made available pursuant to the authority provided in this section or under any other provision of law for the purposes of the programs under subsection (a).

SEC. 9008. Amounts provided in this title for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan may be used by the Department of Defense for the purchase of heavy and light armored vehicles for force protection purposes, notwithstanding any other limitation specified elsewhere in this Act, or any other provision of law: Provided, That the Secretary of Defense shall submit a report in writing no later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter notifying the congressional defense committees of any purchase described in this section, including the cost, purposes, and quantity purchased.

SEC. 9009. During the current fiscal year, funds available to the Department of Defense for operation and maintenance may be used, notwithstanding any other provision of law, to provide supplies, services, transportation, including airlift and sealift, and other logistical support to coalition forces supporting military and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan: Provided, That the Secretary of Defense shall provide quarterly reports to the congressional defense committees regarding support provided in this section.

SEC. 9010. (a) Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 90 days thereafter until the end of fiscal year 2006, the Secretary of Defense shall set forth in a report to Congress a comprehensive set of performance indicators and measures for progress toward political, military, and social stability in Iraq.

(b) The report shall include performance standards and goals for security, economic, and force protection training objectives in Iraq together with a notional timetable for achieving these goals.

(c) In specific, the report requires, at a minimum, the following:

(1) With respect to stability and security in Iraq, the following:

(A) Key measures of political stability, including the important political milestones that must be achieved over the next several years.

(B) The primary indicators of a stable security environment in Iraq, such as number of engagement days, numbers of trained Iraqi forces, and trends relating to numbers and types of ethnic and religious-based hostile encounters.

(C) An assessment of the estimated strength of the insurgency and the extent to which it is composed of non-Iraqi fighters.

(D) A description of all militias operating in Iraq, including the number, size, equipment strength, sources of support, legal status, and efforts to disarm or re-integrate each militia.

(E) Key indicators of economic activity that should be considered the most important for determining the prospects of stability in Iraq, including—

(i) unemployment levels;

(ii) electricity, water, and oil production rates; and

(iii) hunger and poverty levels.

(F) The criteria the Administration will use to determine when it is safe to begin withdrawing United States forces from Iraq.

(2) With respect to the training and performance of coalition forces in Iraq, the following:

(A) The training provided Iraqi military and other Ministry of Defense forces and the equipment used by such forces.

(B) Key criteria for assessing the capabilities and readiness of the Iraqi military and other Ministry of Defense forces, goals for achieving certain capability and readiness levels (as well as for force structure), the type, number, and organizational structure of Iraqi battalions that are—

(i) capable of conducting counterinsurgency operations independently;

(ii) capable of conducting counterinsurgency operations with the support of United States or coalition forces;

(iii) not ready to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

(D) The rates of absenteeism in the Iraqi military forces and the extent to which insurgents have infiltrated such forces.

(E) The training provided Iraqi police and other Ministry of Interior forces and the equipment used by such forces.

(F) Key criteria for assessing the capabilities and readiness of the Iraqi police and other Ministry of Interior forces, including the type, number, and readiness levels (as well as for recruiting, training, and equipping), and the milestones and notional timetable for achieving these goals, including—

(i) the number of police recruits that have received classroom training and the duration of such training;

(ii) the number of veteran police officers who have received classroom instruction and the duration of such instruction;

(iii) the number of police candidates screened by the Iraqi Police Screening Service, the number of candidates derived from other entry procedures, and the success rates of those groups of candidates;

(iv) the number of Iraqi police forces who have received field training by international police trainers and the duration of such instruction; and

(v) attrition rates and measures of absenteeism and infiltration by insurgents.

(G) The estimated total number of Iraqi battalions needed for the Iraqi security forces to perform duties now being undertaken by coalition forces, including defending the borders of Iraq and providing adequate levels of law and order throughout the country.

(H) The effectiveness of the Iraqi military and police officer cadres and the chain of command.

(I) The number of United States and coalition advisors needed to support the Iraqi security forces and associated ministries.

(J) An assessment, in a classified annex if necessary, of United States military requirements, including planned force rotations, through the end of calendar year 2006.

SEC. 9011. Congress, consistent with international law and the United States Constitution, shall—

(a) direct the President to consult with the governments of the United States and Iraq regarding the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Iraq and the implementation of a phased withdrawal of U.S. forces in Iraq; and

(b) with respect to such withdrawal, approve such withdrawal, disapprove such withdrawal, or direct the President to review such withdrawal and report to Congress.

SEC. 9012. Supervision and administration of programs authorized or appropriated under this title shall be subject to—

(a) the requirements of chapter 87 of title 22, United States Code, and this title, including—

(i) the terms of this Act;

(ii) the terms of any other Act, including the requirements of any other Act that authorizes or appropriates funds for the Armed Forces;

(iii) the terms of any agreement between the United States and Iraq; and

(iv) the terms of any multilateral agreement between the United States and Iraq and any other country or countries.

(b) the terms of this section, unless the terms of this section are inconsistent with the terms of—

(i) this Act;

(ii) the terms of any other Act, including the requirements of any other Act that authorizes or appropriates funds for the Armed Forces;

(iii) the terms of any agreement between the United States and Iraq; and

(iv) the terms of any multilateral agreement between the United States and Iraq and any other country or countries.

(c) the terms of any agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other agreement in writing between the United States and any other country or countries.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006, CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate instruct the conference report to the immediate consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2960, the Homeland Security Appropriations bill. I further ask that there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided, and following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to a vote on adoption of the conference report, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER appointed Mr. STEVENS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BOND, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. BURNS, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. BYRD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REID, Mrs. FRISTENSTEIN, and Ms. MIKULSKI conferees on the part of the Senate.
the consideration of the conference report.

The Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of September 20, 2005.)

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, for the information of colleagues, we expect this vote to be a voice vote. There will be no rollcall votes today.

I yield the Algama. Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, in the Senate this year, we have considered this homeland security bill during two very different times of crisis. When the bill was on the floor of the Senate in July, the reprehensible train bombings in London had just occurred and there was a desire to increase funding for rail security. Now, we consider this conference report during the immediate aftermath of one of the most damaging hurricanes in the gulf coast, which demolished entire communities. And there has been a call and an urgency to provide Federal financial help. We have met that call through significant—very significant—supplemental emergency funds. While these funds need to be monitored to make sure they are spent wisely, the conference report is an appropriate help to get the people in these areas back on their feet. And it is important to remember that this is an emergency, and emergency needs are being addressed through tens of billions of dollars that have been approved.

The conference report before us today addresses the Department of Homeland Security as a whole. It is an amalgamation of 22 Federal agencies and it encompasses the broad spectrum of homeland security needs. But first and foremost, the Department must be focused on the national security of our country.

The conference report we are considering today addresses the Department of Homeland Security as a whole. It is an amalgamation of 22 Federal agencies and it encompasses the broad spectrum of homeland security needs. But first and foremost, the Department must be focused on the national security of our country.

The conference report builds on that. It is threat-based and provides supplemental emergency funds. While these funds need to be monitored to make sure they are spent wisely, the conference report is an appropriate help to get the people in these areas back on their feet. And it is important to remember that this is an emergency, and emergency needs are being addressed through tens of billions of dollars that have been approved.

As a country, we pride ourselves on being an open and democratic society that affords tremendous freedoms to its citizens. Unfortunately, there are terrorists who wish to prey on that trust and openness and to harm and kill innocent Americans to attack our way of life. There is absolutely no question that if a terrorist gets control of a weapon of mass destruction, be it biological, nuclear, or radiological, it will be used against us and against the fundamentals of Western civilization. This conference report provides over $2.4 billion for WMD and terrorism prevention and preparedness, including funds to assist State and local jurisdictions.

Similarly, because we seek to participate in an open and vibrant world, our borders are incredibly porous and access into this country is easy. Regrettably, that openness is now a threat to us. We do not have a handle on who and what crosses into our country everyday. This conference report provides $9 billion, which funds 1,000 new border patrol agents, 250 new investigators, 460 new detention personnel, 200 new aircraft, 5,000 new detention beds by at least 1,800. And the number of immigration investigators, border agents, and detention officers by over 750; and Congress will have increased the number of immigration investigators, border agents, and detention officers by over 750; and Congress will have increased the number of immigration investigators, border agents, and detention officers by over 750; and Congress will have increased the number of immigration investigators, border agents, and detention officers by over 750.

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The conference agreement before us increases funding for the Department of Homeland Security by $2.4 billion, which funds 1,000 additional new border patrol agents, 250 new investigators, 460 new detention personnel, and 200 new aircraft. This conference agreement provides $9 billion to fund 5,000 new detention beds by at least 1,800. And the conference agreement provides $30.8 billion for discretionary programs in the homeland security appropriations conference report.

I also commend the thousands of men and women who are on the front lines of Homeland Security. God bless them. I thank them. While I remain very concerned that we are not giving these men and women the tools they need to do their job, that in no way detracts from their commitment to serve the Nation.

The conference agreement before us provides $2.4 billion in supplemental emergency funds. While these funds need to be monitored to ensure they are spent wisely, the conference agreement is an appropriate help to get the people in these areas back on their feet. And it is important to remember that this is an emergency, and emergency needs are being addressed through tens of billions of dollars that have been approved.

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have the Appropriations Committee increase the fees paid by airline passengers by $1.68 billion. How about that?

The Appropriations Committee does not have jurisdiction—what is the matter with you?—the Appropriations Committee does not have jurisdiction over airline fees. The White House knows that. The Budget Office knows that. So as a result of what the White House did, the committee was forced to reduce spending on critical homeland security programs—your programs, your people's programs, your constituents' programs.

This ill-considered administration proposal—hear it—this ill-considered White House proposal resulted in real cuts—real cuts—in firefighter grants, first responder grants, Coast Guard operations, and in the number of airport screeners.

Now listen. Listen. It is regrettable that the administration's most apparent lack of understanding of the legislative process will have such a direct impact on programs that are important elements of our homeland security. What is the impact of that? Time and time again—time and time again—this administration has talked a good game on homeland security, but it has not followed through with a sustained commitment of resources and ideas. I fear that administration believes that it fulfilled its commitment to securing the homeland by creating the Department of Homeland Security, which I voted against. And I am glad I voted against it. Well, America is not safe.

Repeatedly, the energy, the initiative, the resources, and the leadership for homeland security have come from the Congress—the Congress. From border security to transit, rail, and port security, to air cargo security and explosives detection, the initiative—hear me—the initiative to fund these efforts came from—where?—the Congress, you, this body, the other body, the people's branch, the Congress. This congressional agreement continues in that tradition, and I commend Chairman GREGG and former Chairman COCHRAN. I commend them for their excellent leadership.

However, following the terrorist attacks of Madrid and of London, the terrorist train bombings, many other bombings such as those in Bali just a few days ago, and Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill. If there is one lesson we should all learn from Hurricane Katrina, Congress should be approving a more robust homeland security bill.

The entire bill that is before us, the budget that is issued, is only $30.8 billion. Now, I understand the need to live within limits, but sometimes those limits simply do not correspond to the reality that confronts us. Why not limit somewhere else? Why not limit elsewhere? How much are we giving to Iraq? How many questions do we ask, then, when we give there? We build infrastructure in Iraq. How about building it here in our country? Charity begins at home. In this bill we have provided $60 billion as an emergency for one agency that is funded by this bill, FEMA. One agency received a supplemental that is double the annual budget of the entire Department, and yet in this bill we see the investments to help us avoid future $60 billion supplemental bills.

We should be increasing predisaster mitigation efforts. What if something happens here in Washington? What if something hits Washington? There will be millions of people from Washington, Virginia, and Maryland heading—where?—heading westward, heading toward West Virginia, heading toward parts of Maryland, and Virginia. Then what? Yes, what about that? We have seen the problems created by Katrina. What if the terrorists were to hit here, and then we have this massive, massive flow of people Westward? That is what we are talking about when we talk about predisaster mitigation efforts.

My Governor, the Governor of West Virginia, the most handsome Governor in the country, Governor Joe Manchin, has proposed more money—more money, that we need to prepare ahead of time, that we need to pre-position medical supplies, pre-position gasoline, pre-position other items that will be needed when and if that disaster hits. That is why we should be increasing; predisaster mitigation efforts—cutting them.

We should be doing the disaster planning now so that if there is a terrorist attack on a plane or at an airport in Washington, DC, that produces a mass evacuation, there will be pre-positioned food, water, fuel, and communications equipment to help the millions of affected citizens evacuate safely.

When less than one percent of eligible applications for firefighting grants were approved last year, should we be cutting firefighting funds by $105 million? Why, that is sheer madness—madness. That is sheer madness. May I say to one of my favorite Senators of all time, the Senator from Vermont, Jim Jeffords—one of my favorite Senators—that is sheer madness.

When the Madrid and London train bombings proved that there is a real threat to our transit systems—hear me, New York City—when there is a real threat to our transit systems, should Congress be providing just $150 million more than the estimated need is $6 billion—$6 billion.

When two Russian airplanes were simultaneously blown out of the sky by terrorists 1 year ago, should we be satisfied that only 18—only 18—out of the 448 commercial airports in the United States have received new checkpoint technologies to screen passengers for explosives?

I believe Chairman GREGG—the inimitable chairman, I say; he is a Republican, but he is a great chairman; I am proud of him—he has put together a bill that makes significant improvements to the President's budget. I commend Chairman GREGG for those choices. However, as we move forward on a Katrina supplemental bill, I hope we will reconsider the investments contained in the amendment that was defeated—hear me—defeated in conference.

Sometimes I say, yes, sometimes you have to spend money to save money and to save lives. Let me say that again. Sometimes—sometimes—Senators; sometimes, Mr. President; sometimes, I say to the White House—you have to spend money to save money and to save lives. And you do have to spend it here in America, in this country, to save American lives.

I commend the staff—our wonderful staff, our great staff, our dedicated staff—for their contributions to this important legislation. In particular, I thank Chairman GREGG's staff: Rebecca Davies, James Hayes, Carol Cribbs, Kimberly Nelson, Shannon O'Keefe, and Avery Forbes.

And do you think I would forget my own staff? No. My congratulations to them: Charles Kieffer—man, is it, he is the man, Charles Kieffer—Chip Walgren, Scott Nance, Drenan Dudley, and our Coast Guard detaillee, Sean MacKenzie. What a staff.

Finally, on a personal note, I mark the recent passing of Robert M. Sempsey this past Saturday. Bob Sempsey worked for the Congressional Budget Office for nearly 25 years. He was the principal analyst for the Homeland Security and Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bills. He was a good friend. He was a fine teacher for many of our Senate staff. To his wife and three children, I extend my hand in your time of grief. Bob was a fine public servant. He will be sorely missed.

With regard to the Homeland Security conference report, I again compliment the inimitable Chairman Judd Gregg.

I urge its adoption, and I yield the floor.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, it is with regret that I oppose this conference report.

I am a strong advocate of the need for the Department of Homeland Security and its work. And as the ranking
member of the Department's lead authorizing committee. I do not lightly oppose this appropriations bill for the Department's vital work. But I feel I have no choice but to protest what I consider to be dangerous and misguided cuts in the vital programs that help America's first responders.

Just weeks ago, we watched with horror as our fellow citizens in Louisiana and Mississippi suffered the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. It was inevitable that a hurricane of that size and intensity would cause hardship. But we know that the pain was far greater and the recovery far more daunting than it needed to have been if our Government had done all it could to prepare for and respond to the catastrophe. We know that preparedness planning was inadequate; that first responders lacked the equipment and communications they needed to respond; and that first responders and officials did not have training and command structures they needed to work effectively together to help the many victims depending on them. And this for a catastrophic hurricane that was predicted in advance. We can only speculate what preparedness and response to an unforeseen catastrophic terror attack might look like.

We know, in short, that we have very far to go. We are already as far behind as we must be for the threats ahead. So why are we now asked to approve dramatic cuts in the very programs that are we now are asked to approve dramatically? Why? First, the funding levels for first responder grants has been slashed to the lowest levels in the post-9/11 era despite the evident need for resources. Second, the bill adopts a formula for the distribution of first responder grants that is unbalanced, and that we are not yet ready to meet them. Katrina has just underscored that lesson. Two years ago, a distinguished task force chaired by our former colleague Warren Rudman told us that our first responders were “drastically underfunded, dangerously unprepared” and that we would need close to $100 billion over 5 years to meet critical preparedness and response needs. Yet in the time since Katrina we have whittled away at these critical programs rather than strengthening them. As I have said before, we have the best military in the world because we are willing to pay for it. We should not do less for our defense.

I wish to go on record opposing this conference report because I believe we must find a way to do more for our first responders and the communities they serve.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the fiscal year 2006 Homeland Security appropriations bill. I oppose this conference report for three main reasons. First, the funding levels for first responder grants has been slashed to the lowest levels in the post-9/11 era despite the evident need for resources. Second, the bill adopts a formula for the distribution of first responder grants that is unpredictable, lacking in basic fiscal safeguards and will leave many parts of this country underfunded. Third, this conference report underruns mass transit security. This conference report cuts the funding allocation for State and local first responder grants from $1.1 billion enacted in fiscal year 2005 to only $550 million for fiscal year 2006, an unacceptable and unwise reduction. Moreover, the level contained in the conference report is a full $270 million less than the amount requested in the administration’s budget request. Unfortunately, these reductions continue a downward trend. The overall amount of homeland security funding for first responders and state and local needs has declined by $1.2 billion in just the past 2 years. This is not the time to slash funding levels of these critical preparedness grants. These Draconian cuts are particularly remarkable given the recent failures in the response to Hurricane Katrina. That disaster clearly indicated that this Nation is not as prepared as it must be and that Federal, State, and local first responders and emergency managers are lacking critical equipment, especially communications gear and training resources. This is not the time to be cutting the resources available for these vital preparedness programs.

The second reason I voted against the conference report is because it adopts a formula to distribute these funds that is unbalanced, unpredictable and lacks accountability mechanisms that are needed to ensure funds are spent wisely. Indeed, this conference report underruns just in the New York area—Senator LIEBERMAN and I have developed, and the Senate overwhelmingly endorsed, to ensure a stable level of funding for all States. The approach taken in our bill would establish a formula that provides a predictable level of funding—scaled to reflect the different needs of states—that will allow all States to achieve essential preparedness and prevention capabilities.

We do not know where the next terrorist attack will take place. There is no way to predict where the next hurricane, tornado, or outbreak of pandemic influenza will occur. Therefore, we must raise the preparedness of all States to a minimum level of preparedness.

Unfortunately, the approach taken by the conference report does not provide an adequate base level to help States and localities establish minimum levels of preparedness. Nor does it recognize, as our bill does, that some States, because of larger or more dense populations, need more funding than others to establish essential preparedness capabilities.

Additionally, accountability measures—like independent audits, robust reporting requirements, and tying spending to standards—are simply not in place. We need to adopt authorizing legislation to ensure this funding is being properly spent.

It is disappointing that the appropriators largely adopted the House position on how to distribute this funding. This is particularly the case given that the bill Senator LIEBERMAN and I put together received the support of more than 30 Senators to adopt our proposal.

Finally, this conference report is flawed because it shortchanges vulnerable areas, in particular, transit security. The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs recommended no funding reductions for our transit systems. The attacks in Madrid and London demonstrate that terrorists are willing and able to attack transit systems; it is unconscionable that we are not doing more to secure our domestic transit systems.

Our Nation must make more progress in improving its ability to respond to...
catastrophic disasters, whether natural or from a terrorist attack. Congress owes it to our constituents and to our first responders to be more thoughtful in how we provide the resources necessary to improve our ability to deter, detect, and respond to threats facing our Nation.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today the Senate passed the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill conference report. The bill provides $30.8 billion in discretionary spending for the Department of Homeland Security. While it is important that the Senate acted to pass this legislation, I am concerned about the funding levels provided for critical programs in this conference report. Specifically, the bill cuts funding for vital first-responders grants, and fails to improve our Nation’s transit and aviation security.

I fear that we have failed to learn from the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London about the vulnerability of our transit systems. Yesterday’s terrorist threat against the New York City transit system further illustrates the need to increase our efforts in this area. Yet the conference report that we passed today includes only $150 million for transit grants. In June, Senators SHELBY and SARINAS and I sponsored an amendment to raise funding for transit security to more than $1 billion. Unfortunately, the amendment failed. But it is this level of funding, not $30 million, that is necessary to keep the Nation safe.

Every workday, 14 million Americans take a train or a bus. We know that transit systems and their riders are by their very nature prime terrorist targets. Subways, light rail, buses, and ferries are designed for easy access and to move large numbers of people efficiently.

These are the facts: Numerous attacks on transit; 6,000 transit systems in the U.S. alone; $1 billion riders every workday. I don’t think anyone can say transit is not a target for terrorists and should not be among our highest homeland security priorities. Yet the Federal Government’s response to these facts has been underwhelming. Indeed, the Federal Government has invested $9 in aviation security improvements per passenger, but only $0.006 in public transportation security per passenger. Now, are aviation and transit the same? No. How can you achieve the same level of security in the open access environment of transit? No, but I doubt that the 14 million Americans who use transit every workday think that less than one cent is the appropriate amount to invest in transit security.

Second, I am concerned about the cuts that the bill provides to aviation screening. The bill would cut funding for the aviation security screener workforce by $125 million from the budget request. This cut will result in 2,000 fewer airport screeners nationwide, including cuts in the number of screeners in Rhode Island. Rather than cutting the number of screeners, we need to increase the nationwide number to 53,000 screeners in order to keep wait times at the current average of about 10 minutes. Yesterday, President Bush in an attempt to rally public support for the war in Iraq stated that the Government disrupted 10 serious terrorist plots since September 11, 2001. Three of these plots involved hijacking airplanes for suicide attacks. Yet, today, the Republican Congress cut the number of screeners serving our airports.

Finally, the bill cuts funding for first-responder grants for States and local governments by about 17 percent, $680 billion less than last year, and failed to include a decision to help ensure all states would receive adequate funding and protection.

This conference report does not do enough to protect Americans from terrorism threats or natural disasters. This is a continuation of the Administration’s, and the leadership of this Congress, pattern of failure to learn from past lessons and invest in the essential infrastructure necessary to make our country safe. Is this the type of belt-tightening Administration is willing to accept in order to continue to pay for irresponsible tax cuts?

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to express my displeasure with the Homeland Security appropriations conference report. More specifically, the conferees’ neglect of formula based funding for State’s first responders could produce dire results for small rural States such as Arkansas.

The conferees’ decision to cut this funding, by more than half, will make it harder for smaller States to prevent, and more importantly, respond to emergency situations either manmade or natural. The events of the last 2 months have demonstrated that first responders need to be prepared regardless of where they are located geographically.

The conferees’ decision to cut first responder funding is even more frustrating seeing that the U.S. Senate a few months ago overwhelmingly passed a Homeland Security appropriations bill that went to great lengths to maintain a minimum base of first responder funding for all States. The formula which was created by Senators SUSAN COLLINS and JOSEPH LIEBERMAN was fair and would have provided stability to our Homeland Security appropriations process. I commend these Senators for their hard work and regret that their formula was ignored by conferees.

The conferees’ actions will not only do great disservice to small States’ first responders this year, but they have guaranteed that we will yet again spend precious time next year working out a funding formula to allocate Homeland Security grant money. There are many other issues that we must tackle but an inability to reach an understanding on this important issue will keep us stuck in the mud and that, Mr. President, is a disservice to all States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does any other Member seek recognition?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield back time on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded, the question is on agreeing to the conference report.

The conference report was agreed to. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. ENZI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RELIEF FOR THE GULF COAST

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, there has been a lot of activity on the floor over the last 24 hours. It has been focused on how best to help the people along the gulf coast who have been devastated by twin natural disasters, Katrina and Rita. There has been an ongoing debate that took up the night here in trying to determine how best to provide the funding that the cities and parishes in Louisiana and in Mississippi and Alabama and Texas need in order to begin to deal with their pressing urgent needs.

I rise because I well remember the feelings that I had on this floor in the aftermath of the attacks we suffered on September 11, 2001. It was an uncertain and tragic time in our country. We were attacked and we lost nearly 3,000 people. Eighteen acres were destroyed in the heart of the financial capital of the world. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs. Businesses were shuttered, and there was great doubt as to how we were going to obtain the resources to begin the recovery process.

I am grateful that in New York’s hour of need, we had strong support in this Chamber. I am looking at my dear friend, the senior Senator from West Virginia, who came to our aid immediately. In fact, he said he would be the third Senator from New York.

Mr. BYRD. Yes.

Mrs. CLINTON. I have never forgotten that. I am so grateful because he helped to shepherd through the Congress the money that New York needed immediately to respond to this crisis.

I am someone who believes that in a time of natural or manmade disaster, Americans rally around each other. We