

President and Republicans trying to repeal our healthcare law.

The Texas lawsuit is working its way through the courts now. If Mr. Readler's legal argument prevails in the courts, access to healthcare for children with asthma, adults with arthritis, and cancer survivors would no longer be guaranteed.

Mr. Readler argues that preexisting condition protections like these are unconstitutional. We Senate Democrats think that is outrageous and extreme, which is why we are calling on Republicans to join us in opposing his nomination.

In short, any Republican Senator who supports Mr. Readler's nomination is supporting the Trump Republican lawsuit to get rid of preexisting condition protections and to take away healthcare from tens of millions—if not hundreds of millions—of Americans.

DECLARATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Mr. President, now on the national emergency, over the weekend, RAND PAUL, the fourth Republican in the Senate, announced his support for the resolution to terminate the President's national emergency, giving it the needed 51 votes to pass this Chamber.

It is clear that Members of both parties know there is no actual emergency at the border. The President himself made clear, when announcing the state of emergency, that he didn't need to do this. When the President says "I don't need to do this," he is saying that there is no emergency.

By definition, an emergency is something you need to do; it is an emergency. In the President's own words, this is not an emergency. It is a political bone and a face-saving device for the President to throw to the right-wing, to show he is still fighting for the wall. It goes way beyond simply how you feel on the wall, pro or con; it goes to the fundamental building blocks of how this country was structured.

Congress has the power of the purse. Congress is a check on the Executive. The Founding Fathers feared—probably above anything else, having dealt with King George in the Revolution—that an overreaching Executive was one of the greatest dangers to our democracy. That is why so many Presidents have respected and done emergencies only in the rarest of times.

The last bunch of emergencies were either a war, 9/11, Desert Storm, diseases—real emergencies—things that affect our climate, disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes, in terms of what has happened with our weather and our climate.

If this coequal branch of government allows Presidents—whoever they may be, Democrats or Republicans—to just declare an emergency whenever they want to achieve a partisan policy goal, it will fundamentally alter the balance of power in this country in a way the Founding Fathers would be aghast at.

My guess is if George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, or James Madison

were looking down on this Chamber, they would want us to rise to the occasion; that was the democracy they wanted. I don't know if we will.

The Founders of this Nation gave the Congress one of the greatest powers any government has—the power of the purse. President Trump is trying to take these powers away, even after Congress rejected—explicitly rejected several times—the money for his wall.

We Democrats know this, and now it is clear that a growing number of Republicans know it, as well: To allow this emergency to persist is a change in the fundamental, necessary, and often exquisite balance of power that marks the genius of the American Constitution.

I know many of my friends on the other side of the aisle understand that. In fact, if you are a true conservative and not just a Trump acolyte, you realize that there shouldn't be too much power centralized in any place because conservatism, at its root, believes in maximizing the freedom of the individual and minimizing anything that encroaches on it, including an overreaching Executive. So to look the other way because President Trump wants this and because he is sometimes almost in a temper tantrum about this issue is so shortsighted and so detrimental to the long-term health, stability, and viability of how this balance of power works.

Let us come together on this issue—Democrats, Republicans, House and Senate—and rise to the occasion. If Congress stands up, it will be a reaffirmation of our democracy. It will be a day historians will proudly note decades from now. It will be a reaffirmation of the democracy the Founding Fathers wanted.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, for decades, we have known that climate change is not only a major national challenge but an existential threat to our planet and to our future.

Despite the gravity and scale of this challenge, one political party in the United States—the Republican Party—has largely denied the problem even exists, denied the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community, and denied most attempts in Congress to tackle climate change.

Today marks day 18 since I first challenged our Republican leader and all of my Republican colleagues to answer these three questions: One, is climate change real? Two, is it caused by human activity? And, three, should Congress act immediately, strongly, to deal with this issue?

We haven't heard an answer from the leader or from almost every Republican in this body. So let me repeat them again.

Leader MCCONNELL, do you believe that climate change is real? Leader MCCONNELL, do you believe that it is caused by human activity? Leader MCCONNELL, do you believe that Congress should take immediate action to address the crisis of climate change?

I suppose it is not a surprise that Republicans are fearful to answer these questions. They know the public is on our side on this issue, overwhelmingly two to one. But the oil industry, which funnels tons of money into Republican coffers, much of it dark money, undisclosed—they are on the other side. That is why they are afraid to answer the question one way or the other.

Today's Washington Post details how the denial of basic scientific facts surrounding climate change is amounting to a political litmus test for President Trump. Perhaps Republicans are avoiding answering questions I have posed for fear that the President would retaliate for siding against him and his radical views. There is no real, rational explanation.

U.S.-CHINA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. President, finally, on China trade, we have seen reports in today's newspapers that President Trump is close to cutting a deal with China.

I have given the President credit for bringing China to the table with his strong action on tariffs. He has done more to stop China from stealing our intellectual property and keeping American businesses out, causing tens of millions of Americans to lose income and millions of Americans to lose jobs. He has done more than previous Presidents. I give him credit.

But if now—at the end of the day—he sells out, backs out, and just looks at trade balances and doesn't deal with the fundamental, structural ways China takes advantage of us, it doesn't matter that he put in the tariffs in the first place.

The bottom line is very simple: China is our economic rival, and they don't play by the rules. They steal intellectual property by cyber theft, even promising that they will not. They don't let American companies come in and compete fairly in China, even though their companies can come here.

My late father-in-law, a cabdriver in New York City, just like one of those Damon Runyon cabdrivers, said that when it comes to certain things, America is not Uncle Sam; we are "Uncle Sap." When it comes to China, that is what we are. We have let them take advantage of us for two decades—two decades.

Now President Trump has the opportunity to stop them, and the news reports today say that he is going to back off—back off—because China will buy some more product.

China's buying more products will not change the structural problems. It will not change the basic erosion of American wealth and jobs as it flows to China. It is a temporary salve and nothing more.

I care about our farmers; we have a lot of them in New York State. I care about companies that might be hurt in the short run by this, but unless we take some tough action against China, the hurt will be much greater and much longer.

I say to President Trump: You stayed tough in North Korea, and it inured to

your benefit. The Democratic leader of the Senate praised President Trump for doing that. Stay tough on China. When it comes to China, don't let March be the month when it is said that President Trump went in like a lion and went out like a lamb, and President Xi, a darn good negotiator, figuratively eats our lunch.

There is a generational imperative to get this right. The President and his folks must not squander the chance to achieve permanent reforms to China's economic relations with the world. This chance will not come around again for a long time, and American wealth, income, and jobs will ebb. This is one of the most important moments in the Trump Presidency.

President Trump, stand tough. China can no longer be allowed to take advantage of us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TORNADOES IN ALABAMA AND GEORGIA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know the entire Senate joins me today in offering deep sympathies to the communities affected by yesterday's spate of tornadoes in east Alabama and Georgia. As first responders continue to search for survivors in the rubble, we know that at least 23 innocent lives were lost to this disaster all in Lee County, AL. Our condolences are especially with their loved ones, and our gratitude is with the emergency personnel and local officials who spearheaded evacuation and rescue efforts.

The people of Alabama are all too familiar with the pain caused by devastating storms like yesterday's. The entire region has been hit hard in recent years, seemingly by one disaster after another. They continue to brace against the threat of tornadoes and the flooding that so often impacts communities in my State of Kentucky.

At every step of the way—from response and recovery to resilient achievement—Alabama has benefitted from the devoted leadership of Senator RICHARD SHELBY. On the specific issue of disaster recovery, his hard work and steady hand have helped to lead the charge. When supplemental funding for natural disaster relief receives floor time here in the Senate, it will be thanks to the hard work of our colleagues like Senator PERDUE, Senator ISAKSON, and others, and, certainly, Chairman SHELBY.

Of course, this is far from the only area in which RICHARD SHELBY has delivered results for his State and for our Nation. For years, he has made a per-

sonal mission out of restoring and improving our Nation's infrastructure. He has brought wise and decisive leadership as our chief appropriator, and the State of Alabama bears countless signs of Senator SHELBY's dedicated service—from supporting the missile defense and space exploration programs in Huntsville to helping to establish the National Water Center in Tuscaloosa, where researchers forecast floods and work to mitigate water-related hazards.

It is fitting today to praise Senator SHELBY's continued service. It also happened that, over the weekend, the senior Senator from Alabama became the longest serving senator in the history of his State. I couldn't be happier to recognize my friend RICHARD SHELBY on this occasion, and I know each of our colleagues will join me in congratulating him on the years of faithful service to Alabamians that have made this recognition possible.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, this week the Senate is considering the nominations of three more well-qualified jurists to vacancies on our Nation's Federal courts.

First is Allison Jones Rushing, of North Carolina, to serve on the Fourth Circuit. Ms. Rushing is a graduate of Wake Forest University and Duke University School of Law with high honors. In the years since, she has built a distinguished record in private practice and has held prestigious appellate clerkships on two Federal circuit courts and the U.S. Supreme Court.

I will have more to say on the state of our nominations process soon, but I hope each of our colleagues will begin the week by joining me in voting to advance Ms. Rushing's nomination later today.

THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Mr. President, on one final matter, like many Americans, I have spent the past several weeks watching with interest as prominent leaders in the Democratic Party have engaged in a political footrace. They are sprinting—literally, sprinting—as far left as possible, as quickly as possible, trying to outdo one another. The result is that one of our two major political parties has begun embracing one radical, half-baked socialist proposal after another. It is really a sight to see.

First came the Democratic Politician Protection Act, a sweeping Washington, DC, takeover of what Americans can say about politics and how they elect their representatives. Speaker PELOSI and her House colleagues were ready with that from day one in this new Congress. They chose it as their No. 1 ceremonial first bill of the year, H.R. 1. Let me say that this is quite a piece of legislation to hold up as the defining product—bear in mind, the defining product—of a new Democratic House majority.

House Democrats are championing an unprecedented takeover of our Nation's electoral system—one that would over-

haul campaign rules and make it harder for private citizens to exercise their right to political speech.

It would replace private money in political campaigns with your tax dollars. Let me say that again. They take your private money contributed to a candidate of your choice out of the political process and replace that with your tax dollars—up to \$5 million to any candidate that wants it—even, by the way, if it happens to be a candidate you disagree with. They are going to take your tax money and give it to candidates you don't agree with and swing the partisan balance of the Federal Election Commission, which has the final say in election regulations.

Oh, and it all comes under the guise of—you guessed it—this is about restoring democracy. Now, of course, this sprawling 622-page doorstop is never going to become law. I certainly don't plan to even bring it to the floor here in the Senate. There are always improvements and reforms to be made, but this certainly isn't it.

It does give us a useful signal of our Democratic colleagues' real goals—what they really want to do. Democrats look out over the landscape of America today, and everywhere they look, they see opportunity to seize money and power from American families and communities and pile it up in their own hands—you guessed it—right here in Washington. Taxing more, spending more, and Washington's seizing more power away from the people—that is the Democrat's hammer of choice. In every part of American life, they see a nail. In every part of American life, they see a nail.

Just look at the Green New Deal. From what we understand, the American people can expect a government-mandated overhaul of every four-walled structure in America—a government-mandated overhaul of every four-walled structure in America—and, if that were not enough, an end to American fossil fuel and energy production from nuclear powerplants—of course, along with all the jobs that make both of those possible.

According to background documents, there are plans for a government-guaranteed income. Listen to this: a government-guaranteed income for those unwilling to work, all at the low price of an estimated—listen to this—\$93 trillion.

Of course, next came the massive one-size-fits-all government-run healthcare proposal—“Medicare for none.” It strips everything from our seniors' Medicare Program but the name. It slaps that name on a new government-run plan, and they are so confident Americans will love their Democratic-designed insurance that they feel the need to outlaw competing private insurance altogether, just to make sure there is no competition.

Democrats want to strip existing health plans away from middle-class families, even if they are happy with their current coverage, and, inevitably,