — the overwhelming majority of people coming in the border and crossing are being sent back.” But only 13 percent of the 13,000 families that tried to cross the last week were sent back, according to Axios. So where do we get a majority out of 13 percent?

PSAKI: The vast majority of adults are being sent back.

DOOCY: Okay, so the family units 87 percent of them are being taken into the United States to either be resettled or await — [AUDIO FEEDBACK] — await their hearings. I'm just curious, 87 percent in the country of the family units is not a majority being sent back.

PSAKI: A majority of adults, which every adult is not a part of a family unit, as I'm sure you're fully tracking —

DOOCY: Right.
PSAKI: — and tens of thousands of people are coming to our border. We know that and so the majority of adults are being turned away. Our policy remains the same. We are implementing Section 42. As the President touched on and I touched on a little bit earlier this week, we — there are capacity issues in Mexico, which we are in discussions with them about addressing and they are not in a position to accept and take the families that they have in the past. So that's part of the diplomatic discussions that were having.

DOOCY: Okay and just one more about yesterday. We noticed, starting at the end of the campaign, and then into the transition, and here at the White House, any time that the President has an event where he was given a list of reporters to call on, Fox is the only member of the five network TV pool that has never been on the list in front of the President. And I'm just curious, if that is an official administration policy.

PSAKI: We're here having a conversation here, aren't we?

DOOCY: Yes, but the President —

PSAKI: And do I take questions from you every time you come to the briefing room?

DOOCY: — yes, but I'm asking about the President.

PSAKI: Has the president taking questions from you since you came in — since you — he came into office.

DOOCY: Unfortunately —

PSAKI: Yes or no?

DOOCY: — only when I have shouted after he goes through his whole list, and the President has been very generous with his time with Fox. I'm just curious about this list that he has given.

PSAKI: So —

DOOCY: The only member of the five network pool never on it dating back to when he resumed in-person events in Wilmington during the end of the campaign.

PSAKI: Well, I would say that I'm always happy to have this conversation with you, even about your awesome socks you're having on today — you wearing today and have a conversation with you, even when we disagree. The President's taking your questions, and I'm looking forward to doing Fox News Sunday this Sunday for the third time in the last few months. I think we gotta move on because we've got limited time. Go ahead, Kristen

KRISTEN WELKER: Jen, thank you. The President talked about the importance of kids going back to the classrooms. In many schools all across the country, they are not going back to the classrooms and their argument plans to do so because teachers, unions say that they want their
teachers to be vaccinated first, even though the CDC says that's not required. How are you going to deal with that? And are there any discussions about saying to teachers unions, you have to go back to the classroom?

PSAKI: Well first, actually, 76 percent of schools are — do have teaching do have kids in the classroom for part of the week and about 46 percent are back five days a week, and we expect that to continue to increase over time.

WELKER: But the President said the majority — he wants the majority by day 100, yes.

PSAKI: Right, by day 100. And we're on track to meet that objective. I will say that we took a step in this administration to prioritize teachers through our pharmacy program with that program is working. It's effective. Teachers can go. They are prioritized at pharmacies. It's something we had the power to take and implement even without even — and we feel it's very much in line with the CDC guidelines because it is one of the mitigation steps and it's a step we had the power to take and put into place. We actually don't see an issue coming up with — with schools not reopening. They are reopening, more reopening every single week, and we certainly feel we're on track to meet our goal.

(....)

1:06:58 p.m.
1 minute and 21 seconds

WELKER: And just to follow up with my question with the president yesterday, I asked him about transparency and access for journalists into some of the facilities at the border. The President said, “I will commit with my plan is underway to have access.” It sounded to a lot of people like he was saying, I will left more cameras in once I'm satisfied with the conditions. How is that consistent with transparency?

PSAKI: That's not actually what he meant. I’ll first say we did allow access, including an NBC camera exclusively into the shelter facility on Wednesday, and we're committed to increasing access and doing additional pools, making it available — these facilities, including the Border Patrol facilities, as well as the shelter's. What he was conveying is, right now, his focus is on moving these kids out of these border patrol facilities, right? And making sure it's done in a way that keeps them safe and keeps everyone safe. That does not imply that we're not going to allow access until that is done. It implies that is his first focus, so thanks for asking the question that was his — that was his intention.

WELKER: And do you have a time frame for when — I noted that NBC did go in as pool. Do you a time frame for when the next round of cameras might be allowed.

PSAKI: Oh, we're working on it. Hopefully soon and it's something we're certainly committed to and we're just working with DHS and HHS and when we can make it possible.
1:20:18 p.m.
26 seconds

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE REPORTER: I have a question about the Iowa second congressional district race.

PSAKI: Mmhmm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE REPORTER: Four Republican senators, in a letter to corporations, are calling the battle for the — for Democrats to take back the seat “an unacceptable attempt to undermine a legitimate, democratic process. Does the President agree with their assessment?

PSAKI: I believe the — that the — the process that is outlined by the House of Representatives is what's being followed here to ensure every vote is counted. So no, he wouldn't agree with that.