privilege of watching television commercials attacking their own beliefs and the candidates they support and knowing their own tax dollars bought the airtime for candidates they oppose.

All of this is what House Democrats are debating on the floor this very week—H.R. 1—all of this and more. I have only scratched the surface of the Democratic Politician Protection Act: running roughshod over States' and communities' control of their own elections, regulating and chilling the American people's exercise of the First Amendment, forcing taxpayers to indirectly donate to the politicians they don't like, and a dozen other bad ideas to boot.

Behold the signature legislation of the new House Democratic majority.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, just briefly, I heard my good friend, the Republican leader, decry H.R. 1. He called it the Democratic protection act. Well, if making it easier for people to vote and getting Big Money out of politics hurt the Republican Party and is good for Democrats, what a sad commentary on the Republican Party that they don't want to see people vote, make it easier to vote, and that they don't want Big Money out of politics—a sad commentary on the Republican Party to be afraid of H.R. 1.

NOMINATION OF CHAD A. READLER

Madam President, later this afternoon, the Senate will vote to take up the nomination of Chad Readler to be a judge on the Sixth Circuit. Mr. Readler was the man behind the curtain last year when the Trump administration decided to side with Texas and 19 other States with Republican attorneys general in suing to repeal our healthcare law. Mr. Readler didn't merely work on the case; he was the lead lawyer who filed the Justice Department brief declaring the administration would refuse to defend the laws of our country.

His recommendations were so outrageous that many career Justice Department attorneys refused to sign it. Mr. Readler argued that protections for Americans with preexisting conditions should be eliminated. Let me repeat that. The nominee up for a vote later this afternoon argued that protections for Americans with preexisting conditions should be eliminated. Then, a day after Mr. Readler filed this awful brief hurting average Americans—hurting tens of millions of average Americans—he was nominated for a lifetime appointment on the Federal bench. Coincidence? I think not. You see, in the Trump administration, depriving people of protections for preexisting conditions is actually something to be rewarded. Shame. Shame on the Trump administration. Shame on anybody who votes for Mr. Readler, particularly those who claim they want to protect preexisting conditions. Those who say they want to protect them and vote for the chief cook and bottle washer who pulled them away and was given this nomination the next day, shame on them.

During the past campaign, as I said, many Republicans stood up and said, rightly, that they supported keeping protections for Americans with preexisting conditions. That is all well and good, but that is what is so typical of our Republican friends in the Senate. They talk the game that we do—they are for more healthcare, they are for protecting Americans with preexisting conditions—but their votes on the floor of the Senate are exactly the opposite. It is all well and good to say you want to protect them, but those promises and pronouncements mean next to nothing if they will not vote to reject a lifetime appointment for the man who played the starring role in the legal effort to take these conditions away.

Republicans who vote yes on Mr. Readler, I believe, will regret that vote in future years. A vote to confirm Mr. Readler is an endorsement of the Republican lawsuit to eliminate protections for preexisting conditions and repeal healthcare for millions of Americans.

DECLARATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Madam President, on another matter, the national emergency. It seems with each passing day, another Republican comes out to oppose the President's declaration of a national emergency at the border. Over the weekend, Senator RAND PAUL, who often speaks his own mind, became the fourth Republican to officially announce his support for terminating the President's emergency declaration, apparently guaranteeing enough votes for passage in the Senate. I hope and expect that Senator PAUL will not be the last Republican to announce their support because this should be an issue that transcends party. The President's emergency declaration gnaws at our very fabric, particularly the separation of powers. The President—this President—is trying to bend the law to his will, to accrue powers that are not his.

There is no evidence that some new emergency exists at the border. The President himself has said he ''didn't need to do this.'' An emergency, by definition, is something that you need to do. Everyone here knows the truth. The President didn't declare an emergency because there is one. He declared an emergency because he lost in Congress, threw another temper tantrum, and wanted to go around it. That, my friends, is a gross abuse of our constitutional system.

Article I—not article II, the executive branch article, not article III, the judiciary branch article, but article I, Congress—gives Congress the power of the purse, not the President. Were we to permit an Executive—any Executive—to declare an emergency every time they lost in Congress, what would be the point of Congress? We would be trading our democracy for a monarchy, the very thing our Framers abhorred and that our Constitution guards against. Remember, back then, why did the colonists—the brave colonists—rebel? It was against the overreaching power of King George. They said: We need a government that is going to protect us from the overreaching power of any individual, particularly one empowered to lead a nation. That is why they did it. It is relevant today. Donald Trump has shown more desire to overreach than any President. Some people may like that, but it goes against 200 years of wisdom in this country, and I hope people will reject it.

Whatever you think of the policy at the southern border—I suppose Senator PAUL is very much for the wall—no President should be allowed to discard the Constitution on a whim and do an end run around a coequal branch of government.

This vote on the resolution to terminate this emergency is not a vote about policy, it is not a vote about party. It is a vote about Presidential power and the precedent it will set, which will reach far beyond the current debate about the border. The debate about the border will be forgotten, but the fact that this Congress, this Senate, allows a President to so overreach and rearrange singlehandedly the balancing blocks in our democracy will be regarded by historians as a bleak day.

I say to my colleagues, that doesn't just apply to how you vote. It applies to whether we have enough votes to override the President should he veto this resolution when it passes.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, on climate, Leader MCCONNELL has spent a great deal of time talking about bringing his version of the Green New Deal to the floor. Everybody knows it is nothing more than a political stunt. Everybody knows the same Republican leader decried bringing bills to reopen the government because the President wouldn't sign them, and he said those were stunts. Now he is doing the same thing. It is amazing sometimes that there can be a 180-degree turn so quickly.

So let's talk about some of the things Leader MCCONNELL could actually do to move the ball forward on climate change, which now more and more people—two thirds of Americans, if you believe in polling—believe is a real threat to our planet that demands the Senate's action, not stunts, not games.

All 47 Democrats have introduced a resolution that affirms three simple things; one, climate change is real;

two, climate change is caused by human activity; and, three, Congress must immediately act to address the problem. Leader MCCONNELL could bring that resolution to the floor. He could say he believes climate change is real and deserves our time and attention. Given the rampant denialism from some wings of the Republican Party, including so many in the White House, that would be notable progress, but I don't think it will happen.

You scratch your head and wonder why. Why would they be so afraid to even say climate change is real? One possible answer many people think is the cause, one of the main causes, is oil money—oil money. The oil industry has such power around here—and much of that money is dark, by the way—that Republicans are afraid to admit the candid truth and say climate change is real.

Our resolution doesn't talk about how you propose to deal with this very real issue. We are not locking people into this proposal or that proposal. We are simply saying, let's start talking about it. Actually, the one good thing about Leader MCCONNELL's stunt is we are talking about it, and that is a good thing. I have news for the leader. We will keep talking about it throughout this whole Congress, and we will keep trying to use our leverage to make it easier to resist the bad forces of carbon dioxide entering our atmosphere.

So we are going to keep at this. We are going to keep at this, Leader MCCONNELL. No stunt that you put on the floor is going to deter us. We are preparing legislation to defund President Trump's attempt to create a fake climate panel within the executive branch. Leader MCCONNELL can bring that legislation to the floor once it is ready so Congress can tell the President that we do not tolerate the intentional dissemination of disinformation to the American public on any issue, especially climate change.

Democrats have also said any infrastructure bill must include substantial investments in green jobs. That is something Leader MCCONNELL could pursue. We all like jobs. Many Members on his side of the aisle believe in wind and solar power—well, not many but at least some. Let's move forward on that. We need to upgrade our power grids. We need to make energy more available and cheaper and greener. Let's do that.

There are many more things besides, but make no mistake, before and after Leader MCCONNELL's political stunt on climate change, Democrats will continue to focus on the issue, propose solutions, and try to get some of those solutions enacted into law in the places we have some leverage, even as a minority.

There is an enormous energy—enormous energy in this country, particularly among young Americans—to take bold action on climate change. They see the planet on which they live changing before their eyes, not for the better, and they are absolutely right. It is our job to channel the energy of those young people—wonderful energy; I am so glad it is out there—into bold legislation that addresses the climate crisis head on, and that is exactly—exactly—what Democrats will do, even if Republicans continue to play these political games in their efforts to try to keep their heads in the sand and ignore that climate change is real.

CHINA

Madam President, finally, on China, recent news reports have described an emerging trade deal with China that would see the United States ease up on tariffs in exchange for the Chinese buying more American goods and making some—some changes to its trade practices.

As the New York Times reports this morning, ''The agreement does not appear to require the sweeping changes to China's economy that prompted Mr. Trump to begin the trade war.'' If the reports about the emerging agreement are accurate, I would say to President Trump, you are heading down a precarious road.

The President's instincts were right when he took a hard line on China. I supported his hard line on China. China is killing us in terms of stealing our intellectual property, in terms of not letting American companies compete fairly in their large market while they are allowed to come here, in terms of not creating a level playing field for companies no matter what country they are from.

The President was right when he said we have to do something about it. In fact, as he began on this road, he did a lot more than previous Presidents. Both President Bush and President Obama did less to get China to understand the seriousness of this problem than President Trump did. He knows that.

When you are getting close to a victory, to relent at the eleventh hour without meaningful, enforceable, and verifiable structural reform to China's trade policies would be an abject failure of the President's China polices, and people will shrug their shoulders and ask, what the heck did he begin this for if he will not complete it?

We need to put an end to the forced transfer of American technology and American know-how as a ransom for doing business in China. We need to put an end to China's systemic theft of American intellectual property. A big hack from China was found out just last month. Our companies need the same unfettered access to China's markets that we allow Chinese firms to have to markets in America.

This may be our last shot. If the President squanders his own efforts now, there will be lasting and untold consequences for generations to come.

The President is too focused on trade imbalances. That is short term. Those come and go. The reason our trade balance is so bad is because of all of the structural things China does to make it harder for us to export to China and easier for them to import here after stealing a lot of our know-how. A temporary narrowing of the trade deficit would be cold comfort to the millions of American workers who have suffered and will continue to suffer the abuse of China's policies.

When the President was headed to North Korea, I said to him: When it comes to North Korea, don't let March go in like a lion and come out like a lamb.

The President did the right thing on North Korea, and I got up here and said that he did. He backed out when the North Koreans wouldn't give him much and resisted the opportunity of a photo op, which we know is hard for him to resist. He should do the same thing on China.

He got a lot of credit for backing out on North Korea. The President will get a lot of credit if he stands up to China and will eventually win because the Chinese economy is hurting. They just reduced their own biased estimates on growth. It is lower.

My plea to President Trump is this: Stand firm. We will win this fight that you correctly began, but don't back off for some temporary salve. America's future depends on it. The income of our workers and the number of good-paying jobs we create all depend on our standing tough with China right now when we sort of have them where we want them and completing a strong deal. Please, Mr. President, don't back off. When it comes to China trade and your actions, don't let March come in like a lion and go out like a lamb.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last week, we learned that the economy grew at a rate of 3.1 percent from the fourth quarter of 2017 to the fourth quarter of 2018. That is the strongest economic growth in over 10 years. Economic growth for the fourth quarter of 2018 smashed market expectations.

In January, the economy created more than 300,000 jobs. More than 5.3 million jobs have been created since President Trump was elected. Job openings hit a record high of 7.3 million in December, substantially exceeding the number of those looking for work. The Department of Labor reports that the number of job openings has exceeded the number of job seekers for 10 straight months. Unemployment is low. January marked the 11th straight month that unemployment has been at or below 4 percent. That is the longest streak in nearly five decades.

Wage growth has accelerated. Wages have now been growing at a rate of 3 percent or greater for 6 straight months. The last time wage growth reached this level was in 2009. Median household income is at an alltime high.

U.S. manufacturing has rebounded. The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday: