



They Said It Flashback!

When Sen. Harry Reid Respected Senate Tradition And The Filibuster



Sen. Harry Reid: “The Filibuster Is Far From A Procedural Gimmick. It’s Part Of The Fabric Of This Institution ... Senators Have Used The Filibuster To Stand Up To Popular Presidents, To Block Legislation, And, Yes, Even, As I’ve Stated, To Stall Executive Nominees.” SEN. HARRY REID: “The filibuster is not a scheme and it certainly isn’t new. The filibuster is far from a procedural gimmick. It’s part of the fabric of this institution we call the Senate. It was well-known in colonial legislatures before we became a country, and it’s an integral part of our country’s 214-year history. The first filibuster in the United States Congress happened in 1790. It was used by lawmakers from Virginia and South Carolina who were trying to prevent Philadelphia from hosting the first Congress. Since then, the filibuster has been employed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times. It’s been employed on legislative matters, it’s been employed on procedural matters relating to the president’s nominations for Cabinet and sub-Cabinet posts, and it’s been used on judges for all those years. One scholar estimates that 20 percent of the judges nominated by presidents have fallen by the wayside, most of them as a result of filibusters. Senators have used the filibuster to stand up to popular presidents, to block legislation, and, yes, even, as I’ve stated, to stall executive nominees. The roots of the filibuster are found in the Constitution and in our

own rules.” (Sen. Harry Reid, [Floor Remarks](#), 5/18/05)



Reid: “Some In This Chamber Want To Throw Out 214 Years Of Senate History In The Quest For Absolute Power. ... They Think They're Wiser Than Our Founding Fathers. I Doubt That That's True.” SEN. HARRY REID: “For 200 years we've had the right to extended debate. It's not some procedural gimmick. It's within the vision of the founding fathers of our country. They did it; we didn't do it. They established a government so that no one person and no single party could have total control. Some in this chamber want to throw out 214 years of Senate history in the quest for absolute power. They want to do away with Mr. Smith, as depicted in that great movie, being able to come to Washington. They want to do away with the filibuster. They think they're wiser than our founding fathers. I doubt that that's true.” (Sen. Harry Reid, [Floor Remarks](#), 5/18/05)



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Reid: “The Fact Is, To Move Forward As Contemplated By The Majority, Is Moving Toward Breaking The Rules To Change The Rules. That's Improper, It Will Change The Senate Forever. That's Not Good.” SEN. HARRY REID: “I just want to briefly say that we are following the rules. We believe in following the rules, not breaking the rules. And, while it's good to talk about this 'up or down vote', the fact is, to move forward as contemplated by the majority, is moving toward breaking the rules to change the rules. That's improper, it will change the Senate forever. That's not good.” (Sen. Harry Reid, [Floor Remarks](#), 5/18/05)