

The Honorable Charles Schumer
9 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, NY 11215
September 27, 2020

Dear Senator Schumer,

Yom Kippur is nearly here. Instead of bringing you a happy greeting, we are crying out, asking for you to act to alleviate our pain and fear, and return our country to sanity and possibility.

- Like you, we are Jewish Brooklynites.
- Like you, we are in mourning.
- Like you, we fear what may happen to the Supreme Court.

When Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (z"l) died on Friday, September 18, 2020, just as Jews across the country were entering Rosh Hashana, we cried out in pain. She was a hero to so many, a fearless champion who gave everything she had, including her frail ill body, to protect the rights of women and girls, to be a bulwark for accessible healthcare, to defend social justice.

We also cried out in pain because of the implications of her death. We knew right away what Republican Senators would say and Senator McConnell would pledge, hypocritically: That he would fill the seat immediately for the President, who intends (should he lose, which seems likely) to challenge the election results and hand to the Supreme Court the deciding vote over who will be the next Commander-in-Chief. As you do, many of us remember Bush vs. Gore. But now more than 200,000 Americans are dead and there is no end in sight for the novel coronavirus and no change for the Black and brown Americans also living a pandemic of racist violence. If the Republicans succeed in installing their extreme right nominee, the road ahead will be paved with more dead -- killed by ever fiercer fires and storms, by pre-existing conditions and subsequent lack of healthcare and medicine, by their own hand when they have no reproductive rights or have lost their livelihoods, are hungry and have nothing left to live for.

We know you know. And we know you are a moral man. We know you have a long history in government and a deep respect for the Senate as an institution. And we know that you have often chosen a civil and polite road.

This is no time to be polite, Senator Schumer. The gates are closing.

This is a real emergency. You say you don't have the power to stop the Republicans who have the votes and the majority. We are pleading: use all the tools you do have. It may not be in your nature to confront, to block, to raise your voice, to say "over my dead body," but many more will literally die if you do not.

Soon we will enter Yom Kippur, all of us saying our prayers virtually, but with deep meaning. Tomorrow night we will say the prayers for Neilah as the gates of teshuva begin to close. Even now, the gates are closing on democracy, Senator. You know this to be true. We need you to rally the Democratic senators and use every tool that exists:

- deny unanimous consent,
- exploit the cloture requirements,
- call for quorum,
- impeach William Barr,
- take no meetings with illegitimate candidates,
- Use every tool available to honor Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's (z"l) dying wish that she "not be replaced until a new president is installed."

And then go further: get creative, try things that haven't been done before. You know that the power-hungry and corrupt zealots on the other side of the aisle will always go to any length to roll back our rights and enable more of the chaos that currently reigns. We need your commitment to go to any length possible to protect our rights.

Our tradition tells us that we must act in the face of injustice. We implore you to use your power, to honor the dying, fighting wish of Justice Ginsburg (z"l). She never got the chance to rest and neither can we.

Respectfully yours and wishing you a meaningful fast,

Concerned Brooklyn Jews and Allies