

Mr. Speaker, I must also ask why we do not allow the extraneous provisions attached to the disaster bill to stand on their own. Are we afraid they will not stand up to the scrutiny of the committee process? If these are good ideas that will benefit the American people, let them stand alone. If these extraneous provisions have a broad base of support among the American people, allow the Members of this body to consider them on their own merits. Attaching them to a disaster relief bill is cowardly.

I will briefly address just one of these provisions. In the 104th Congress, the House asked the Census Bureau to cut costs on the 2000 census. Followup analysis of the 1990 census done by the Bureau shows that our current method is resulting in an undercount. The National Academy of Sciences has told us a statistical technique called sampling will result in a more accurate count for the final 10 percent of Americans, those who do not respond to the questionnaires. The Census Bureau tells us the use of this technique will save them \$1 billion in conducting the 2000 census, almost 25 percent of their cost. The Republicans seek to ban a technique which scientists tell us is better and the counters tell us is cheaper.

Mr. Speaker, this does not add up. The fact that this is attached to a disaster relief bill is a red flag waving high in the sky. It is enormously suspicious, especially when given that a few years back, the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. GINGRICH, specifically requested sampling to be used in his own State.

Mr. Speaker, one side of this debate has been up front with the victims of this flood and one side has made them pawns in a political game. The Fargo-Moorhead Forum newspaper concluded on Sunday morning and I quote again: "Republican leaders in Congress continue to play outrageous political games with the lives and futures of Red River Valley flood victims."

How true and how sad it is.

A clean disaster relief bill is the right thing to do. Mr. Speaker, let us get it done.

WHAT IS A PERCEPTION'S REALITY?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate on TV and decided to come over and get involved a little bit. I heard the Beatles' name brought up earlier, and listening to this debate, I am reminded of another Beatles' line out of Strawberry Fields Forever. "They say living is easy with eyes closed; misunderstanding all you see." And then of course the hook is all about how nothing is real in Strawberry Fields.

Well, nothing is real in this debate either. It reminds me so much of what

happened over the past couple of years where we had Medicare come up first, and how we Republicans hated our grandmothers and senior citizens because we wanted Medicare to increase at 7.2 percent but the President and the Democrats, who loved our grandparents so much more than us, wanted it to increase at 7.3, 7.4 percent.

Today, I think we voted on the bill in Ways and Means where it passed something like 30 to 3, a similar bill to what so many people were attacking before.

Now it is flood victims. It was also children. We hated children because we only wanted the School Lunch Program to go up 4 percent instead of 6 or 7 percent.

Now we are talking about flood victims, talking about how we want to hurt the flood victims. Of course, as happened during the Government shutdown when the President vetoed bill after bill after bill that we sent him, what people did not recognize was that it was the President who was vetoing the bills. It was the President who vetoed this bill today.

So the President, of course, was handed a wonderful, wonderful issue. It was put in his lap. And I have to wonder how we Republicans keep stepping into it and making these mistakes, but we do because we actually think that we should debate on the merits instead of on political points.

Which brings me to point two. The fact is that this crisis has been created for political purposes. What we do not hear is the fact that FEMA is funded, at least through this month. And we also saw in an AP report about a month ago, when this debate first started coming up before the Memorial Day break, when the President needed an issue, what he did, because the agencies were funded through this time period, he actually pushed up, he forward-funded, according to the AP articles, requirements so he could say, gee, these people are not getting their money.

So the President pushed the dates up for funding so he could create a political crisis, and that is what he did. And so now the President can get out and once again be compassionate and be the one that loves flood victims when Republicans supposedly hate flood victims.

So let us keep a list now. It is senior citizens, it is young children and it is flood victims. I guess the Democrats believe a sucker is born every day.

I can tell my colleagues that I constantly have hurricane victims in my district. I understand how this situation works, and certainly I feel compassion for the people that have been suffering this crisis.

In another area that, again, maybe nothing is real, or maybe as Henry Kissinger says, "In politics, what is a perception's reality," we keep hearing people say just give us a clean bill, just let us fund the flood victims, that is all we really need, when, in reality, if somebody would pick up the New York

Times this morning and read in the New York Times that this so-called clean flood bill, where we needed \$750 million to actually fund the flood victims, ended up being an \$8.4 billion monstrosity.

Now, I want to know where were all these self-righteous people when these emergency parking garages were being put in this bill; when, according to the New York Times article, we threw in, as "an emergency funding" a theater, with theater renovations. And they went and asked the guy who owned the theater, is this theater really an emergency, and he said, well, we had a couple of pipes that leaked last year.

The fact is that we have shoved, these same people who are now screaming give us a clean bill were the same people, both sides, Republicans and Democrats, that were shoving as much stuff into this so-called emergency appropriations bill as they could. And yet now they come back and they whine about how they need a clean bill. Well, that did not seem to concern them that much before.

Also, we shoved in money for apple orchardists. I guess they were so shocked and stunned by the visions they saw on TV that they were not able to attend to their apple orchards. Maybe that requires funding in this emergency appropriations bill.

If we read the New York Times article, we can see that these arguments about how they just want a clean bill is disingenuous. Everybody has gathered around the table and thrown all they could on there.

Finally, we should talk about what this issue is all about. It is about a continuing resolution issue, where we wanted to avoid letting the President do what he did before, vetoing appropriation bill after appropriation bill, and then coming out and going I will not let the Republicans do this, that, or the other.

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Again, it is disingenuous. This CR is the only way we ensure that we continue funding FEMA and other agencies at 100 percent without the President vetoing these bills time in and time out, without using flood victims for political purposes.

I say, let us get to the facts of the matter and let us stop using the flood victims as political pawns.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. MINGE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MINGE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I represent the Second District of Minnesota. It is a district that contains almost the entire length of Minnesota River. Minnesota River flows through a broad valley. I think for many, it is known as

the Valley of the Jolly Green Giant. It is very productive, it is lush, and it is noted for the table vegetables that have been grown there over the past several decades.

In the valley there is a narrow river that winds back and forth and oxbows and normally is very placid. But occasionally it becomes a raging torrent. In 1997, this river carried more water than it ever has since the area was settled, over 100 years ago. The record water levels resulted in flooding in numerous communities, starting in Ortonville at the head of the river as it flows out of Big Stone Lake, required the evacuation of the community of Odessa. Tributaries flooded in Appleton, Dawson, MN. Montevideo, MN, my home community, was on the evening news for the first time in the history of the community repeatedly because of the efforts of the volunteers to try to stop the damage by sandbagging, building dikes.

Their efforts were successful except for one neighborhood which could not be saved and could not be diked. Downstream, Granite Falls built dikes. It was largely spared the ravages of the flood. North Redwood Falls was affected, however, and a few homes in the community known as New Ulm. This was all damage that was done, but fortunately we were spared the ravages of the communities on the Red River of the North.

People in my area felt quite fortunate, by comparison. The communities pulled together. Thousands of volunteers came from neighboring towns from the urban areas, and a real spirit of cooperation and goodwill prevailed. I can tell you that partisanship was certainly absent in this undertaking.

The people also were impressed with the activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, and the Army Corps of Engineers, both of which had a very substantial presence, and the National Guard troops that were mobilized and came in. I held a series of informational meetings on the disaster programs that were being established, the ones that were in place. The FEMA officials, the Army Corps of Engineers, the State agencies, U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies all came and participated in these meetings.

It appeared that we would have a disaster assistance program that would both be effective in addressing the needs of the communities and the residents and would be promptly available. Unfortunately, as the days wore on, it also emerged that partisanship would be a part of the picture.

In an effort to pass legislation that the leadership in this body and the other side of the building knew would be unacceptable to the President, they began to beat the drums about how important certain riders were. And unfortunately, I concluded that what was happening is that this disaster assistance bill was being hijacked for other purposes. Proposals that could not be

passed separately would not be accepted by the President were being shoehorned into the disaster assistance bill in hopes that the President could be brow beaten or embarrassed into signing them.

Well, we know what happened. The President vetoed the legislation. I am not here this evening to say that we have to point fingers at the leadership in the House and the Senate or criticize the President. The fact of the matter is, all of us knew that this legislation as it left Congress was on a collision course with the White House.

It is very difficult for me to tell people at home that the political process is consumed with politics and that we cannot deliver the type of assistance that has become a consensus package for disaster assistance. It is awfully difficult for me to explain to people why it is that controversial riders have to be attached to this legislation. I cannot explain it. I voted for it. I wanted to see it passed. But it was unacceptable.

The previous speaker said the money is in the pipeline. Do not worry. I would just like to briefly point out that although FEMA is well funded, the community development block grant program for relocation assistance is hanging in abeyance. People in businesses do not know what level of relocation assistance will be available, whether it will be available. Precious construction days are slipping by.

Similarly, the livestock indemnity program is in limbo and a number of other programs are simply not being addressed. I would like to urge, I implore the leadership of Congress to promptly send to the President a clean bill so that we can provide the assistance that has been long promised and is badly needed by the victims of this flooding in the upper Midwest.

EMERGENCY RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House and particularly to respond to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH], who spoke and who since left.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH made the point that Republicans, he said, were perceived as not liking children, not liking senior citizens, and now not liking flood victims. I do not know whether that is the case. Maybe that is his feeling and his concern. He also observed that both sides of the House have added things to emergency relief bills in the past and cited a New York Times article, which I have not read but which I know to be true.

That is the case. There is always the time when a bill that should pass and most of us believe must pass and be signed, in this case the belief for those

who have been ravaged by rains and flood and who are at risk and what this Nation wants to help. Everybody believes this bill ought to pass and it ought to pass quickly.

But lest my colleagues or anybody else be confused that this is the regular course of business, let me reflect a little bit on history. It took just 15 days to provide the assistance that President Bush asked this Congress to give for the victims of Hurricane Andrew. We are now in the 83rd day.

It was not that President Bush and the Congress, then led by Democrats, controlled by Democrats, agreed on everything. That was not the case. But what President Bush and the Democratic Congress did agree on was that it was our responsibility to pass that emergency relief in a timely fashion, 15 days, as opposed to the 83 days that this bill has languished in this Congress.

And why does this bill languish? Why does a bill that everybody said should pass and must pass not pass? It is, Mr. Speaker, because the leadership of this House and the leadership of the Senate has determined that they want to stare down the President, that they want to muscle the President, that they want to leverage the President, and they have taken hostage the victims of the floods of these past months in order to accomplish that objective.

My colleagues have heard the issues discussed. There are two principal ones. One is called a continuing resolution and it is put forth by the Republicans in this House and in the Senate as an effort to prevent government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, I represent 56,000 Federal employees. I am for preventing government shutdown. In point of fact, it was in the last Congress for the first time since I have been serving since 1981 that we consciously and purposefully shut down the Government.

The Republican leadership said in April of 1995 they were going to do that. They reiterated that in July of 1995. And sure enough, on November 19, 1995, they shut down the Government, looked the President in the eye, and said, if you do not do it my way, we will do it no way.

That is not what the people sent us here to do. They sent us here to work together. The fact of the matter is that when we did work together, we passed appropriation bills and we opened the Government after 2 long shutdowns consciously planned by the Republican majority to force the President to do something that he said he was not going to do. That never happened when the Republicans were in control in the 1980s and the first 2 years of the 1990s and Democrats controlled this Congress.

Were there differences? Yes. Did the Democrats try to get advantage on the Republican President? Yes. But did there come a time when they said that they would not move, that they would be immovable in the face of presidential opposition? The answer is no.