



**Delaware Interfaith Power & Light**  
*A Religious Response to Climate Change*  
www.delawareipl.org

December 7, 2021

Dear Senators Coons and Carper,

As faith leaders and faith-based advocates in the state of Delaware, we write to you today about the urgent need to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. We greatly appreciate your support for these two bills, but we urge you to actively support filibuster reform so that the bills can get passed and onto President Biden's desk for a signature.

All of our faith traditions have teachings about the need to care for our neighbors, and care for the sacred planet we share. The faith community affirms that every human being is a person of dignity and worth. In a secular democracy, fair and just democratic systems are central to the assertion of that dignity and worth.

All over the country, anti-voter extremists in state legislatures have been changing laws to make it more difficult for Black and brown Americans to cast their ballots, and attacks on the freedom to vote continue. These assaults threaten our democracy and the well-being of our people hangs in the balance -- especially in communities of color. Millions of Americans, particularly in marginalized Black and Brown communities, will have their votes suppressed, if leaders fail to pass federal protections and standards of access for exercising our sacred right to vote.

In Delaware and across the nation, we saw record voter turn-out in 2020 largely due to expanded options for voting. Delaware has always been a leader in democracy, and election rules in the First State already reflect many of the values reflected by the Freedom to Vote Act, although there are anti-voter extremists in Dover who oppose pro-voter bills. As people of faith, we are also mindful of our less fortunate neighbors who are facing disenfranchisement from barriers to voting in other states. The voting and election reforms in the bill, written by the late Rep. John Lewis, would set federal baseline standards of access for every eligible voter, regardless of where they live.

The Freedom to Vote Act is the bold, comprehensive bill we need because the threats to our democracy are deep, systemic, and wide-ranging, and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would restore important safeguards designed to prevent the return of Jim Crow-style voting restrictions. Both are necessary to save democratic self-government, and neither will pass unless the Senate revises the filibuster, a mere procedural rule that President Obama has called a "Jim Crow relic."

Our democracy is sacred, and voting is a sacred act. We must value the voices of everyone in our communities, not just the most powerful. As people of faith and as your constituents, we ask that you ***strongly and publicly support filibuster reform*** to pass the Freedom to Vote Act. We would like to thank Senator Carper for meeting with diverse coalition members recently and we would like to make a humble request to Senator Coons for making some time to speak with us to discuss his views.



**Delaware Interfaith Power & Light**  
*A Religious Response to Climate Change*  
www.delawareipl.org

Sincerely,

Irfan Patel, President, Islamic Society of Delaware

The Rev. Robert P. Hall, President, Christian Coalition of Delmarva

Charanjeet Singh Minhas, Founder, Delaware Sikh Coalition

John Sykes, President, Delaware Interfaith Power & Light

The Rev. Dr. Lyle J. Dykstra, Retired Pastor, Presbyterian Church USA

The Rev. Amy D. Yarnall, Pastor, Wesley United Methodist Church, Dover

The Rev. Paula Maiorano, Executive Director, A Center for Relational Living

Ed & Jo Klinge, Co-Conveners, Interfaith Leaders for Neighborhood Ministries, Wilmington

Rabbi Yair Robinson, Congregation Beth Emeth, Wilmington

Dr. John Graham, Bishop, Temple United Church, Wilmington

The Rev. Corey Fields, Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Newark

The Rev. Andy Jacob, Pastor, Hanover Presbyterian Church, Wilmington

The Rev. Susan Loney, Assistant Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Wilmington

The Rev. David Andrews, The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew, Wilmington

Arqum Rashid, Imam and Resident Scholar, Islamic Society of Central Delaware, Dover

Pramod (Paul) Mathur, Trustee, Hindu Temple of Delaware, Hockessin

The Rev. Dr. Melissa Lemmons, Unity Lutheran Church, Wilmington

The Rev. Larry Peers, First Unitarian Church, Wilmington

The Rev. Shada Sullivan, The Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian), Wilmington

The Rev. CJ Ransdell, Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Dover

Janet Bordley, President, Delaware Conference Missionary

The Rev. Diane Fisher, Elder, Metropolitan Community Church of Rehoboth

The Rev. Gregory Pelley, Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek, Newark

The Rev. Martha Kirkpatrick, Canon, The Episcopal Church in Delaware

The Rev. Mark Walters, Interim Pastor, St. Stephens Lutheran Church, Wilmington

The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen, Assistant Rector, Trinity Episcopal Parish, Wilmington

The Rev. Charles S. Weiss, Rector, Christ Episcopal Church, Dover



**Delaware Interfaith Power & Light**  
*A Religious Response to Climate Change*  
www.delawareipl.org

The Rev. Jay Hutchinson, St. Andrews School, Middletown  
La Vaida Owens-White, Nurse, St. Joseph/St. Patrick Churches et. al.  
The Rev. Cynthia Robinson, New Ark United Church of Christ, Newark  
Liz Carlisle, Social Justice Chair, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark  
The Rev. Timothy Bostick, Limestone Presbyterian Church, Wilmington  
The Rev. W. James Thomas, Bishop, Calvary Baptist Church of Dover  
The Rev. Blaine Hackett, Pastor, St. John AM Church of Newark  
The Rev. Joseph Archie, District Superintendent, United Methodist Church  
The Rev. Sandra Ben, Pastor, Praying Ground Community Church  
The Rev. Kathy Ierien, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Wilmington  
Rabbi Douglas Krantz, Retired  
The Rev. Earle Baker, The United Methodist Church, Retired  
The Rev. Ray Eck, Pastor, New Castle United Methodist Church  
Rabbi Michael Beals, Congregation Beth Shalom, Wilmington  
The Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, UU the Vote