

of four received a tax cut of more than \$2,000 in 2018.

We also made it easier for millions of Americans to file their taxes by reducing the need to itemize. In addition to promoting economic growth generally, we created opportunity zones to focus specifically on helping to revitalize distressed communities. Championed by Senator SCOTT, the opportunity zones provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provide incentives for long-term investment in low-income communities, with the goal of creating new jobs and economic opportunity for local residents.

We also took action to provide additional support to families by creating an incentive for employers to offer paid family leave to their workers.

Two-plus years ago, Republicans in Congress and the President set out with one goal in mind—to make life better for American families. I am proud that tax reform has expanded opportunity for Americans and made life easier for families, and we are not stopping here.

Republicans will keep working to ensure that the economic growth that we are experiencing continues and that every American has access to a secure and a prosperous future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

#### NOMINATION OF RODOLFO ARMANDO RUIZ II

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Rodolfo Ruiz to serve as a judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

I first met Judge Rudy Ruiz in 2012 when I appointed him to the Miami-Dade County Court, when he was only 33 years old. He served Miami-Dade County very well, and 3 years later I had the opportunity to appoint him to the circuit court bench.

Judge Ruiz has an impressive record. He graduated from Duke University and earned his law degree from Georgetown University.

Following law school, Judge Ruiz clerked for Federal Judge Federico Moreno in the Southern District of Florida and later served as assistant county attorney for Miami-Dade County.

With 7 years of distinguished service as a judge in Florida, it is no surprise that the administration has nominated him for this position, and the American Bar Association agrees. They unanimously rated him as “well qualified” for the robe.

Judge Rudy Ruiz has honorably served the State of Florida, and I am proud to support his appointment to the Federal bench today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM BARR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as we speak, Attorney General William Barr is testifying before a hearing in front of the Judiciary Committee.

There may not be a member of this administration with more to answer for than the current Attorney General, and that is a pretty high bar. His confirmation occurred only a few months ago. Yet, in a short time, Mr. Barr's conduct has raised damning questions about his impartiality and about his fitness.

Just last night we learned that Special Counsel Mueller sent a private letter more than a month ago to the Attorney General that took issue with Mr. Barr's early description of the Russia investigation's conclusions.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter dated March 27, 2019, to Mr. Barr.

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,  
THE SPECIAL COUNSEL'S OFFICE,  
Washington, DC, March 27, 2019.

Re Report of the Special Counsel on the Investigation Into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election and Obstruction of Justice (March 2019).

Hon. WILLIAM P. BARR,  
*Attorney General of the United States, Department of Justice, Washington, DC.*

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL BARR: I previously sent you a letter dated March 25, 2019, that enclosed the introduction and executive summary for each volume of the Special Counsel's report marked with redactions to remove any information that potentially could be protected by Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 6(e); that concerned declination decisions; or that related to a charged case. We also had marked an additional two sentences for review and have now confirmed that these sentences can be released publicly.

Accordingly, the enclosed documents are in a form that can be released to the public consistent with legal requirements and Department policies. I am requesting that you provide these materials to Congress and authorize their public release at this time.

As we stated in our meeting of March 5 and reiterated to the Department early in the afternoon of March 24, the introductions and executive summaries of our two-volume report accurately summarize this Office's work and conclusions. The summary letter the Department sent to Congress and released to the public late in the afternoon of March 24 did not fully capture the context, nature, and substance of this Office's work and conclusions. We communicated that concern to the Department on the morning of March 25.

There is now public confusion about critical aspects of the results of our investigation. This threatens to undermine a central purpose for which the Department appointed the Special Counsel: to assure full public confidence in the outcome of the investigations. See Department of Justice, Press Release (May 17, 2017).

While we understand that the Department is reviewing the full report to determine what is appropriate for public release—a process that our Office is working with you to complete—that process need not delay release of the enclosed materials. Release at this time would alleviate the misunderstandings that have arisen and would answer congressional and public questions about the nature and outcome of our investigation. It would also accord with the standard for public release of notifications to Congress cited in your letter. See 28 C.F.R. 609(c) (“the Attorney General may determine that public release” of congressional notifications “would be in the public interest”).

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT S. MUELLER, III,  
*Special Counsel.*

Mr. SCHUMER. What a stunning indictment of the Attorney General, whose principal job in all of this was to make sure—to make sure—that he wasn't mischaracterizing or spinning results. This letter shows what an awful, awful Attorney General Mr. Barr has been so far. I will have more to say on this later.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. President, on infrastructure, yesterday Speaker PELOSI and I had a productive meeting with President Trump at the White House on the topic of infrastructure. We all agreed on the need to invest substantial resources in infrastructure. We all agreed on the need to modernize and rebuild our roads, bridges, highways, and also our schools, our housing, and our power grids, and there was a specific conversation about the need to invest in expanding broadband to underserved communities.

We told the President we needed labor protections, we needed a green bill, and we needed to see that minorities, women, and veterans got their fair share when contracts were let out.

It was a good discussion, but there is more to be decided. So what we agreed was that we would have another discussion in which the administration will present proposals for how to pay for the bill.

Let's face it, the reason we haven't gotten far in infrastructure is that the administration has come up with no way for pay-fors. We Democrats put in a \$1 trillion plan—not \$2 trillion—but we paid for all of it. We used tax breaks on the wealthy and the powerful who got huge, huge benefits recently to pay for it. That may not be the way the President wants to pay for it, but we want to know how he would because last time he came up with a bill that had virtually no real pay-fors—public-private partnerships, which even he discredits.

The bottom line is simple. We will get an infrastructure bill if the President will come up with pay-fors, and then we can put ours forward—we have

already—and see if we can come to an agreement.

Seven or eight people at the meeting all told the President that we will not get a bill done unless he comes up with pay-fors. He agreed. He said: I will. He said: I will take some heat from some of my fellow Republicans, but I will do it. We will be waiting. We will be waiting.

At the White House, I made it explicitly clear that in an effort to pay for infrastructure, the administration must not take the Tax Code and make it any more regressive than it already is. I prefer to make it more progressive. To tell the wealthy that they are getting a huge tax break and then to tell the middle-class, working people that they are paying for the bulk of this is totally unfair and unacceptable to this Member.

The President said he would come up with pay-fors, but this morning I was disappointed. I saw both the Acting Chief of Staff, Mr. Mulvaney, and the Wall Street Journal editorial board mock the effort we are trying to make to rebuild the Nation's infrastructure. Their criticism? Too much spending, the deficit is too high, and we can't find revenue. Funny that we didn't hear those same criticisms when the Republicans in Congress were jamming through a partisan, unpaid-for \$2 trillion tax cut for the wealthiest of Americans. That doesn't have to be paid for, but our roads and bridges do. We are willing to pay for both, although I am not willing to pay for any big tax cuts on the wealthy that didn't pass with a single Democratic vote. I hope, for the good of the country and for the need of infrastructure—we know when we build infrastructure, America grows, and jobs are created. So we hope Mr. Mulvaney and the Wall Street Journal editorial board will rethink their knee-jerk partisan reactions.

Let's face it. Mulvaney is different. He was with the President. He supported the tax cuts. The Wall Street Journal editorial board believes it is OK to increase the deficit to reduce tax cuts on the wealthy but not OK when you are building infrastructure. Ninety-five percent of all Americans don't agree with that. Let's hope Donald Trump doesn't follow their ministrations.

The bottom line is, we hope to hear from the White House in several weeks, one way or the other.

Mr. President, what are your pay-fors? We want to know, and the American people want to know. Right now it is the biggest barrier to preventing us from getting an infrastructure bill.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, finally, on climate change, over the past few months, I have been asking Leader McCONNELL and my Republican colleagues three simple questions on climate: Do they agree that climate change is real; do they believe it is caused by humans; and do they believe we should take significant action? It seems that after re-

peating those questions over and over again, we have finally gotten some results.

Yesterday the New York Times said in an article that some Senate Republicans, "in a switch," are starting to cite climate change as the reason for some of their policy suggestions, be they support nuclear energy or carbon capture research. That is a first.

The fact that we have been asking our Republican colleagues the question: Do you believe in climate change, and now the fact that they feel compelled to say yes, even though we don't agree with their solutions—which we may not—is progress. It is not enough progress, given that the globe is at stake, but at least it is a step forward, and we haven't seen any steps come out of our Republican friends in a long time.

Hopefully, our Republican friends are finally coming around to realizing that climate change is real and caused by humans. Maybe they are looking at poll numbers and realizing that calling climate change a hoax looks as crazy as it sounds. Maybe they are seeing the changes in their own States with the climate. Whatever the reason, it is at least a little bit of progress—and we will have to take whatever little bit we can get from our normally intransigent Republican friends on this issue—and we welcome it.

That said, the types of policies my Republican colleagues talk about when they talk about climate do a disservice to the term "low-hanging fruit." Of course, I welcome smart and sensible solutions from anywhere in this Chamber, but there is a difference between getting serious on climate change and just mouthing the words or coming up with solutions that don't really solve the problem.

Some of my colleagues have called for funding for more research on carbon capture, and that is a good idea. It should be part of any plan, but in the face of an existential threat of our time, if they support carbon capture but don't go bigger, don't advocate more solutions than that, they are not doing close to enough of what we need. We must go bolder. We must grapple with the central challenge—reducing carbon emissions as quickly as possible. The good news is, we can do that with affordable and reliable technologies that exist today.

We have waited far too long to address the climate crisis in a serious way. We now need to act in a way that matches the urgency and scale of this challenge. My Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle mocked the Green New Deal, but the growing youth movement leading the fight for the Green New Deal understands something that I think most Americans do: We must think big, bold, and fast, and that we can create jobs and economic opportunity for working families in this transition. We welcome the glimmer, the little, small green sprouts of progress, whatever we can get.

Our Republican friends are starting to answer our pointed questions on climate change, but now the next step is, they have to think bigger and talk to the leader about pursuing real legislation instead of just partisan stunts.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

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

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

#### NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, every President since 1952 has signed a national declaration declaring a National Day of Prayer. It is bipartisan cooperation to recognize people who pray and who set aside time to spend time with God and pray for the Nation. Quite frankly, for us as a party and as a body and as a nation, it is a good thing to pause.

This year, on May 2, with the theme "Love One Another," we will again have a National Day of Prayer. There is not a requirement for Americans to pray. There is not a requirement for people to direct themselves to pray by a certain method at a certain location. It is just a call to the Nation to say that we have great needs as a country.

As we watch the attacks on synagogues in our country, as we watch bombings of Christians in Sri Lanka, gun battles that have erupted in churches in the United States, mosques that have been attacked, people of faith being targeted simply because of their faith, it is reasonable for us as a nation to pause and say "How are we doing?" as this year's theme is "Love One Another."

We as a nation have a long history of prayer. Hanging in the Rotunda in this Capitol Building is a painting called the Embarkation of the Pilgrims. That painting depicts the beginning of America. It has been hanging in that same spot in the Rotunda since 1843. The painting is simply of a group of people on a deck of a ship leaving out from Europe and huddled around an open Bible and praying. The painting was designed and created to depict how America began in the 1600s—people on the deck of a ship, around an open Bible, praying.

That is still something I would encourage Americans of faith to stop and do, and it is still one of the most humbling experiences that I experience each time someone from my State of Oklahoma catches me, as someone did this morning, and says: Every day, my wife and I pray for you.

It is not a terrible thing to do as a nation—to love and pray for each other and for the future direction of our country.

If I can model for the Nation for just a moment in my own way and encourage the Nation on our National Day of