

nothing to do with the disaster. It has to do with Government shutdowns—very controversial amendment—and has no relationship to a disaster bill. But they stuck it on there knowing they could hold hostage thousands of victims of these floods, and that is exactly what happened.

We have come to the end of this week, and the other body decided it doesn't have time; they were unwilling to pass a disaster bill.

I have been around this institution for some long while, first in the House of Representatives and now in the Senate. There is not a precedent for this. Nowhere that I know of is there a precedent for a disaster bill, when people have suffered in a region of this country, for someone else to say, "Oh, by the way, I know this is a disaster, so I am going to stick this on my agenda, and either you pass it that way or it doesn't get passed." At no time that I know of has someone in Congress said to those who suffered earthquakes in California or floods along the Mississippi in 1993 or tornadoes or fires, never have I heard the Congress say, "And, by the way, yes, we're in the business of disaster relief, but we want to stick extraneous amendments on which are controversial, and we are willing to play with the threat of a veto by a President because we're not so concerned about the victims of a disaster."

Some have said, "Well, it's not urgent; it can wait a couple of weeks." Let me describe for my colleagues why it is urgent and why what the House has done, if it continues to do it—and it looks like it will—why it is significant to the people of our region.

The money in this bill, \$500 million for Community Development Block Grants, which is the most flexible money available to help rebuild and recover, cannot be made available, cannot be obligated and cannot be committed by these cities to say to those folks who lost everything, and lost their homes especially, that "here is our new floodplain, here is where we are going to buy out the homes, here is a commitment we will buy out your home, and now you can start building anew." This delays that. It delays recovery. It delays rebuilding. It delays repair. And delay is critical in our part of the country.

We have a very short construction season. This 2-week delay, 4-week delay, or 6-week delay, whatever it turns out to be, is a devastating delay to people who are not in their homes and who are awaiting answers from local officials about what will happen to the home that is already destroyed.

So, Mr. President, there is no excuse for what has happened. I want to make it clear that the Senate Appropriations Committee created a disaster portion of this bill that is a wonderful, wonderful response to the people of our region.

I commend Senator STEVENS and Senator BYRD and all of the people who worked together to do that. That is not

where the problem is. They are to be complimented. The problem exists because we had some folks on the other side of the Capitol who said, "We don't care. We're leaving. We've got a plane ticket and a ride out of town."

I ask those who are now on their way, if they have the time in the next week when the Congress is on recess, to stop by Grand Forks, ND. I just finished talking to the mayor. There is a line of people outside the civic center, and every single one of them is asking, "What is happening to the funding? Do you have the ability to commit so we know if there is going to be a buyout of our house? Do you have some commitment to rebuild?" Every one of them is asking, "When will we know?"

To those who believe it is important to go on recess and ignore the needs of people in a disaster, I say, "Stop by Grand Forks and explain to those folks why that was their priority."

This disaster portion of this bill is a good portion of the bill. The Senator from Washington is here. He serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee with me. All of it with respect to disaster is now agreed to—all of it. I compliment every member of that committee because they have done a wonderful job. It simply could have been lifted out and passed so at least the disaster portion is available, because we did it and did it right. Republicans and Democrats working together did it right.

But what happened was, last evening, some folks on the other side said, "We're sorry, we're just not going to do that, we're going home." And if I sound a little angry—I guess that is probably an appropriate word to describe it. I don't think that I ought to stand here and say, "Well, that's the way the system works." I represent thousands of people who don't have a home, thousands of people who don't have much hope, thousands of people who are asking for help. And I think it is unconscionable that anyone on that side of the Capitol believes it is appropriate to leave those people high and dry without an answer, without hope, and without help.

Oh, yes, it is going to come, and when it comes, I am going to be thankful that it is there. But, between now and then, it is delayed—delay of recovery, delay of rebuilding and delay of providing hope that we should well provide to the people of that region. There hasn't been one instance since I have been in Congress that I have not been the first to say, "Sign me up" when there is an earthquake in California that devastates that region. I say it is our job, yes, our job as North Dakota taxpayers to say to them, "We want to help you."

The same is true of every region of the country that has suffered disaster. It is important for us to reach out and help, and it is especially important now when we need help for the rest of the country to do that. The Senate Appropriations Committee was prepared

to do it and had written a piece to do it. Regrettably, it is Friday afternoon, and it now looks like there will be a recess without disaster aid going to people who will not be sleeping in their bed—not a hundred of them, not a thousand of them, but thousands and thousands—who the mayors of these cities say await word of when this help is coming.

I don't know if there is going to be other news today on this subject, but I hope some way is found and that this will not be the final message as this Congress leaves for the Memorial Day recess. If it is, I pledge to be on the floor the first time this Congress reconvenes to say to my colleagues that now is the time to at least pass the disaster portion of this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. LEVIN. I wonder if the Senator from Washington will yield for an inquiry as to how long he expects to be.

Mr. GORTON. The Senator from Washington will take somewhere between 10 and 15 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator.

BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, the budget resolution which has just been adopted by this body is a remarkable achievement. It is a remarkable achievement partly because, for the first time in decades, it was adopted by a large bipartisan majority rather than as a simple partisan document. It is a remarkable achievement as well, I believe, because each of the 78 Members of this body who voted for it did so with serious reservations about substantial portions of that budget resolution. Yes, it meets the primary objective of the President and of the vast majority of Members in Congress in that it establishes policies under which the budget will, in fact, come into balance shortly after the turn of the century.

Yes, it does, in fact, limit spending and the growth of Government to a slower rate at least than would take place were we on automatic pilot.

Yes, it meets some but by no means all of the President's priorities as he outlined them in his State of the Union Address.

And, yes, it provides very real tax relief for the American people, most particularly for working American parents and their children. But those of us for whom tax relief was a major goal are unhappy because it is insufficient and because there are too many new spending programs, and those relatively indifferent to tax relief but in favor of all of the President's priorities, and more, are unhappy because there is not enough spending included in this resolution.

In the long run, however, Mr. President, I believe that it represents a triumph, or rather the culmination of a set of conflicting ideas which somehow

or another have joined together to make a real success.

In 1993, along with every one of my colleagues on this side of the aisle, I opposed President Clinton's first budget in the firm belief that it would result in harm to our economy. Now, in a very real sense, we were wrong. For a group of reasons, the budget deficit did, indeed, decline and economic opportunity did, indeed, increase.

In 1995, as a part of a majority, we proposed a dramatic change in direction, a real balanced budget for the first time, genuine tax relief for the first time and major reforms in entitlement programs designed not only to help the taxpayers' pocket, but to save the future of Medicaid and Medicare.

That resolution never became law because of the President's veto, but it did have one tremendously positive impact. For the first time, the President and a majority of his party dedicated themselves actually to balancing the budget. During the entire year during which that 1995 budget was debated, interest rates declined, it became easier and easier for the people of the United States to purchase homes, purchase automobiles, start new businesses, provide job opportunities. Only when the promise began to fail did interest rates, once again, increase.

The promise was renewed early this year, and a few short weeks ago met fruition in an agreement between the Republican leadership of both Houses and the President of the United States.

Since even the commitment to a balanced budget paid dramatic dividends in increased economic opportunity, lower unemployment and lower interest rates, the accomplishment of a balanced budget, I am convinced, Mr. President, will bring even more rewards to the American people in lower interest rates and greater opportunity, and for the first time in decades meeting our responsibility not to spend money today while sending the bills to our children and to our grandchildren.

I am convinced, in spite of my own disagreement with some of the policies in this proposal, that it will have nothing but good results with respect to the economy of the United States. Yet, Mr. President, I am convinced there are still very real troubles ahead, very real rough spots in the road.

I note that while only eight Members of the Democratic Party voted against the budget resolution, the vast majority of them voted for amendment after amendment during the course of the last 3 days that would have increased taxes and increased spending, by my own total for the amendments, by \$88 billion in higher taxes and almost that amount in greater spending—direct violations of the agreement that they and the President have made with the Republican leadership.

As a consequence, I am convinced that it is important for all of us on both sides of the aisle to remember that we made a commitment to the American people in this agreement,

one that was almost instantly approved by the vast majority of our citizens, and keep not just those parts of the agreement with which we agree, but those with which we disagree.

I am the chairman, Mr. President, of a subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. The agreement includes a number of Presidential priorities that can only be funded through my subcommittee. Several of those priorities are ones with which I disagree. I think the money could be spent elsewhere better. But I do feel committed to keep those unpleasant parts of the agreement in order to reach the overall more important goals that are a part of a historic budget resolution.

So, in one sense, Mr. President, the vote a few hours ago was the culmination of a process and of a debate which has lasted for many, many years. In another sense, it is only the beginning. And unless it is taken seriously by those who support it, we still face the prospect of failing.

I am an optimist. I think that this is a new beginning, more than an ending to a long period of arid political exchanges. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in order to make it happen.

(The remarks of Mr. GORTON pertaining to the submission of Senate Concurrent Resolution 29 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The Senator from South Carolina.

(The remarks of Mr. THURMOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 813 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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.

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

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

RECORD SENATE SERVICE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I commend the President pro tempore, the distinguished Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. THURMOND]. As we will note when we come back, the distinguished Senator from South Carolina will mark a very important day on Sunday. That day will represent the first day he will have exceeded the time that anyone has had the good fortune to serve in the Senate. He will go down in history as having served longer than any other Senator, Democratic or Republican or, for that matter, any other party that has existed in our Nation's 220-year past. I congratu-

late and commend him. I look forward to having more of an opportunity when we return to call attention to his remarkable record and the success he has enjoyed. It has been my good fortune to work with him. While we differ on many issues, I certainly admire the extraordinary service he has provided this country. I congratulate him and his family on this remarkable achievement this weekend.

MARY NIEDRINGHAUS: BRANDON VALLEY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, it is my privilege today to honor Mary Niedringhaus of Brandon Valley, SD. Mary has been selected as Teacher of the Year in the Brandon Valley School District in recognition of two decades of outstanding teaching, guidance, and care that she has given the children of the community. I can think of few individuals more deserving of this prestigious award.

A fifth grade teacher at Brandon Elementary, Mary's gift is her ability to recognize and meet the needs of each of her students. She conveys an excitement for learning that her students find infectious. Whether bright or struggling, students excel in Mary's class because she genuinely believes in each of them and draws out their best efforts. After hearing Mary's lesson on importance of ladybugs to people, one little girl was so excited that later in the day she rushed to Mary and presented her with a ladybug. As she explained breathlessly, she had just rescued it from being flushed down the toilet in the girls' bathroom.

Mary holds herself and her students to the highest standards. Parents in Brandon seek to place their children in her classroom because they know that she will give them the finest education possible. Once, when planning a unit on South Dakota history for her students, Mary discovered that no good textbooks existed on the subject for grade school students. Undaunted, she developed her own curriculum based on materials she gathered on her own. Mary's curriculum is now the model used by all teachers in the Brandon Valley school district.

No remarks about Mary would be complete without mention of the deep empathy she has for others. Brandon Elementary School Principal Marv Sharkey noted that Mary, "has the knack of making parents feel like their child is the best kid in the world." Mary genuinely loves her students; I believe that this is the true source of her success as a teacher.

Finally, it seems that Mary has done as a good of job raising her children as she has teaching her students. Her daughter, Nancy Erickson, is a longtime, invaluable senior member of my staff. Mary should be deeply proud of her.

Mr. President, I commend Mary Niedringhaus for her exceptional work. Along with other district winners, she