

Our Founding Fathers feared foreign interference in our elections and considered it one of the greatest threats facing our fledgling Republic. Once again, the wisdom of the Founding Fathers shines through. If a foreign country can meddle in or affect the outcome of our elections, Americans will quickly lose faith in our democracy. If Russia or China or Iran controls our elections, what the heck do we vote for? So the alleged offense by the President is clearly serious enough to warrant an investigation by Congress, and that is exactly what the House of Representatives is doing in its impeachment inquiry, and it must continue unimpeded.

We can do two things, and we must do them. We can protect the Constitution and take action to help average working families at the same time. Here in the Senate, we can do both: protect the Constitution and help average working families. It is not either-or. It is not one or the other.

#### SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, from the very beginning, Democrats have been committed to doing the people's business, but while the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives has passed hundreds of bills dealing with healthcare, infrastructure, gun violence, climate change, and much more, Leader MCCONNELL has turned our Chamber into a legislative graveyard. Not one of these bills has received a vote in the Senate: no vote to save protections for people with preexisting conditions, although the American people are pleading with us to do it; no vote on bipartisan background checks, although more people die from gun violence committed by people who shouldn't have guns; no vote on bipartisan election security as Russia threatens us; and no vote on the Violence Against Women Act, when abuse of women continues.

Over the course of his Presidency, President Trump has also failed to offer proposals to address any of these pressing issues. In many cases, his policies and his Executive actions have made things worse.

As Congress comes back into session, Senate Democrats will force our Republican colleagues to vote during this work period on three measures that are important to millions of Americans. These votes will occur under the procedures of the Congressional Review Act. The Congressional Review Act—I know the public is not familiar with the arcane parts of these things—is one of the rare instances where the minority can force a vote. We want to debate these other issues. We want to debate gun violence. We want to debate healthcare. We want to debate infrastructure. We want to debate preexisting conditions. We are not saying our Republican friends are going to think exactly as we do, but let's have a

debate and vote. Leader MCCONNELL, much to the discredit of this Chamber, as well as his own, has said no, but here the Congressional Review Act at least allows us to review some of the overreaching actions of the executive branch and get a vote on them.

Each of these CRA votes will present our Republican colleagues with a choice: whether to protect Americans with preexisting conditions or not to protect them, whether to protect middle-class Americans from a tax hike or not to protect them, and whether to fight climate change or to do nothing.

We will also demand that our Republican colleagues take up legislation to protect hard-earned pensions for millions of American workers. Several of my colleagues will come to the floor this evening to do just that. Senators MANCHIN, BROWN, STABENOW, PETERS, SMITH, BALDWIN, and TESTER have been real leaders on these pension issues. Workers, who for decades put money into their pensions and thought when they retired they would at least have some modicum on which to live decently, will lose all that unless we act.

We hope our Republican colleagues will listen to the debate and help us move to deal with the millions of workers struggling to preserve their pensions.

As we continue to fulfill our solemn constitutional duty to hold the President accountable, Democrats will not—will not—stop putting pressure on Leader MCCONNELL and our friends in the majority to get the Senate back to work for the American people. Democrats will use every tool we have—there are not that many—to stop Leader MCCONNELL from making the Senate a legislative graveyard when the American people need help and action in so many ways.

#### TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now on Turkey and Syria, a major issue that deserves the Senate's attention this week and that shows we can, again, fulfill our constitutional obligations as well as help the American people. One thing we are going to be talking about this week is President Trump's precipitous and dangerous decision to withdraw from northern Syria.

A few weeks ago, the President abruptly announced that the United States, which has long maintained a presence in northern Syria to root out ISIS terrorists, would stand aside, and Turkey launched a military incursion into the region. For years, a global coalition of the United States and our partners and allies, particularly the stout Kurds in Syria, have worked tirelessly and sacrificed much to defeat ISIS. Now, in only a matter of days, the President's quick, unstudied, and ill-advised Syria decision has jeopardized all of that progress.

For years, American soldiers have fought hard and some have given their

lives to vanquish ISIS. For years, our great military and diplomatic leaders have strategized about how to get rid of ISIS, and in one fell quick and unthought-out swoop, the President has undone that. It is despicable. It is dangerous.

The consequences have already proven dire. Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian dictator and war criminal, has strengthened his position greatly, cutting a deal with the Kurds and moving his forces into the gap left by our withdrawal.

Who else has benefited from President Trump's ill-thought-out, precipitous, and wrongheaded action? Iran, his greatest enemy, one of our great enemies in many ways. As you know, I am no friend of the Iranian Government.

Iran has benefited. Who else has benefited? President Putin. Russian troops have now swept into the region, according to reports. Russia envies the oil in northern Syria that it might control.

When the President does some kind of action, it makes everyone scratch their heads, and if it benefits Putin, one doesn't know if he is doing it to actually help Putin or if he just doesn't get it. I tend to think it is often the former, unfortunately.

Our Kurdish partners are paying the ultimate cost of their betrayal, and tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced. Maybe most concerning of all, reports say that more than 10,000 ISIS fighters currently held and guarded by the Kurds could walk out of their cells. By pulling out of northern Syria, President Trump has encouraged nothing short of an ISIS jailbreak.

I say this to my fellow Americans. Some may say: We don't want any troops anywhere. Bring them all home. We don't care.

Well, I care. Most people care.

But some might say: I don't care what happens to the Kurds.

The one thing everyone should care about, whatever their views on geopolitics in the Middle East and in Syria, is our own security. We have spent a decade of treasure and often lives rooting out ISIS. Why? Because ISIS presents a danger to our homeland. We, in New York, know, more than anybody, how a small group from far away could do huge damage and kill thousands of innocent Americans here. And now President Trump, through this thoughtless action, is allowing ISIS to gain new strength. What is going on here? This is a threat to our own national security here in our homeland, and we must do everything to stop it.

And who is the most angry at the President? From what I am told, our own military is. Our own military, who have fought shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the Kurds, watching the Kurds risk and lose their lives to help protect Americans—they weren't even consulted. The military wasn't even consulted. You heard what General