

happy to tax and spend other people's money that it never occurred to anyone that maybe the American people wouldn't love the idea of their own tax dollars being redistributed to political campaign consultants. It never occurred to them that the American people might not like to have their tax money redistributed to political consultants. This is how out of touch with taxpayers the modern Democratic Party has become.

They saw all these proposals to take the American people's tax dollars and funnel them into more attack ads, yard signs, and telephone calls, and thought, what a great idea. We will put that in. The Democrat Political Protection Act would do this in several different ways. There would be a new Washington, DC-run voucher program so that would-be political donors could simply ask for chunks of taxpayer money and then hand it out to the campaigns they favor. There would also be a brandnew, sixfold matching program for certain donations. The Federal Government would literally come in—sort of the way some businesses match their workers' charitable contributions—and use the American people's money to match certain campaign contributions sixfold. In other words, millions of dollars would be available for each candidate who comes along asking for his or her share of the taxpayer loot.

Keep in mind—this would put each taxpayer on the hook for financing the candidates and campaigns they personally disagree with. They will take our money and give it to people we are not for. If Democrats have their way, citizens won't just have to sit through television commercials railing against the candidate they plan to vote for; now they would also have the pleasure of bankrolling the ads. You can sit there in front of the TV screen and watch your tax dollars at work supporting a person you are going to vote against. People are going to love that.

When you ask Democrats why exactly they would propose something as absolutely ludicrous as a massive, new, taxpayer-funded bailout of the permanent political class, sometimes they make vague claims that problems in American politics would go away if only we took more power out of the people's hands and shipped it here to the Nation's Capital. The evidence suggests they are dead wrong on this. Research suggests that jurisdictions—and there are a few of them—that have matching-fund systems in many cases also have rampant corruption, misappropriation, and waste. There are numerous examples that there is still plenty of corruption and wrongdoing in those systems—not exactly a surprise outcome when you centralize more money and power through government channels.

Public financing doesn't appear to change the playing field between challengers and incumbents in any way either. Here is how one University of Wisconsin political scientist summed it

up: "The people who propose these systems often oversell them."

There are no apparent benefits, significant new costs, and they want to stick taxpayers with the bill. This is just another one of the Democrat Politician Protection Act's greatest hits. I will have more in the future.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last night, the country heard some good news. The members of the conference committee announced a tentative agreement to keep the government open past Friday as well as provide additional border security. It was welcome news.

All on the conference committee worked very hard and should be commended for their efforts. I talked to them regularly. Everyone wanted to get something done, and everyone wanted to avoid a government shutdown. While the details are still being hammered out, the tentative agreement represents a path forward for our country—away from another round of fraught negotiations up against a government funding cliff, away from a dreaded government shutdown.

Over the past few months, we have been lurching from one manufactured crisis to another. It would be a wonderful thing for this Congress to pass bills that settle the budget issues for the rest of this year and for the country to finally move past. Hopefully, that is what this agreement will portend. Hopefully, this agreement means that there will not be another government shutdown on Friday—sparing the country of another nightmare of furloughed Federal employees, snarled airports, and economic hardship. Hopefully, it means that we will pass not only the DHS appropriations bill but all six other appropriations bills—done in a bipartisan way—that have been caught in the tangle of these negotiations since last year.

Each of these bills is a product of bipartisan consensus. Each contains more support for programs to help the American people—additional funding for infrastructure, housing, money to combat the opioid crisis, and more. We should pass these appropriations bills alongside this agreement on DHS.

These months of shutdown politics must come to an end. We now have a

bipartisan proposal to accomplish our goals, better secure the border, and avoid another senseless government shutdown. I don't know the details, but the parameters of this are good. So I thank the members of the conference committee.

I would make one more point. I urge President Trump to sign this agreement. We must not have a rerun of what happened a few months back, whereby legislators—Democratic and Republican, House and Senate—agreed, and President Trump pulled the rug out from under the agreement and caused the shutdown. If he opposes this agreement, the same thing could happen again. We don't need it. So I strongly urge the President to sign this agreement. No one gets everything one wants in these agreements. The President must sign it and not cause another shutdown.

PRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on another matter, late last week, I had the privilege of addressing an audience at the Newseum about the current challenges facing the free press in America.

I ask unanimous consent that my remarks be printed in the RECORD after my remarks here.

One of the most significant challenges the press faces, of course, is economic. Besieged by a fractured media landscape and rapidly changing technology, newspapers have been forced to adapt or die. Some have adapted, but many have died.

One area in which it is particularly troubling to me is in smaller markets in midsized and smaller cities. In those areas, local newspapers have been the glue that keeps communities informed and stitched together. I have seen it. In cities in Upstate New York—small- and middle-sized—big companies have left, and some of the community banks have been bought up by major large banks. The things that keep a community together are greatly deteriorating. Newspapers are one of the few glues these communities have. They are vital—way beyond the profit and loss that they might make. The external benefits of these newspapers, as the economists would say, are large, but they are in trouble because of all the economic issues I mentioned.

Now there is a new threat on the horizon. A few weeks ago, a hedge fund, known as the "destroyer of newspapers," announced a bid to take over Gannett, which, in addition to USA Today, publishes a lot of small- and medium-sized newspapers and four important papers in my State, those being the Democrat and Chronicle in Rochester, the Press & Sun in Binghamton, the Poughkeepsie Journal, the Journal News in Westchester, and newspapers in Elmira and Ithaca.

This morning, on the front page of the Washington Post, there is an article about the business practices of

Alden and its subsidiaries. Essentially, Alden's strategy is to buy up newspapers, cut staff, and then sell the commercial real estate of newsrooms and printing presses for profit. The article quotes several experts who have said of Alden:

They are the ultimate cash flow mercenary. They want to find cash flow and bleed it to death.

Their principle is "no new investment and sell off what you can while you can," according to analysts who have studied it.

An analysis of the newspapers owned by Alden revealed that it cut newspaper staff at more than twice the rate of its competitors. In all likelihood, when it sells the real estate, the vast majority of the money does not go to revitalizing newspapers, as a newspaper itself would do when it sells real estate; it goes elsewhere. For Alden Global Capital, the hedge fund, the acquisition and streamlining of Gannett papers might increase its profits a couple of percentage points, but the loss of the Press & Sun and the Democrat and Chronicle would be incalculable.

Let me ask the American people and every one of my colleagues here: What is more important—having our newspapers go on, which is so important to local communities, or having a hedge fund raise its market profits by five points, if it is public, or by a certain amount? What is more important? I would argue: the newspapers.

The Gannett consortium was already the result of a consolidated news business, with one reporter working multiple beats and placing stories in multiple newspapers. I have seen that in Upstate New York. What was already an overburdened, undersourced operation now faces potential annihilation by an indifferent media conglomerate that is backed by an even more indifferent hedge fund.

What do we do about this?

I don't know how to solve the broader economic problem for newspapers, big and small. I hope there is a solution. The only antidote to these problems, as I have seen, is the rarer and rarer presence of generous, civic-minded families and individuals who own news outlets for the right reasons, not simply to maximize profits—although profit is still important—but because they feel an obligation to advance journalism for the greater benefit of us all. Everyone has seen this work at flagship newspapers, but the family model has worked in smaller markets as well, including at several papers in Upstate New York.

So I would propose that charitably inclined institutions and individuals should begin to think of journalism as a philanthropic endeavor. If it becomes a worthy endeavor to buy a local newspaper and preserve its size and independence—just as it is a worthy endeavor to support the local hospital, school, charity—many more might consider doing it.

As Americans, we must continue to support the First Amendment—the

freedom and viability of the press. Our democracy depends on it.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[CES Prepared Remarks—Feb. 7, 2019]

JOURNALISTS ARE NOT THE ENEMY

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you, Gene Policinski, for that kind introduction and for your help in hosting. Thank you to Marjorie for your work at the Globe, your work on this event, and allowing me to cut you in line to give remarks.

Thank you also to Linda Henry for the invitation to address you today. It's a good time to be a Henry. Much to my chagrin, the Red Sox were champions again this year, which—no matter how many times it has happened—will always be a bit bemusing to us Yankee fans with 27 championships. It stings, but Sox fans: you have a long way to go.

I didn't want to miss the opportunity to be here with you this afternoon, because, as you all know, I have such respect and admiration for the press. At the Al Smith Dinner a few years back, President Obama joked that I brought the press along with me as my "loved ones." And just as I do with my loved ones, I worry about the future of the media; the future of journalism.

We live in a time of immense challenge: economic, global, political. The institutions of our democracy are being tested in ways they haven't been tested since the early days of the Republic. If ever there were a time for a vigorous Fourth Estate—to ferret out the facts, inform a divided nation, and hold power to account—it's right now.

But journalism, in its moment of maximum import, is also at its moment of maximum peril. Besieged by large economic forces and rapidly changing technology, journalism has been forced to adapt or die. Some have adapted; many have died. On top of these economic forces, the media faces a relentless campaign of de-legitimization waged by the most powerful office in the free world.

This afternoon, I'd like to discuss both of these challenges with you; what they mean for our country and what we might do about them.

I want to begin by talking about the concerted effort to destroy the credibility of most news organizations.

To do that, I have to wind back the clock a bit to the start of the Internet era, which allowed the media universe to splinter into a near-infinite number of outlets, some of which do important niche reporting, but many of which are hyper-partisan, whose sole purpose is to market news to a specific political demographic.

It used to be in America that we had a national town hall every night at 6 o'clock with the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening newscasts. You watched CBS if you liked Cronkite, or NBC if you preferred Huntley-Brinkley. But regardless of what channel we chose, we all got the same information; everyone started with the same common fact base that helped us relate to one another at the water cooler.

The same went for major newspapers. As Arthur Miller quipped, "a good newspaper, I suppose, is a nation talking to itself." Our nation is no longer talking to itself—we're not even speaking the same language.

1987 was a pivot point, when the Reagan FCC withdrew the Fairness Doctrine. No longer were stations compelled to report controversial issues in a manner that was honest, equitable and balanced. The withdrawal of the Fairness Doctrine took the leash off, allowing stations of any political bent to report the news as they saw fit.

This was taken advantage of by folks from every dot on the political spectrum, but figures like Rupert Murdoch, Roger Ailes, Andrew Breitbart and Steve Bannon took perhaps the greatest advantage. They realized they could cultivate a network of partisan media outlets, walking right up to—and sometimes crossing—the line of blurring fact and fiction.

Enter President Trump: stage right. Fueled by his derision for all but the most flattering reporting, President Trump has taken it one step further.

His goal, it seems, is to discredit the media altogether as a check on his power, to say to the American people that newspapers are irrelevant, "the failing New York Times;"

that all journalists are evil, "the enemy of the people;"

that virtually all news is false, "fake news."

Let's be honest here: the president tells more lies than any president we have ever seen.

When the press tells the truth, when the press speaks truth to power, when the press does its job: President Trump can't handle it. He calls it fake.

When President Trump labels something "fake news," it is inevitably critical of him, and most often, true.

Perhaps the president's penchant for calling stories "fake" could have been ignored or viewed with appropriate skepticism 25 years ago. But because there is an entire ecosystem of partisan news outlets and columnists that are in total fealty to the president, who don't value the free press as much as their own political ideology or profit—the "fake news" contagion has spread, beyond even the president's most ardent supporters, for a number of reasons.

We live in an age during which nearly all institutions are mistrusted. Faith in the news media, historically one of the most trusted institutions, has declined like so many others—the government, the Church, corporate America, schools and universities.

But if the public, broadly speaking, loses all faith in the media—if the public comes to believe that all news is fake—that's the beginning of the end of America as we know it.

So I want to speak directly to the members of the media in the audience and those who may be watching . . .

Your job is more important than ever. It's important to rebut alternative facts with facts.

It's important to correct the president's lies.

And it is equally important that you not let the president wear you down or throw you off course . . . to think—maybe we should tone it down a little, maybe we can let that one go, when in fact it should be the opposite.

Dictators throughout the course of history have learned that the best way to consolidate power is to capture or totally discredit the news media.

Your mission goes beyond rebutting Trump's lies, important as that may be. Your mission is intertwined with the future of our democracy.

President Johnson said that "an informed mind is the guardian genius of democracy." That's what good journalism does. It informs. It establishes truth. It is like a guardrail for the country—keeping us from swerving off the road and over a cliff.

At a time when those fundamental principles are under attack—including the very nature of truth—keeping the media strong, keeping the media free, keeping the media alive . . . has never been more important.

So I salute you. You are doing a noble thing. You just have to just stay the course, charge ahead, undaunted and undeterred.

Don't flag or lose faith. The Trump presidency has reinvigorated a level of interest in journalism not seen since Watergate. At the CUNY Journalism school, the number of applications last year were 40% higher than they were the year before. So long as journalists continue to do their jobs without fear or favor, I truly believe that the president's assault on the free press will not succeed.

Now, the second challenge facing journalism is also menacing, also existential: the arrival of the internet—the Huffington Post and Buzzfeed, followed closely by Twitter, Facebook, and social media—brought an end to the traditional business model for newspapers. Consumers expect their news instantaneously, and they often expect it to be free. Subscriptions and newsstand sales fell. Craigslist became the preferred destination for classified ads, the most reliable revenue stream for newspapers. Facebook, Twitter, and Google gobbled up the remaining ad revenue as venues for the journalism of others. I submit to you that it is not an accident that Facebook's home page is called the "news feed."

Like a boat taking on water faster than it can be bailed out: newsrooms shrunk, the industry consolidated, and many once-revered papers simply sunk.

None of this is "news" as would you say—but the collapse of the newspaper's business model is still claiming victims. One area where it's particularly troubling to me is in smaller markets, in mid-sized and smaller cities. The most striking example I've seen is in upstate New York. Just a few years ago, the major newspaper in a town of 70,000 had fifteen full-time reporters. Now it has two.

For generations, local newspapers and television stations have been the glue that keeps small communities informed and stitched together. In a big city, there are many interlocking layers of civic life: social clubs, religious groups, sports teams, municipal organizations. But in many smaller cities and towns, the local paper is the most robust civic organization left in that community.

When Kodak was in Rochester, it looked out for its civic life, its charities, its communities. But there is no more Kodak. When the community bank headquartered in Elmira was purchased, a national bank came in and took much less interest in the community life of Elmira. When Walmart came in and supplanted every clothing and hardware store all across upstate, it eroded both the finances and social fabric of those communities. Local newspapers are one of the few institutions left in smaller cities and towns. Just anecdotally, cities with strong, successful papers—like Buffalo with the Buffalo News—tend to do better economically and those papers help foster a strong sense of community and connectedness.

So I have a particular concern when smaller papers and smaller television networks are forced to downsize, reorganize, or close.

Unfortunately, in my home state of New York, an already bleak picture just got bleaker. Last week, a hedge fund known as the "destroyer of newspapers" announced a bid to take over Gannet, which, in addition to USA Today, publishes four important papers in my state, all in mid-size to smaller cities: the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, the Binghamton Press & Sun, the Poughkeepsie Journal, and the Journal News in the Lower Hudson Valley.

For Alden Global Capital, the hedge fund, the acquisition and "streamlining" of Gannet newspapers might increase its profits a couple of percentage points. But the loss of the Binghamton Press & Sun and the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle would be incalculable.

The Gannet consortium was already the result of a consolidated news business, with

one reporter working multiple beats and placing stories in multiple newspapers. What was already an overburdened, under-resourced operation now faces potential annihilation by an indifferent media conglomerate backed by an even more indifferent hedge fund.

And in my view, losing a newspaper in Rochester is even worse than losing one in Dallas. I am left angry and searching for answers. What do we do about this?

I don't know how to solve the broader economic problem for newspapers big and small. Federal support is problematic beyond NPR and PBS. The press must remain adversarial; acting and appearing independent.

The only antidote to these problems I have seen is the rarer and rarer presence of generous, civic-minded families and individuals who own news outlets for the right reasons—not simply to maximize profits, although profit is still important, but because they feel an obligation to advance journalism for the greater benefit of us all. Newspapers that belong to families or trusts have been some of the few to survive the last two decades, isolated in part from market pressures.

Everyone has seen this work at places like the Globe, the Times, and the Post, but the family model has worked in smaller markets as well. The Watertown Times, for example, is owned by the Johnson family and it does as much for the North Country in upstate New York as any institution.

I would propose, to you and your broader audience, that charitably-inclined institutions and individuals should begin to think of journalism as a philanthropic endeavor. The plight of the Fourth Estate should move the conscience of the nation. If it became a worthy endeavor to buy a local paper and preserve its size and independence—just as it's a worthy endeavor to support the local hospital, school, or charity—many more might consider doing it.

The Guardian, for example, operates on a reader-donation model—which funds its entire online presence. Journalism is a public good. From philanthropists to average readers: we should all start treating it as such.

This is just one idea. I'm sure there are better ones. God knows I don't have the answers. But from where I stand, I see the same problems that you all understand so well, and I am pained for solutions.

Because, throughout history, the Fourth Estate has always kept our government in check when it's gone astray, perhaps more than anywhere else around the world. We rely on newspapers to inform our citizens, shine a light on injustice, establish the facts, and hold elected officials like me accountable. A free and robust Fourth Estate is how we discern democracy from autocracy and guard against the slide from one to the other.

This is a time when many of us who have had complete faith in the wellspring of democracy that has graced our country genuinely worry if it will endure.

The fact that you, the free press, are there at the bulwark—Independent, strong, and fearless, in cities big and small—gives me solace that despite our current peril, the greatness of America will ultimately prevail.

As Americans, we must continue to support the First Amendment; the freedom—and viability—of the press. It's nothing short of a moral imperative.

Thank you.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 47, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 47) to provide for the management of the natural resources of the United States, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murkowski/Manchin Modified Amendment No. 111, in the nature of a substitute.

Murkowski Amendment No. 112 (to Amendment No. 111), to modify the authorization period for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program.

Rubio/Scott (FL) Amendment No. 182 (to Amendment No. 112), to give effect to more accurate maps of units of the John H. Chafee Costal Barrier Resources System that were produced by digital mapping.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

GREEN NEW DEAL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last Thursday, Democrats released their plan for a Green New Deal, although "plan" might be a bit of a stretch. It is more like a wish list because while Democrats announced their desired outcomes like getting rid of fossil fuels or upgrading every single building in the United States, they provided no details at all about how to get there. In particular, they failed to provide any details on how to pay for the staggering costs of what they are proposing to do.

Take just one provision of the Democrats' green wish list: "Upgrading all existing buildings in the United States and building new buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency, water efficiency, safety, affordability, comfort, and durability, including through electrification." That is a direct quote from the so-called plan, upgrading all existing buildings—all existing buildings.

Well, the cost of that provision alone is practically inconceivable, but that is just a small fraction of what the Democrats want to do. Their wish list also includes "meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources, including by dramatically expanding and upgrading renewable power sources and by deploying new capacity; overhauling