

another strong, bipartisan vote of confidence in this exceptionally well-qualified jurist.

Finally, the Senate will consider Janet Dhillon, of Pennsylvania, to serve on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and it will consider Michael Park, of New York, to be a U.S. circuit judge for the Second Circuit. I am proud that even amid partisan distractions, this body will continue fulfilling one of its key constitutional responsibilities.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Madam President, on one final matter, I talked about leaving the “outrage industrial complex” behind and returning focus to the issues that impact the everyday lives of the American people. That is what my Republican colleagues and I have been focused on all along, and we are continuing to see that focus pay off.

For the better part of the last 2 years, the Labor Department’s monthly jobs report has regularly pointed to an economy that has been opening new doors for millions of Americans. It has reinforced what we have known to be the case—that the pro-growth, pro-opportunity agenda enacted by the Republicans has been helping America’s working families, job creators, and entrepreneurs write a remarkable new chapter of prosperity.

Here are just a few of the headlines to emerge following last Friday’s jobs report: “Real gains in the paychecks of average workers”; “Torrent of job offers, bigger salaries offer more proof U.S. labor market is still red-hot”; “U.S. unemployment fell to 3.6 percent, the lowest since December 1969.”

Yet there appears to be plenty of disbelief among Washington Democrats that things like rising wages, consumer confidence, and fierce competition for skilled American workers are causes for celebration. At least, that is what their recent policy proposals have left us to assume.

From a massive Federal experiment in one-size-fits-all health insurance to a Washington-dictated “green” overhaul of American homes, cars, and jobs, the Democrats seem determined to make the current wave of prosperity and economic opportunity short-lived. They are peddling a wholesale shift away from the free enterprise tradition that has unleashed prosperity and opportunity throughout American history, and they are doing so at the very time that daily headlines confirm those principles are still working to literally lift up American families.

In my home State of Kentucky, the unemployment rate has reached its lowest level on record. Communities across the country are tapping into new opportunities for growth, and families and job creators nationwide are benefiting.

So Republicans will continue working hard, laying the groundwork for American free enterprise to seize on this truly extraordinary moment.

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. 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, I ask unanimous consent that I give my remarks under leader time and that the vote occurs immediately after.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ROBERT PEAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I begin this morning with a heavy heart, having heard of the abrupt passing of New York Times journalist Robert Pear.

It just so happens that Robert lived on my floor in college during freshman year. While everyone else in those days had long hair and wore bell-bottoms, Robert had a flattop, was always studious, inquisitive, polite, and very decent, earning him the nickname “The Deacon.” He was the first to go into the library and the last to come out late at night. The Deacon was different from most of us but earned all of our respect.

Robert maintained the qualities of studiousness and inquisitiveness, politeness and decency throughout his personal and professional life. In my view, he represented the very best of America.

When Robert’s byline appeared on a story—and so often, his stories were on the front page, above the fold of the New York Times—the reader knew the reporting would be both important and authoritative.

His death is a loss for journalism itself. I send my condolences to his family in this moment of profound grief.

MUELLER REPORT

We all know that Leader MCCONNELL would like to move on from the Mueller report. We know that he and many Senate Republicans are ready to say “case closed.” We all know that whether he has been bamboozled by, afraid of, worried about, or simply enamored with President Trump, Leader MCCONNELL would prefer to sweep the entire report under the rug. So, yesterday, Leader MCCONNELL’s speech here on the Senate floor struck me as an impassioned bit of wishful thinking that I believe the leader will regret in later days that he gave.

I am sure President Nixon wished that the investigations into Watergate would simply go away, just as I am sure President Trump wants Mueller’s investigations to fade into the background, but in the first case—President

Nixon—we had courageous Republicans who put the rule of law above simple fealty to a President, and they resisted. Unfortunately, thus far, Leader MCCONNELL has shown none of that nobility and strength. He is simply going along with President Trump.

Just for a moment, though, let us set aside the discussion about the President’s repeated attempts to obstruct the Federal investigation. Let’s just talk about the conclusions Mueller came to about election interference in 2016, separate from his views of the investigation of Trump.

Does Leader MCCONNELL agree that election security is a serious and ongoing challenge? Does Leader MCCONNELL agree with FBI Director Wray that “2018 was a dress rehearsal” for foreign influence campaigns against the United States? Does the leader agree with our intelligence and law enforcement officials who are warning us right now that foreign capitals—Russia above all but perhaps Iran and China and Turkey—are gearing up to try to interfere with our elections in 2020?

This is the wellspring of our democracy. Russia may temporarily want to choose one candidate over another—as they chose Trump in 2016 and may well again—but their ultimate goal is to sow such dissension, worry, and lack of faith in our democracy that it could crumble. If everyone believes that foreigners are influencing our elections and the outcome isn’t just, that is a terrible—terrible—step downward for America that none of us wants to take.

Then why doesn’t Leader MCCONNELL at least do something about election security, independent of President Trump—although, those investigations and hearings should go on and will. If so, if Leader MCCONNELL believes this foreign interference in our elections is a serious problem, then he has an obligation to separate himself from his desire to shield the President from accountability and to act on this national imperative to defend our democracy from insidious and foreign attack.

Whatever Leader MCCONNELL believes about the President’s behavior and for whatever reason, there is no reason for Leader MCCONNELL to resist bipartisan bills like the Secure Elections Act that would harden election infrastructure. There is no reason for Leader MCCONNELL to oppose additional funding in the appropriations process for States to safeguard their election hardware. For God’s sake, there is no good reason for Leader MCCONNELL to resist or delay scheduling an all-Senators briefing on election threats in 2020. The only reason to do that would be false.

I hope the reason Leader MCCONNELL is resisting strengthening and securing our elections is not because he believes Russia will help President Trump and that he is willing to let that go forward. I hope that is not true. There is no good reason on God’s green Earth why we shouldn’t be making our elections more secure, even though we may