As a scholar of rhetoric, I have spent over 40 years teaching students the importance of public argument in the market place of ideas. This is a fundamental principle anchoring our democracy. It is one of the reasons why, when the founding fathers established our unique system of governance, they envisioned that the House of Representatives, Senate and Chief Executive would function as three co-equal and independent branches, each representing different constituencies and beliefs.

For example, the framers of the Constitution in their great wisdom did not believe the Senate should exist simply to rubberstamp legislation that was or would be approved by the President. If that was their desire, why did they see a need for the creation of the Senate?

In view of this Constitutional objective, we must question why Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has refused to bring up for debate
and vote approximately 100 bills passed by the House. Even if these bills are opposed by the President and some members of the Senate, don’t American citizens deserve accountability, requiring their Senators officially to go on record?

Moreover, don’t members of Congress deserve the opportunity to change Presidents’ minds or hold them accountable by forcing them to decide whether or not to use their veto power?

What I am suggesting is not a partisan claim; it is a view that should be shared by all, regardless of party preference and political ideology—and regardless of who controls each branch of government.

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