



**INTERNATIONAL
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*Addressed Individually
to all Members of the
U.S. Senate*

April 6, 2005

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Bldg., Rm. SH-141
Washington, DC 20510-1103

Dear Senator Akaka:

On behalf of the 750,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write concerning efforts to eliminate the 200-year-old tradition of the Senate filibuster. The IBEW opposes any attempt to prohibit the use of a tool that helps maintain the system of checks and balances envisioned by the Framers of our Constitution.

The filibuster empowers 41 or more Senators to prevent an abuse of power by any one political party. Senate leadership is considering a rule change that would end the use of the filibuster for judicial nominees. If enacted, this provision would change the rules of how the Senate has conducted business throughout its long and rich history.

Changing the rule on filibusters sets a dangerous precedent that has implications on many issues far beyond our nation's courts. There is no distinction between the rules on filibustering judicial nominations and filibustering legislation. This fight is not just about judicial nominations, it lays the groundwork for ending a Senator's ability to protect the minority he or she may represent.

I am genuinely concerned that a practice used by the United States Senate for over 200 years may be ended, thereby destabilizing our time-proven system of checks and balances. I urge you to oppose any rule change to eliminate a Senator's right to filibuster.

Sincerely,

Edwin D. Hill
International President

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