America, the Senate could have sent a strong, positive signal by moving forward on the Violence Against Women Act. Instead, Leader MCCONNELL carved out another tombstone for his legislative graveyard—another popular bipartisan bill buried with no action by the Senate and tied by the leader in partisan gridlock.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, earlier this month, a report from Hawaii's Mauna Loa Observatory found that carbon dioxide levels in our atmosphere have now reached the highest level in human history—in human history. It was a chilling reminder that the threat from climate change is real, immediate, and existential. Almost everyone accepts this science and the gravity of the threat it portends. The only group of folks that still seem skeptical of climate science are Republicans and the Trump administration.

Yesterday the New York Times reported that the Trump EPA is planning to rewrite the established benchmarks for unsafe levels of air pollution. You heard that right. They are planning to use dubious math to obscure the real and long-known health risks of air pollution. These new formulations would result in fewer predicted deaths than what the experts have long agreed to. People will still die. The numbers will just be wrong about the effect.

Why, might you ask, would anyone want to obscure the full health risks of air pollution? Because then the Trump administration could use the fake math to justify further rollbacks to clean air rules at a time when global warming is increasing and when Americans know the danger. This Trump administration and the Republican majority are rolling the clock back—more carbon, more coal, more oil, and more gas, when we need less. We all know that.

What kind of Orwellian nonsense is this? The Environmental Protection Agency making it easier to pollute the environment? It is a textbook definition of ''dystopian.''

As my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE so often points out, dark money lurks behind so much of what the Trump administration does. Big Oil, Big Gas, and big polluters everywhere are the only possible boosters of this decision. It is their money, funneled to political organizations and politicians without a trace of disclosure, that motivates folks in the Trump administration to make it easier to release more pollution into the air.

We should be using the Senate to debate climate policies in search of common ground, but Leader MCCONNELL has decided to bring forward his version of the Green New Deal just so his party could vote against it. We know what Leader MCCONNELL and the Republicans are against. What are they for in dealing with climate change? So far, nada, zero, nothing—they haven't put a single thing on the floor. The American people see the effects of climate change in their lives, and they know Congress must act. Only the Republican majority stands in the way.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the 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 to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Howard C. Nielson, of Utah, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Monday is Memorial Day. It is the day our Nation pauses to remember all those who laid down their lives in defense of our country, from Saratoga to Yorktown, to Iraq and Afghanistan.

We enjoy tremendous freedoms as Americans, tremendous privileges, but we do not enjoy these privileges by chance. They are hard-fought gains secured for us again and again by each new generation of American soldiers who lay down their lives in the cause of the free. It is important that we do not take what they have secured for us lightly, that we remember our freedoms have been paid for in blood.

Near the end of the film ''Saving Private Ryan,'' the dying Captain Miller tells Private Ryan of the sacrifice that has been made on his behalf. He says: ''Earn this . . . earn it.''

I am not sure we can ever fully earn the gift that has been given to us by those who have laid down their lives in our defense, but we can attempt to live lives worthy of their sacrifice and to defend the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.

When we remember the fallen on Memorial Day, there is one other group we should remember, and that is their families. Our Nation's Gold Star families may not have laid down their own lives for our country, but they gave their loved ones, their fathers and brothers, daughters and sisters. For the sake of our freedoms, they live with empty spaces at Thanksgivings and birthdays, at weddings and graduations, at their dinner tables and Little League practices. We owe them a debt also that we can never repay.

I have been privileged to visit more than one veterans cemetery, such as our own Black Hills National Cemetery in South Dakota—which we recently expanded to ensure that our soldiers will have a resting place for generations to come—Arlington National Cemetery, and the American Cemetery at Normandy. There is a special hallowedness to the ground at these places. Valor and sacrifice still linger in the air, and a deep peace abounds—the peace of the warrior who has fought the good fight and found rest from his labors.

General George S. Patton once said:

> It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather, we should thank God that such men lived.

I might disagree with General Patton on the first part, as it is right and proper that we should mourn our dead, but with General Patton, I say: Let us thank God that such men and women lived.

May the memory of our honored dead be eternal.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor again today to discuss Washington Democrats' one-size-fits-all healthcare scheme. Every American needs to know about this very radical plan.

Democrats essentially want Washington, DC, to take over all of healthcare in this country and to abolish private health insurance that 180 million Americans get through their jobs. Incredibly, this proposal offered by Senator BERNIE SANDERS has the backing of many leading Democrats running for President and 109 Democratic Members of the House of Representatives.

So I want to continue the debate today by focusing on the terrible impact this radical scheme will have on all of the fine men and women who provide healthcare to people across the country. Of course, the impact on them will impact the patients for whom they provide care and services.

I am talking about the Nation's dedicated medical professionals, especially