

just learned of the birth of TAMMY DUCKWORTH's child. It is a milestone. TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a few hours ago, became the first Senator to give birth while in office. We are very glad to hear that she and her newborn daughter are happy and healthy.

COMMONSENSE VALUES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, like all of my colleagues, I spent the past few weeks crisscrossing my State meeting with constituents. I am always struck by their commonsense values. Folks want to be able to afford quality healthcare. That is probably their greatest worry. They know healthcare is so vital to them and for families. They know costs keep going up. They are worried about premiums, especially after the Republican Congress has done so much to sabotage our healthcare system; talking about tearing down the healthcare system but never building it up in any way.

Folks also want a good job with decent benefits and higher wages, but they are not seeing much of that in the wake of the Republican tax bill. In fact, many of them are disappointed that they are not receiving more. They are seeing corporations buy back a lot of their stock, which boosts compensation for executives and shareholders, but they don't see that much of a bump in their paychecks. The bottom line is, they are asking: Why are the wealthy getting so much more money in the tax break than we are? I have heard that from one end of my State to the other.

Another problem: folks want to be able to send their kids to school and know they will be safe. I talked to one mom whose daughter just doesn't want to go to school after what happened in Parkland. She is afraid. She is 7 years old.

A few weeks ago, I marched with hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers in the March For Our Lives. Their energy and optimism and dedication give me hope that finally the time has come for Congress to take meaningful action on gun safety.

Another example where our Republican colleagues who run this Senate haven't done enough—not close to enough—is on the issue of gun safety. On these issues and more, the Republican majority has done very little. What they have done has been on behalf of entrenched special interests: tax cuts for corporations and the super-wealthy, gutting healthcare to pay for more tax cuts, and holding back on commonsense gun safety laws like universal gun safety checks because the NRA opposes it.

The American people are fed up with large, special, and powerful interests getting their way, while average folks get left behind. That is what I heard while traveling my State.

In November, the American people will have a chance to move this country in a dramatically different direction, away from the corporate special

interest-driven politics, away from the swamp—I will talk more about that later, but President Trump has made it worse, despite claims that he is making it better—and toward politics that work for the middle class and those struggling to get there. The enthusiasm among so many Americans—not just core Democrats but others—of going to the polls and making their voices heard because they want a change in direction in this country was heartening and strengthening to me. The Democratic Senate minority is working to get away from those special interest politics. That is what a Democratic majority will deliver if elected in November.

NOMINATION OF ANDREW WHEELER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week the Senate will consider several nominations, including the nomination of Andrew Wheeler to be Deputy Administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Wheeler—not atypical of this administration, not atypical of the dense swamp that they have made a whole lot worse—is, what else, an industry lobbyist who has worked on behalf of big polluters and climate change deniers. He spent years working to undermine or lobby against environmental protections he may soon oversee. As a lobbyist, he helped raise money for a few Republican Senators who sit on the committee that recently approved his nomination. Swamp, President Trump? You are creating it; you are making it a lot worse.

Wheeler's nomination fits the pattern in the Trump administration of nominating industry lobbyists to lead agencies that are supposed to be a watchdog over those very industries. The nerve it takes for President Trump and his allies to preach "drain the swamp" after all the President has done to fill the swamp since coming to Washington. His Cabinet is filled with multimillionaires, hedge fund managers, corporate executives, and former lobbyists with sprawling conflicts of interest. Mr. Wheeler is only the latest in a long line of swamp nominees. I will be opposing his nomination.

EPA ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Wheeler nomination sheds even more light on the current storm surrounding EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. If there was ever somebody who characterizes the swamp, it is Scott Pruitt, and all Americans should believe that, regardless of your views on the environment or whether wind or solar or natural gas or oil or coal is the right form of energy.

What Pruitt is doing is just incredible. In a relatively brief tenure at EPA, he has amassed an embarrassing list of scandals. He has ordered the construction of an expensive soundproof office at the EPA for reasons un-

known, when none of his predecessors, Democratic or Republican, saw any need for such a facility. He has typically flown coach when paying for travel out of his own pocket but elected to fly first class when the taxpayers foot the bill. After moving to Washington, Administrator Pruitt rented an apartment for a cutrate price from—guess who—an energy lobbyist and former campaign donor who represents multiple clients with businesses before the EPA during Pruitt's tenure.

The level of hypocrisy in this administration is staggering. President Trump says he is going to drain the swamp. Pruitt characterizes the swamp in just about all of his actions, and Trump sticks by him. If you want to drain the swamp, Mr. President, get rid of Mr. Pruitt.

Unfortunately, President Trump has stood by Pruitt, despite obvious abuses of the taxpayers' money and trust. Why? Well, he likes what he is doing to unwind critical environmental protections on behalf of powerful industries.

The bottom line is simple. President Trump is so beholden to the special interests that supported Administrator Pruitt and his extreme, anti-green, industry-driven agenda that he is willing to turn a blind eye to serious ethical problems. If Big Oil and Big Gas are happy with EPA Administrator Pruitt, so, it seems, is President Trump.

In supporting Administrator Pruitt, President Trump is lowering the bar of government ethics and accountability to the floor. What abuse of the American people's trust will President Trump not tolerate if Administrator Pruitt is allowed to continue in his position despite flagrant graft? How can the President, with a straight face, say he aims to drain the swamp when he allows a man like Pruitt to stay? How much will President Trump let the standards for ethical conduct in his administration deteriorate?

I say to President Trump: The corruption and incompetence of this administration has reached a fever pitch.

President Trump, if you truly mean to drain the swamp—and it doesn't seem that you do—you ought to fire Administrator Pruitt immediately. Accept his resignation. Let him leave, which alone will clean up Washington in a way that Pruitt has not cleaned up our environment.

CBO REPORT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on the CBO report.

Today CBO came out with a report that revised its projections of the deficit, saying they have "increased markedly" since the Republican tax bill added about \$1.9 trillion to the deficit. By 2020, the annual deficit will surpass \$1 trillion.

It is a reminder of just how wrong the predictions were that the Republican tax bill would somehow pay for itself. It is also a reminder of how unconcerned the current Republican Party is about deficits.