

healthcare, God help the middle class. They are the party of no healthcare; the party of repeal with no plan to replace.

This lawsuit is just the latest salvo against the American people, and it shows that so long as Republicans are in power, the healthcare of the American people will not be safe. If they are successful in striking down the Affordable Care Act, Republicans—all of them—will own the consequences.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last week, the DHS inspector general released a report detailing horrid conditions at border facilities. This is the President's own DHS inspector general saying how bad conditions were. Then we found reports of a secret Border Patrol workers' Facebook group that revealed a toxic culture at U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Everything we had heard anecdotally, everything we feared about the mindset of CBP proved to be true in that Facebook group.

Over the weekend, the New York Times and then the El Paso Times released the latest account of conditions at the Border Patrol station in Clint, TX. A facility built for 100 adults has become a modern-day internment camp for up to 700 children at a time, many locked up for weeks on end. Some children go without beds to sleep on. There are food shortages and insufficient sanitation. For heaven's sake, we read reports of children suffering from outbreaks of scabies, lice, and even chicken pox. This is cruelty—cruelty—once again.

These awful conditions show that for too long, the CBP has operated as an agency out of control. It must be reined in immediately, beginning with its leadership. Internal investigations will not suffice because CBP leadership—particularly Acting Commissioner Mark Morgan—is far too callous in their treatment of children and their families. Too many of the CBP leaders have had this attitude for too long, and it has infested itself down to too many who are the rank and file in that agency. We need untainted professionals to be brought in from outside the CBP structure immediately.

President Trump turns to his typical tactics of denial, distortion, and distraction. President Trump should be focused on fixing the problems that exist instead of blaming others. The truth, of course, is that we should never have been in this situation in the first place. The suffering imposed on migrant children is the result of the administration's own mishandling of family arrivals through Central America.

While Donald Trump says he is serious about fixing our immigration challenges, he has done just about everything to make matters worse.

President Trump, you want to fix the border? Then do what Democrats have

been asking you to do for a long time—let the asylum seekers apply for asylum in their home countries, increase the number of judges to process the cases, and, for heaven's sake, restore aid to those Central American countries of Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua to help them crack down on gang violence and cartels so people will not flee for fear of their lives from the gangs.

President Trump, stop finger-pointing at Democrats for this mess of your own making. You are the President. As this problem festers and gets worse, the American people realize you are the Chief Executive. It is your problem to solve.

We will join you, if you have anything reasonable to propose, but just finger-pointing at Democrats for this mess of your own making, President Trump, is like poking holes in your own umbrella and then blaming the clouds when you get wet.

I urge President Trump and Senate Republicans to seriously consider these measures because unless we make structural reforms to our immigration system, we have done nothing to reverse what is happening at the southern border.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, President Trump's hypocrisy and his diving into mistruths over and over again reared its ugly head once again. We can't become used to it because it is such a bad thing for a President to be so abjectly dishonest about so much of what is happening and so much of what he does. It happened again.

Today, amazingly enough, President Trump tried to claim credit as a leader on environmental protection, of all things. This is laughable. The same President who pulled us out of the Paris Agreement, who has filled his administration with oil and coal cronies, who has slashed protections for clean air, clean water, and protections for public lands, and who has denied basic science now wants to call himself a leader on the environment. Give me a break.

Try as he might say otherwise, President Trump has proved himself probably the staunchest ally of the worst polluters of any President we have ever had.

On climate change, the President's record is particularly egregious. In 2 years, his government has gutted oil, coal, and pollution standards, has erased climate data from government websites, and even censored words like "climate change" from appearing in official government documents. This is somebody who is a leader of environmental protection? How gullible does he think the American people are? Even Trump supporters may agree with him on this issue, but to say he is protecting the environment is ludicrous.

Some of these things are just the tip of the iceberg. Would someone who is a

leader on environmental protection hire oil and coal lobbyists to run the EPA and Department of Interior and cripple the National Climate Assessment? He completely caves to the oil and gas industry. Every time they say jump, he says how high. Now he has the temerity—the gall—to say he is the leader of environmental protection. Again, give me a break.

To be fair, President Trump's speech does have one silver lining. The mere fact that he even spoke today on the environment forces us to an unavoidable conclusion: Climate change is real. It is a serious problem that deserves action, including action in this Chamber.

The Republican majority, Leader McConnell, could take action on this issue at a moment's notice, but, for now, they are happy keeping their heads in the sand. They have not brought a single measure to the floor that would deal with the issue of climate, even as their views grow increasingly out of step with most Americans.

They cannot continue to keep their heads in the sand as our planet faces serious problems today and even far more serious problems for our children. It is an issue that can't wait a day longer, and yet the masters of this legislative graveyard refuse to act. I fear the majority in this body will refuse to act until either they are no longer the majority or, even worse, it is too late.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Daniel Aaron Bress, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

YOUNGSTOWN VINDICATOR

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, at the end of June, we received news that sickened so many of us. The Youngstown Vindicator, one of Ohio's greatest local newspapers, is closing after 150 years in business.

It is devastating news for a community that is already reeling from General Motors' abandonment of

Lordstown—and “abandonment” is the right word. General Motors made the decision to shut down production, losing 4,500 jobs in Lordstown, OH. They moved some of their production to Mexico. They took part of their tax cuts and their profits and used that money to buy stock options for their top executives.

The Vindicator was reporting the story about GM's abandonment of Lordstown before the national media came to town. When GM laid off one shift of workers back in late 2016, after the Presidential election, then a second shift several months later, the Vindicator was there covering what those job losses meant to this community. We know the end of the Vindicator's coverage is another huge blow to Mahoning Valley.

Our hearts break for the dedicated journalists and support staff losing their jobs. This was a family-owned paper for 132 years.

This will not just be a loss for those who worked there. When local newspapers close, everyone suffers. Local reporters know their communities better than anyone. David Skolnick, Mark Sweetwood, and the entire Vindicator team have held local officials accountable. They told the stories of how national issues affect real Ohioans, how our trade policy hurts Ohio workers, and how the opioid crisis has devastated the valley. Craig Graziosi and many others have done vital work covering Lordstown. These journalists care about the cities and towns they serve. They hold those in power accountable, whether it is local government or city business leaders.

NPR reported on what happens when local papers shut down. First of all, investigative reporting suffers. Long investigations are expensive. Usually, when there are no local newspapers to do these stories, no one steps in to fill the void. The investigations don't happen. Corruption increases, the city's financial health suffers, and citizens get hurt.

Three researchers looked at local newspaper closures over a 19-year period. From 1996 to 2015, 300 papers across the country closed in that time. They found that where papers closed, city borrowing costs went up. Without local journalists, city watchdogs, the city's finances took a hit. It became more costly for taxpayers to fund local schools and other projects. It is just more evidence that journalists are vital to our communities and are necessary for our democracy.

Too many people in this country already undermine the work that journalists do—or worse. We see reporters restricted, vilified, and even threatened—all for getting up every day and doing their jobs honorably.

On the anniversary of the shooting at the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, MD, where several reporters were murdered in cold blood, the President of the United States joked about getting rid of journalists. That is pretty sick. He

is the same President who says journalists are the enemy of the people.

Meanwhile, Wall Street hedge funds gobble up local papers around the country. Just this spring, the Cincinnati Enquirer and other papers around the country that are owned by Gannett fought off a hostile takeover by a New York hedge fund. These guys—and they are mostly guys in the hedge funds—buy up local newspapers and turn around and dismantle them. They fire reporters, and they sell company assets. That is their business model—to put tens of millions of dollars in their pockets. There is no public benefit to that; there are only benefits to the hedge fund operators. It is the last thing we need as the news business gets tougher and tougher.

We have lost veteran reporters at Cleveland.com and at the Columbus Dispatch. The Dispatch's parent company, GateHouse Media, laid off more than 100 journalists this spring, including its longtime Washington bureau chief, Jack Torry, and now The Vindicator is closing its doors for good.

It is time for us in the White House and in this Congress to stand up for the free press, to stand up for community newspapers, and to stand up for local journalists, who are vital to the fabric of cities and towns like Youngstown and all across this country.

NOMINATION OF PETER C. WRIGHT

Madam President, Ohioans in the Miami Valley are living with the presence of toxic chemicals known as PFAS that are contaminating their drinking water, and the people have been forced to pay for water treatment costs without their getting the help they need.

PFAS chemicals are contaminating water supplies all over the country. It is why Senators on both sides of the aisle have called on the EPA to officially designate PFAS chemicals as the hazardous substances they are so that communities like Dayton can access the Federal funds they need for cleanup and can hold polluters accountable.

The administration, similar to what the Democratic leader just said, has dragged its feet. Peter Wright has been at the EPA for a year, and under his leadership, the Agency has released a PFAS Action Plan that, frankly, includes very little action. Now the Agency expects the Senate to reward this action by confirming him to oversee the EPA's Superfund Program.

We know the influence of oil and gas. We know the influence of polluters in this administration. We know they pulled out of the Paris accord, which almost every major country in the world agreed to. We know this administration has tried to compromise on mileage standards. There is an overwhelming agreement in this country that the government should not be on the side of the polluters and oil industries but should be on the side of public health. Someone who has repeatedly failed to hold polluters accountable for the damage they have done to the

drinking water in Dayton and across the country has no business serving in a leadership role within the EPA. I will say it again. Someone who has repeatedly failed to hold polluters accountable for the damage they have done to drinking water in Dayton and across the country has no business serving as a leader within the EPA.

It is not a partisan issue. This year, I joined a bipartisan group of colleagues in introducing legislation to require the Environmental Protection Agency to step up and declare those chemicals as hazardous substances. Last year, I demanded the government release its Federal study of PFAS chemicals and how safe or unsafe they really are. The residents of Dayton and the residents of other communities shouldn't have to worry about the safety of their water supplies. Ohioans deserve answers from the Environmental Protection Agency. The government is there to protect them.

I thank my colleague Senator CARPER for his leadership on this issue.

I urge my colleagues to oppose Peter Wright's nomination—another Trump administration official who fronts and shills for the oil industry, for the polluters, and for people who shouldn't have roles in government. We should demand a nominee who will take this job seriously when it comes to protecting the water supply in Dayton, OH, and across this country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING HOWELL HEFLIN AND GILES PERKINS

Mr. JONES. Madam President, I rise to honor two of Alabama's great citizens. The State misses greatly the late Senator Howell Heflin, who was a Member of this body for 18 years, and my friend and campaign manager, Giles Perkins, who was a lawyer in Birmingham, AL. These two men spent their lives working to improve our great State, and both shaped the future of Alabama in his own way. Following these remarks, we are going to be honoring both of these men in a reception to be held in my office.

I last spoke on the floor of my friend and former campaign manager, Giles Perkins, following his death last December. Giles was an accomplished attorney, community leader, brilliant political adviser, and strategist. Although a native of Texas, he moved to Alabama following his marriage to his true love, Hillery Head, and he quickly came to understand how Alabama's complicated and sometimes dark history shaped our State. He had the vision of a brighter future if all Alabamians could have just simply worked together to create one Alabama for everyone.