

*CBS Mornings*

01/18/22

7:52:28 a.m. [TEASE]

9 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; Sen. Elizabeth Warren]

NATE BURLESON: Look who's in our green room. It's Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren.

GAYLE KING: There she is!

BURLESON: She's here to talk about the roadblocks standing in the way of President Biden's agenda. We have questions and she has answers.

(...)

8:00:36 a.m. [TEASE]

7 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Senator Elizabeth Warren]

GAYLE KING: Coming up in this hour the showdown over voting rights. We'll talk to senator Elizabeth Warren who says democracy is on the line.

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8:02:42 a.m.

8 minutes and 20 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Elizabeth Warren Live; Dem. Senator on Voting Rights, Stalled Biden Agenda, Covid & Inflation]

TONY DOKOUPIL: I want to take it cause I want to get right to our guest. As you can see, we begin this hour with Senator Elizabeth Warren, who is here to talk about the battle in the Senate over voting rights legislation. It's set to resume today. Her fellow Democrats, that would Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema, oppose a change in Senate rules that would let this measure pass with just 51 votes instead of 60. Without that change, the bill is not going to get anywhere in an evenly split Senate. It is just the latest setback for President Biden's agenda as he approaches one year in office with just a 44 percent approval rating in the latest CBS poll. So Senator Warren, good morning to you.

SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN (D-MA): Thank you.

DOKOUPIL: Do we have that right? This voting rights legislation, which is going to be debated today, it is effectively dead. In fact, it is dead without your Democratic colleagues coming to the

table.

WARREN: Look, I — I am not declaring this bill dead because we can't. It is absolutely too important. Understand it this way. Voting is foundational. That is the whole premise of our democracy and before we get to the procedural part, keep this in mind — that state legislatures all around the country that are controlled by Republicans are doing everything they can to keep people from voting. Who are they trying to keep from voting? Black people, brown people, college students, people who live on tribal reservations, trying to keep those folks from voting because they might vote Democratic. Every single senator who is a Republican in the United States Senate has said they're not going to do anything. They're letting the states do whatever they want.

DOKOUPIL: But you would not need them if Senator Sinema of Arizona and Manchin agreed to a rule change which allowed Democrats to vote on a simple majority. Senator Sinema says she's not doing it because it would deepen partisanship in this country. She calls it a disease. Does she have a point?

WARREN: Look, we have partisanship in this country and that's true and there's a lot of fighting and I get it. We fight over child care. I believe we ought to have universal child care. I understand there are Republicans who say no, we should not invest federal dollars in that. I get that fight. But this is about our democracy. That's the whole premise of how we have a government is consent of the governed and that means that every American citizen has a right to vote and a right to get that vote counted. Here's the thing, all 50 Democrats — all 50 — have agreed to the voting rights protection bill.

KING: Mmhmm.

WARREN: We're just hung on this procedure —

BURLESON: Right.

WARREN: — that effectively gives Mitch McConnell a veto. And you know, the thing about that procedure is it's keeping us from doing a lot of things Americans want that are popular across this country. They want to see us do immigration reform. They want to see us do *Roe v. Wade* and do any of those.

KING: But after a while, senator, people don't even hear you now. It just seems like a lot of screaming and hollering and na, na, na, na. I mean, Senator Sinema and Senator Manchin are also making it difficult for the Build Back Better plan.

WARREN: Yep.

KING: So how do you move past this roadblock? I know you all are very optimistic and say you can't give up hope, but after a while when does reality set in and we need to go in a different direction?

WARREN: Okay, sol, look, let's do a little reality.

KING: Okay.

WARREN: Where were we a year ago today? We were still mopping up blood and sweeping up glass in the United States Capitol.

KING: Yes.

WARREN: We had an armed insurrection.

BURLESON: Mmm.

KING: Yes.

WARREN: Remember, people couldn't even get in line to try to get vaccines. We have now dealt with that. Vaccines are available everywhere, boosters are available everywhere. By the way, get your vaccine and booster.

KING: Yes.

WARREN: If you haven't, they work, but we also passed a rescue package. It's why schools are open, it's why our economy, that everyone predicted was going to take a nosedive, didn't. In fact, in President Biden's first year, more new jobs have been created than any President in history, so we've gotten our act together to do some things.

KING: That's not the headline.

DOKOUPIL: Well, yeah, that's not the headline.

KING: Can we go back to the Build Back Better bill for just a second?

WARREN: Of course.

KING: Would it be better to break it up at this point so you get something accomplished?

WARREN: I don't want to negotiate against myself here because of course we love all the parts to it, but we need to get something accomplished.

KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: The child tax credit?

WARREN: And we need everybody on — absolutely the child tax credit —

DOKOUPIL: Can you peel that off.

WARREN: — and universal child care. No, we need to get those accomplished. We need to get those through.

DOKOUPIL: Right, but peel them off to pass them individually —

WARREN: Pass them.

DOKOUPIL: — so they can get through?

WARREN: That's right, but remember we're back to the filibuster problem.

KING: But you're open to breaking it up, though?

WARREN: I'm open to whatever is going to get us across the finish line knowing we're not going to get one single Republican to lower the price of prescription drugs, not one to give us universal child care, not one who's going to say that these corporations that make billions in profits are going to not get away any longer with paying zero in taxes. We've got all those in Build Back Better. We just need to get what we can across the finish line.

BURLESON: In — in 2024, should Manchin and Sinema be primaried?

WARREN: We'll address that when we get past this week.

BURLESON: Okay. Let me ask you about 2024. Do you believe that President Biden is up for the job?

WARREN: President Biden is running for re-election. I expect to support him.

KING: His approval ratings are some of the lowest that they've been for a very long time.

WARREN: I — I understand that. But remember, we've just finished the first quarter. We're just starting into the second quarter here, so we've got a lot of time, a lot of work in front of us.

DOKOUPIL: But you only have probably less than a year —

KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: — before you lose both the Senate and the House.

WARREN: Ah, bite your tongue.

DOKOUPIL: All the polls —

WARREN: Bite your tongue.

DOKOUPIL: — the polls are very, very bad, right? Gallup had a poll that showed a preference nationally for Republicans at a five-point margin over Democrats.

WARREN: I know.

DOKOUPIL: You started the year with the insurrection and a nine-point advantage.

WARREN: No, I know.

DOKOUPIL: Now, in the fourth quarter, it was a five-point advantage to the Republicans, so something's not right here. Something that you think — it could change the game for President Biden is, with the stroke of a pen, he could cancel student loan debt federally.

WARREN: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: Why do you think that would make such a difference?

WARREN: Because it would affect about 43 million Americans and keep in mind, for the people who are dealing with student loan debt, about 40 percent of them do not have college diplomas. These are people who did what we wanted them to do as Americans. They tried, but they had babies, they were working three jobs, they moved, and they didn't make it, so now they're dealing with student loan debt on what a high school grad makes. Also think about the racial implications of what we talk about. We talk about the racial wealth gap in America. It's alive and well right in the heart of the student debt problem. African Americans borrow more money to go to school, borrow more when they're in school and have a harder time paying when they get out. The single thing that President Biden could do all by himself to help close the black/white wealth gap for people with student loan debt, he could close it by 27 points, cancel \$50,000 in student loan debt. Same thing for Latinos. This would be a huge difference.

BURLESON: But in so many words he has said that this is bigger than him and you're saying that he does have the power.

WARREN: He has the power. Be big.

DOKOUPIL: So, why doesn't the stuff get done? If you look at the polling, the individual ideas from the Democratic Party — your party — are very popular.

WARREN: Yeah.

DOKOUPIL: Then you look at Democrats and often they are not popular, so what's going on here?

WARREN: Look, part of it is we have a lot of ideas and we're out there fighting for different pieces of this. Why is Build Back Better so big? It's because, basically, the train leaves the station

only one time a year, using reconciliation where you can get a vote of 50, you can't put things like voting rights on it but you can put all the economic package together.

KING: But right now the train's not leaving the station at all.

WARREN: And you are right on that point, so we're going to have to rearrange in fact what goes on the train, but let me say this. Offer just a little bit of sympathy for the fact that what we're trying to do is we're trying to fight for everybody.

BURLESON: Mmm.

WARREN: We're trying to fight for our babies, we're trying to fight for our seniors, we're trying to fight for people with diabetes.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

WARREN: We're trying to fight for people who need a government on their side and yeah, we may have tried to load too much onto this train but, by God, I'd rather have people trying to fight for the American people out there trying to do it instead of everybody hanging back and saying, I'll tell you what, let's cut deals in the back room and make this thing move smoothly.

BURLESON: Senator Warren, thank you so much for fielding our questions and thank you for the passion.

WARREN: [THUMBS UP]

BURLESON: Thank you for continuing to fight.

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8:12:38 a.m.

3 seconds

KING: Still talking to Senator Warren because we have so many questions