

MSNBC's *The ReidOut*

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7:02:37 p.m.

1 minute and 40 seconds

JOY REID: So, what happened between 2006 and now to change their support [for the Voting Rights Act]? Well, for one, the first black President, Barack Obama, was elected and reelected thanks to massive turnout from voters of color, giving the black Democrat an opening to shape the courts, including the Supreme Court. Well, Mitch then couldn't have that. Republicans realized that voters of color could overwhelm them again in Georgia in 2020, electing Obama's former VP, Joe Biden, a black woman vice president, and Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, in other words, given open access to the vote, the increasingly diverse electorate was going to choose Democrats. So, what are you going to do about a problem like democracy? Enter the former President's Big Lie, a convenient fiction that Republicans are gleefully using to lock those pesky voters out because their political survival is dependent on taking power, not earning it. Last year, all but one Republican voted to block debate on the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act that was introduced to uncripple the Voting Rights Act, which was gutted by John Roberts's Supreme Court in 2013. 16 — 16 of those same Republicans who voted to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 2006 are still there, including none other than current Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. Today, in John Lewis's home district, President Biden called out those Republicans who refused to stand up to the disgraced former President's Big Lie, urging the Senate to approve the voting bill name for the late civil rights leader and another, the Freedom to Vote Act.

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21 seconds

ERRIN HAINES: They needed to expand. They needed to try to appeal to a more diverse electorate, to try to appeal to more Americans and to get them to engage with the Republican Party. That strategy has since been abandoned and so when you no longer have a strategy of expanding the electorate, voting rights is suddenly, you know, not as bipartisan of an issue.

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2 minutes and 39 seconds

REID: I mean, it's very clear, Jason, that, I mean, when the history is written, Mitch McConnell is going to be remembered as the Strom Thurmond of our era. I mean, he used the filibuster more than anyone has ever used it, probably in league in Strom Thurmond's use of it, but he used it to try to stop the first black President from being successful. Like, it's very clear he is going to be Strom Thurmond. We got that. The only question is how many James Eastlands are going to be. Let's play Mitch McConnell first on the — his politics are on the rules change, and then after

that, I want to play I want to play Marco Rubio because he was part of what Errin was talking about, this sort of vanguard of younger Republicans who Republicans, at one point, thought could bring them in more voters of color and younger voters, it didn't work out that way because they have still at the same politics. Here is Mitch McConnell first.

[MCCONNELL CLIP]

REID: And Marco Rubio, I'm just — I won't even play it, but he's claiming that there is no widespread effort to suppress minority voting rights, like he said that with a straight face, right? That's the story they're going to stick to it. Are we at the point now where, politically, because they've left themselves little room to maneuver, we're just at a point where Republicans are going to get away with claiming they're not trying to stop people from voting and then literally stop them from voting and stealing the elections after if people win, get what they want anyway?

JASON JOHNSON: So, first, Joy, I want to let you know we don't know what the history books will say about Mitch McConnell because when we talk about voter suppression, isn't that critical race theory? And they're trying to make that illegal too?

REID: Oh, right.

JOHNSON: So, we — we don't even know —

REID: It will be illegal.

JOHNSON: — what the history books could say about this when we get there. Here — here's the problem. It's very clear what their plan is. They want politicians to be able to pick voters instead of voters picking politicians and here is why this is important based on what Biden said today. Look, it was a forceful speech. That's great. That's wonderful, but the truth of the matter is Biden said at a town hall in October that he was in favor of some sort of reform. I want to jump us ahead not just to the future or 50 years from now historically, but I want to jump us ahead to next week. So, let's say the vote to reform the filibuster fails. What is the next step? What can this administration do? This is the plan that activists are talking about. Don't come down here without a plan. I have said before you can send federal election monitors to all 50 states. Hey, if you're violating people's civil rights, we will snatch your highway money. Joy, you've made the suggestion, attach infrastructure bill money to election reform. You can't get any of this \$1.8 billion.

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54 seconds

REID: So, let say the vote goes on the floor of the Senate and Manchin and Sinema decide to do the James Eastland. They decide we're rolling with — we're rolling with that. We're going to be the Strom Thurmond end of the party. Then what?

SHERRILYN IFILL: Thanks, Joy, I appreciate it. I think we all know that, you know, much of the power around election protection is going to rest with the Department of Justice. I don't have any worries that the Department of Justice will not pull out all the stops to do some of the important things that we need to protect the vote. That was the whole point of ensuring that there were, you know, former civil rights attorneys and voting rights attorneys in leadership. The head of the civil rights division is Kristen Clarke, an experienced, longtime voting rights litigator, Vanita Gupta is the associate attorney general. So, there will be things that can be done through the DOJ, for sure[.]

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7:14:32 p.m.

2 minutes and 12 seconds

IFILL: But the point is that it's critical to use all of the presidential power and the bully pulpit is a big part of it. He's speaking today, to the Senate, to Manchin and Sinema, but also to the broader American public. This is not just about what black people, brown people, civil rights advocates want. This is a democracy moment and the purpose, I think, of today was to put it in the context, particularly following so closely on his excellent speech about January 6th on the anniversary.

REID: No, indeed and I think that is important to make, because it gets framed as if this is an issue about black people, and it isn't because once you put on the table that you can simply ban groups that you don't want to vote from voting and use all of these tricks to make it so, so impossible and so onerous that they can't vote, that can be used on anybody, right? Do you think —

IFILL: Well —

REID: — looking back — well, go on.

IFILL: — no, I was just going to say, that's exactly right, Joy, and that was true long before 2016 when Trump came to power. It was true in 2013 — just, you know, the timeline, let's get straight about what happened. The Supreme Court's decision in the *Shelby County v. Holder* case, which essentially, you know, struck down that 2006 bipartisan vote to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act, at least in regards to Section 5 really was the opening of the floodgates. It suggested now to southern states that had been covered by preclearance and several northern ones as well as the Republican Party that they could have a free-for-all, and they've been doing it ever since and we've been sounding the alarm —

REID: Yep.

IFILL: — long before Trump came to power and we need people to understand this is a democracy issue. This is not a niche issue for black people, so now we're in a crisis because what they were trying out just on black and brown people, they have now decided to run the tables on

the whole nation.

REID: There you go.

IFILL: So, everyone needs to wake up and say what are you going to do next? I say, what are you going to do? What are you going to do?

REID: That's right, yeah.

IFILL: Because at this point, it's all hands on deck.

REID: Because if they coming [sic] for us, they always start with black folks and then they gonna come for the rest of you. That is the way it works. They want authoritarian control. They don't want — they don't want the vote at all and I think y'all need to wake up to that.