

HONORING THE SORENSENS ON
THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, families are the cornerstone of America. The data are undeniable: Individuals from strong families contribute to the society. In an era when nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of "till death us do part" seriously, demonstrating successfully the timeless principles of love, honor, and fidelity. These characteristics make our country strong.

For these important reasons, I rise today to honor John and Rosalie Sorensen of Des Plaines, IL, formerly of Howard's Ridge, MO, who on July 12, 1997, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. My wife, Janet, and I look forward to the day we can celebrate a similar milestone. The Sorensens' commitment to the principles and values of their marriage deserves to be saluted and recognized.

TRIBUTE TO KATHRYN HOOK

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, in my almost 42 years of service to the U.S. Senate, I have probably had more than one thousand individuals work for me as members of my personal and committee staffs. Among these legions, I have been fortunate to have had a number of particularly capable, dedicated, and selfless men and women who truly went above and beyond the call of duty in assisting me and in carrying out their duties as staffers. Today, I rise to pay tribute to Miss Kathryn Hook, a person who has been with me for just short of 30 years, whose work and efforts have been invaluable, and to many South Carolinians, is as much a part of my office as I am. Sadly, today marks Kathryn's last day on the job.

A woman with a warm and outgoing personality, Kathryn first arrived in my office in 1967 and immediately began to make friends not only among my staff, but with our neighbors in other Senate offices. I recall that at that time the late Bobby Kennedy was one of my colleagues, and he had an office adjacent to mine. As he would walk down the halls with his dogs, he would almost inevitably stop into my reception room to say "hello" to Kathryn. It is my understanding that later, when Senator Kennedy ran for President, he asked Kathryn if she was interested in working on his South Carolina campaign activities, and as tempting and flattering an offer as that most certainly must have been, commendably, Kathryn chose to stay in my employ. It is a decision that I am grateful she made.

For almost three decades, Kathryn has been such a fixture on my staff, she has earned the title of "Dean of Women," and she has made countless

contributions to the operations of this office in many different ways. Working at the back of the reception room of 217 Russell, dubbed the "Dogwood Alcove" because of the personal touches she has made to her workspace, Kathryn has pleasantly, politely, and warmly greeted probably tens of thousands of visitors to my office, ranging from constituents who have come by to say "hello," to senior American and foreign government officials who are making official calls on matters of policy. In each case, she has demonstrated the famed hospitality of South Carolinians, making anyone who enters my suite feel as though they are a long lost friend, and making sure that they know that they are welcome in my office.

Perhaps more importantly, though, is the influence she has had on young staffers who have worked under her. Kathryn is a woman of high and uncompromising standards, and a strong work ethic. In the course of her career, she has passed these commendable qualities and characteristics on to those who have been her direct subordinates, as well as to many other staffers who have worked with her through the years. There is no question that Kathryn has left her mark on an untold number of STROM THURMOND staffers, and that her influence has benefitted these individuals both while they worked for me, and in subsequent jobs. I have no doubt that there are hundreds of people, particularly women, who owe their success in life to the lessons they learned from Kathryn Hook.

Of course, Kathryn's contributions go far beyond that of her duties in the reception room and as the personal assistant to my chief of staff. She is the point of contact for any number of South Carolinians, particularly those from her hometown of Florence, who know Kathryn and feel comfortable contacting her on a multitude of issues that range from correcting problems with a relative's Social Security check, to legislative issues. Kathryn's intimate knowledge of office policy, procedures, and history has made her a useful resource for staff members who need advice and guidance on issues or have a question that can only be answered by her institutional memory.

Mr. President, Kathryn Hook is a unique and special woman in many different ways, and it is impossible to cite all of the highlights of her career or to adequately summarize the impact she has had in my office. Suffice it to say, her efforts over the years have helped me do my job as a legislator and in assisting the people of South Carolina. Kathryn's long tenure of invaluable service to our State was recently recognized and honored by the Governor of South Carolina who presented her with our State's highest award, "The Order of the Palmetto," in a ceremony held in the Strom Thurmond Room of the U.S. Capitol. Regrettably, I do not have an equivalent commendation with which I can present her, but I hope she

knows that I have valued her faithful service, will certainly miss her sense of humor and energetic personality, and that I am pleased to count her among my friends. It is a bittersweet day on which I say goodbye to Kathryn Hook, as not only is it her last day on my staff, but it is her birthday as well. I wish her many more years of health and happiness, and I thank her for her many years of devoted and selfless service.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the leader's designee in morning business. The Democratic leader is allotted 60 minutes.

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

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I come to the floor today again to speak of the disaster relief bill, the so-called supplemental appropriations bill. This bill provides substantial amounts of money for disaster relief, especially for people of the region of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, the region where victims of blizzards, fires and floods now await action by the U.S. Congress on a disaster appropriations bill.

On Saturday, in the Bismarck Tribune, an associated press writer, John McDonald, was in Grand Forks, ND. The headline says, "Patience Short with Congress." Here is what the story says:

Ranee Steffan had strong words for Members of Congress who think flood victims can wait while the bickering continues in Washington over a disaster relief bill.

"You are playing with our lives," Mrs. Steffen warned Friday from the sweltering travel trailer that she and her family now call home. "This isn't some game. You should come here and walk in my shoes for a day."

Homeless for over a month, out of work and bounced from one temporary shelter to another, the wife and mother of two is fed up with lawmakers who seem to think that Grand Forks residents are "getting along just fine."

All she wants, she says, is to move back into a real home and to start working again.

But that isn't likely to happen until Congress and President Clinton work out differences in the emergency spending bill that has \$5.6 million of disaster relief for disaster victims.

I noticed this weekend in the Washington Times, Saturday, June 7, Speaker Gingrich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, "vows not to yield on disaster aid," according to the headline. He says that after a veto, the GOP

will send the bill back with the same riders. And then it says, "Mr. Gingrich predicted voters will not remember this standoff over the supplemental appropriations bill at the ballot boxes next year," suggesting, I suppose, that, well, it is just that region up there, North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota. They will not remember this.

In this morning's Washington Post, we read that in a "contentious meeting of Republican leaders after adjournment Thursday, Majority Leader LOTT of the Senate argued that this time—unlike 2 years ago—the GOP would win the PR battle. He claimed Americans did not care much about the supplemental appropriations bill providing help for the victims of Red River flooding in the Dakotas and Minnesota."

I do not know if that is an accurate quote. It is in Robert Novak's column in today's paper. But I worry about what all of this says. It says somehow that this is a game, it is politics, it is trying to claim a political advantage in the fighting over a disaster bill.

It is interesting that if you take a look at other disaster bills in the Congress and what has happened in those disaster bills, the time line is really quite interesting. We had, as many Americans will recall, a terrible hurricane called Hurricane Andrew. When Hurricane Andrew hit the Florida coast, it decimated and devastated miles and miles of homes, and people were living in camps and trying to figure out what to do next. That was 1992. That hurricane hit August 24, 1992, killing 40 people and destroying more than 25,000 homes. Again, this was August 24, 1992 that the hurricane hit. On September 8, just 2 weeks later, President Bush called for a \$7.7 billion relief package. That took place on September 8. On September 23, President Bush signed it into law. It took 1 month from the hurricane to signing the bill into law.

What a difference compared to our experience this year.

Madam President, on March 19 of this year, the President sent his first request to Congress for a disaster bill to provide supplemental appropriations for a range of disasters that had occurred in our country. March 19, April 19 went by, May 19, and we are headed toward June 19—nearly 3 full months—and the disaster bill is not yet law.

Now, Congress passed a disaster bill, but some in Congress decided they wanted to make a political sideshow out of it and they put very controversial provisions in it, provisions they knew the President would be forced to veto, provisions that had no relationship to this bill at all, extraneous provisions having no business in this bill. The President told them long ago to pass a clean bill. If they put provisions that were controversial in this bill thinking he would sign it, they were wrong.

So the Congress, attempting to provoke a fight, because some political leaders here decided it was in their ad-

vantage to do so, stuck a couple of very controversial items in this bill and sent it down to the President, knowing it would face a certain veto. They took a couple of weeks' vacation first, and broke for the Memorial Day recess. Now it is going to be nearly 3 weeks later than it should have been before a bill would get passed that the President might have an opportunity to sign. But, in any event, they finally did send a bill down to the President this morning containing provisions they knew the President would not sign. The President vetoed the bill, and it now has returned to the House of Representatives, just within the past several hours.

At the end of my remarks, Madam President, I will introduce a bill that is a clean disaster supplemental bill. It strips the two extraneous provisions that are highly controversial out of the legislation. I will send it to the desk and ask it be considered by unanimous consent. If it is considered by unanimous consent, this will go to the House of Representatives. After all, the House passed this bill plus the two controversial provisions. The House could consider it, they could send it to the President, he could sign it, and tomorrow the disaster relief would be available to the people who are victims of this disaster. I have alerted the majority that I intend to do so, and at the end of my remarks I will ask this piece of legislation be considered.

Now, Madam President, before I go further, I will go through once again what has happened to our region and why this is urgent and why some of us have had a bellyful of the politics around here on this bill.

Let me describe, first of all, the blizzards in our part of the country, 3 years' worth of snow in 3 months, 10 feet of snow dropped on our region of the country. The last blizzard was the worst blizzard of 50 years, and the worst blizzard of 50 years dumped nearly 2 feet of snow on much of North Dakota, some of South Dakota, and some of Minnesota. Traffic was stalled, as it was many times this winter, with the nine blizzards that we had. All the roads were shut down. Power poles snapped like toothpicks.

Here is the result of howling winds of 20 and 40 miles an hour and 80-below windchill temperatures and 2 feet of snow in the worst blizzard of 50 years. This is a snowbank on flat land and a farmer standing in front of it to show the size of the snowbank. The snowbank is nearly three times as tall as he is.

The blizzard that hit had this impact: 80,000 people in our region out of power, power poles snapped like toothpicks, lying on the ground all across our region. Some people were out of power for a week and more, while power crews struggled 24 hours a day to try to get the poles up and the lines up and restore power to these communities.

I was in Grafton, ND, when they were out of power for 5 days, and met a

woman who was 89-years-old at a shelter. Yes, they went to shelters because they could not cook, did not have electricity, did not have heat in their homes, and it was bitterly cold. Madam President, this woman was 89 years of age, and she said, "I am getting along just fine. We sure appreciate all the folks here at the shelter." What a great spirit and a great attitude.

But all of those folks went through this kind of dilemma of blizzard after blizzard after blizzard, with shutdowns of virtually all the roads in the State, cattle freezing on their feet because the snow was suffocating them, and then power outages affecting tens of thousands of people. My colleague Senator CONRAD showed this picture the other day. I had shown it previously, a picture similar to it, dead cattle lying on the range, cattle whose hooves were frozen, dairy cows whose udders were frozen. A fellow was in town a while back and he said someone asked a rancher, "What are you doing this afternoon?" He answered, "Going home to shoot some more calves." These calves simply would not make it. Their hooves were frozen and they would not be able to walk any longer. Hundreds of thousands of head of livestock died in those winter blizzards.

Then what happened is the Sun came out and it began to warm up in our part of the country. What was a farm—and this is a farm—now looks like an ocean. The Red River Valley became a flood that was 140 miles long by 20 to 30 miles wide. This is a farm in this photograph. But, of course, this year, it was a flood; 1.7 million acres of farm land were under water when this picture was taken.

This picture shows what that flood looks like from the air. It looks like a huge lake that extends for the entire Red River Valley, with patches of ground in places where you could see some dikes that have been erected to try to protect some areas of the country. That flood inundated Watertown, SD. It was an enormous flood—in Watertown, MN, and Breckenridge and Fargo, ND. That flood water was channeled through Fargo, and for 24 hours a day they wondered whether the dikes would hold, and they did hold in Fargo. Some homes got wet and they had some flooding damage, but it could have been much worse. Then that Red River flooding came to Grand Forks, ND, as they tried to channel that through the city. The flood crest was predicted to be 49 feet, the highest flood crest in history. But it wasn't 49 feet, it was 54 feet. As the water rushed over the dikes down the streets of Grand Forks, people left their homes, running to their cars, running to National Guard trucks, to evacuate their city, in most cases with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

In this photograph is Grand Forks, ND, and East Grand Forks, MN. It looks like a lake with buildings sticking out of the lake, a city completely inundated by a flood. A city of 50,000

people was on this side of the river, with 90 percent evacuated; 9,000 people were on this side of the river, 100 percent evacuated. I might say that this whole area in Grand Forks, ND, will never again be inhabitable. All of these business places are ruined and will be destroyed.

More than that, during the flood when the waters broke the dike, the city of Grand Forks also suffered a major fire, as depicted in this photograph. In the middle of flooding, you can see the firefighters of Grand Forks, ND, standing in the ice-cold water up to their waists, fighting a fire, a fire that destroyed 11 of the larger downtown business buildings in Grand Forks, ND, and then spread to three blocks. They had to bring this fire-fighting material in with huge airplanes, dropping flame retardant on these buildings because they couldn't fight the fire from here. The firefighters didn't have the equipment to fight a fire in a flood. These firefighters, suffering from hypothermia, were using fire extinguishers to fight a fire in downtown Grand Forks, ND. Of course, they finally put the fire out.

I was on a Coast Guard boat in Grand Forks, and as we went up and down the streets of Grand Forks, ND, here is what you saw, streets that looked like rivers and lakes, as shown in this photograph. Occasionally, you would see a car top sticking up. The boat I was on ran into a car. We could not see it, but we knew we ran into a car because we saw about two inches of a radio antenna sticking above the water. When I told the pilot of the boat, "I think you ran into a car," he said, "I guess so, but, you know, it wasn't there yesterday." What happened is that river was running so fast that it was taking cars underneath, and you could not see them moving all around that town, as the river destroyed the central core of that city. When the fire was finally put out in downtown Grand Forks, ND, here is part of what it looked like. It skipped over three different blocks, but you could see what it did to downtown Grand Forks, ND.

Some say, well, that is quite a tragedy, but it happens other places in the country. I don't know of any other place in the country where they have suffered a circumstance where a major city was almost totally and completely evacuated and a major part of the city permanently and totally destroyed. In the middle of all of this, I went to North Dakota, and I was in North Dakota on almost all weekends. I went there with President Clinton on Air Force One during the middle of a week, on a Tuesday. He flew into Grand Forks, ND. While this city was evacuated, thousands of them were sent to Grand Forks AFB. They were put in giant airplane hangars where thousands of cots were set up, and that is where many of them slept overnight until they could find some other shelter to move to or some other family to take them in or to get transportation

to a relative who lived in another city. "Red Cross tops 1 million meals," the Grand Forks Herald says. "How bad was our disaster? Let us count the meals."

People who one day had a home, had warmth, had shelter, had a stove and a refrigerator, a place for kids to come home to from school and a place to come to at the end of the work day, now had nothing. They were living on cots in an Air Force hangar and eating from the Red Cross shelter. And then, finally, the river went back into its bank. Here is what Grand Forks residents have come home to find: 600 homes totally destroyed that will never again be lived in. Another 600 to 800 homes were severely damaged.

I don't know if many people know what a home looks like when it has been totally submerged in a flood. I was in a boat that was floating on top of the water at the rooftop level of most of these homes. These homes are totally destroyed and will never again be repaired. I have some more photographs here. Here is what a basement looks like.

This is what happens out in the yard. They strip all the wallboard out of a home and all of the things that used to be their possessions and put them on the boulevard out in front. What used to be a nice street, where cars would drive up and down, is now on both sides of the street filled with trash, filled with the remnants of a home. You can only drive there one way, up and down. The garbage trucks come all day long, back and forth, trying to keep up to haul out this garbage.

This home was totally submerged in water. When it came back to rest, it rested on top of an old Ford car. This picture shows a home sitting on top of a car. That is what floods do.

This home was in the same neighborhood, and it just collapsed. It was brought up from its foundation and then collapsed.

The Grand Forks Herald, in the midst of all of this, says, "Here is why the Federal Government needs to pass disaster relief now." I have shown you the result of all of this. There is more. There is a problem that farmers and ranchers have—some are flat on their backs having lost their entire herds in the blizzard. But most urgent is the need to give the people who are trying to run these cities the resources so they can tell the people who are out of their homes, here is what your future is going to be. Regarding the 600 homes that are going to have to be bought out, the city needs to be able to say to those 600 families, "We are going to buy you out and create a new flood way." Under any definition, all of those 600 homes are in the flood way.

So those 600 families are on hold now. One is living in a tent, by the way, in their yard—a tent—a mother, a father, and children, because they need to know what their future is going to be. They don't have any money, or a home, and they don't have a job. In this disas-

ter bill are the resources that allow the city to say to those people, "We are going to buy your home and establish a new flood plain and, with that commitment, you can now go and get another home." Until that happens and this bill is passed, those families' lives are on hold—600 families just in that area, and the 800 homes that were severely damaged. Many of them will face a similar circumstance. All of their lives are on hold.

We hear people around here say this, and I heard them last week and the week before saying that time doesn't matter, nothing is urgent, nothing can be done that isn't being done, there is money in the pipeline. You know, I have heard people like that before. They say, "My belt buckle was won in a rodeo," and they say, "There is money in the pipeline." What a bunch of nonsense. The fact is that the money in this bill is critical. It deals with housing. This funding is what is necessary to give these people hope and to give the city the resources to allow them to move back into either their homes or a different home and get on with their lives.

Until this bill is signed, until the bill is done, all of these people's lives are on hold. "There is money in the pipeline," we are told. Yes, FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has some money, but that is short-term emergency money. It is not the kind of money that will finally unlock the housing questions and jobs questions that are in front of all of these families. Until this bill gets passed and signed, none of these families will know what their future can be or is going to be. So those who stand here and say that there is money in the pipeline and there is nothing that can be done that isn't now being done, I say to them, you are wrong and you know it. If you don't know it, buy a plane ticket and fly to Grand Forks and talk to the flood victims that you are holding hostage. If you don't have the decency to do that, then stop talking about it, because you don't know what you are talking about.

There is not money in the pipeline to deal with the emergency needs of these people. Every one in this Chamber has a responsibility to understand that. If they don't understand it, they will not talk about it. If Congress doesn't decide this week—and there is some indication it won't—to pass a disaster bill without continuing to play politics, then all of these people's lives will continue to be on hold for another week and another week and another week. In the midst of all of this, we will have, I suppose, the prospect of front page stories like, "Gingrich Vows Not to Yield on Disaster Bill." This says, "After veto, GOP will send back same riders."

We have people who, a couple of years ago, waltzed around this town and boasted—and I can get you the quotes and the names and the days, but I will not do that at the moment—that

if they didn't get their way in this Congress or in the last Congress, they intended to shut down the Government. They boasted repeatedly, "Either we get our way or we will shut down the Government." They said, "Frankly, nobody cares if we shut down the Government." Well, they boasted about it and they kept their word; they shut down the Government and they paid an enormous price for it.

Now, some of those same people are trying to portray themselves as being opposed to shutting down the Government, so they want to attach an amendment to this disaster bill saying, we want to tell people that we are opposed to shutting down the Government. The amendment has nothing to do with this bill—totally extraneous and unrelated. But they want to use this bill to say we are opposed to shutting down the Government. The amendment by which they do that is controversial, and I am not going to get into the merits of that. Frankly, I care less about the merits of that than do some other people. But as was demonstrated by my comments about the disaster relief when Hurricane Andrew hit Florida, a disaster bill that was passed in less than a month—in fact, in about 2 weeks after President Bush sent it up. As was shown by that, it is unusual for people around here to believe it is appropriate to play politics on a disaster bill.

In most cases when you are talking about disaster aid, you are talking about victims. When you are talking about victims, in most cases, politics takes a back seat. Members of the House and the Senate—Republicans, Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals—don't think much about politics in those cases. They say we have had people who were victims and had tough times through an act of nature, who have been dealt a bad blow, who are homeless, hopeless, helpless, and whose families are jobless and who need us to say, "You are not alone, let us help you." And in almost all cases, the Congress has reached out a helping hand and said, "Here is a disaster bill we are going to pass and we are going to do it on a timely basis to try to give hope to those people who are victims."

In every case that I have recalled since I have been here, whether it was the earthquake victims of California, or the hurricanes in Florida, or tornadoes, or blizzards, or floods, I have felt that the taxpayers of North Dakota want us to say: Let us help.

Let's reach out and provide the helping hand; extend the hand of friendship and the hand of help to say that the rest of the country wants to join you in helping you get back on your feet.

For years we have had disaster bills move through the Congress without someone saying, "I have a new idea. Why don't I try to jam up the disaster bill with a very controversial issue and shove it down the President's throat? Why don't we try to do that? So what if the victims are hurt by that? So

what? They are just from North Dakota." Or, as this paper says, people will forget by the next election. "So what?"

What a hard-headed, cold-hearted attitude for people to take on a disaster bill. I can't remember when I have been as disappointed in the behavior of Congress as on this bill.

Last evening, after the basketball game, the Chicago Bulls and the Utah Jazz promoted during the second half of that game a new television sitcom, I guess—I don't know. I have never seen it, probably never will, certainly don't intend to. If I do, it will be by accident. But the title was "Men Behaving Badly." "Men Behaving Badly." I thought, that could describe what I am going to face tomorrow in the Senate again. And someone said, "Well, but the Senate is more than just men." That is true, and it is a better place because of it. But I don't see anyone other than some prominent leaders out here leading in a direction that is counterproductive, and it is behaving badly.

There is an easy way for us to solve this problem. Today, Monday, thousands of people in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks woke up not in their homes—some in camper trailers, some in tents, some in motels, some in shelters, some in neighboring towns, some in acquaintances' homes, some in relatives' homes. They woke up not in their own homes and not in their own beds because they do not have a home. Most of them don't have a job. What they have is a wait on their hands waiting for the Congress and for their city to make a decision about their future.

Why is it up to us to make a decision? Because we have in this bill the resources that will allow those two cities to describe a new floodplain and buy out some of these homes and give people an opportunity to create a new future. But today, on Monday, they woke up probably feeling as anxious and as angry about this as I did, wondering: What on Earth are people thinking about trying to create a major political issue over a disaster bill?

Madam President, this weekend in the middle of this debate the Republican National Committee was on the radio in North Dakota with paid radio ads on this issue. Why would the Republican National Committee be doing paid radio ads about this issue? Because this is now, and has always been, according to leadership and the Republican National Committee, a political issue. From their point of view, the point seems to be to add extraneous and unrelated issues to this bill, and then try and shove it down the President's throat.

You know. The shoe is going to be on the other foot someday. Someday somebody else is going to have a disaster. Somebody else is going to do to them what is now being done to the people of this region. And then they

are going to complain about it, and say, "How can you do that?" I am not going to do it to them because I have not done that since I came to Congress, and I will not do it in the future. I will not play politics with the lives of people who have been victimized by national disasters. But someone will again in the future because the precedent is now established that it is just fine to do. It is OK. Get a disaster bill, and then get the national political committee of whichever party involved and start doing radio ads creating an advantage, and have the Speaker go to the Editorial Board and say, "We are not going to yield on this issue." Besides, it is just a bunch of folks up there in that territory; and says, "Voters will not remember this standoff over the supplemental appropriations at the ballot box."

Well, I am appalled by what we are facing here. And I don't know what we expect this week.

And I am not the only one who is appalled. I have here an article from the Sioux Falls, SD, paper. The headline reads, about the Governor of South Dakota, Governor Janklow, who is a Republican: "Janklow Slams GOP on disaster-aid bill." The article goes on to say, "Misguided Republican strategy will make Congress look bad."

Governor Janklow has it right.

This is not, and should not be, a bill on which the two parties play a game of political Ping-Pong. This ought to be a disaster bill that provides relief to victims.

So, Madam President, in the remaining days of this week I urge Members of the leadership here in the Congress to give us an opportunity to pass a disaster bill that does not contain extraneous or unrelated issues that are controversial. Give us an opportunity to pass a piece of legislation like that, have the President sign it, and have those people who are now wondering about their future who suffered through significant disasters, blizzards, floods, and fires to be able to understand disaster aid is on the way with the President's signature, that aid begins to move, decisions will be able to be made, and people's lives will be able to begin to move on as if normal again. But that can only happen if Members of the House and the Senate decide that they will forgo the opportunity to play politics with the disaster bill.

Madam President, the Fargo Forum, which is a newspaper in North Dakota, wrote an editorial. This is North Dakota's largest paper. "Act now on flood relief bill. More than 6 weeks ago the flood-ravaged Red River Valley just wanted to be left high and dry * * * [In] an ironic perversion of the wish, Congress acted or failed to act." The "Red River Valley just wanted to be left high and dry." Well, it is high and dry all right.

The point of their editorial is that Congress needs to act now. This is not a case where a week from now, or a month from now it is just fine. This is

urgent. This is an urgent need, and Congress needs to act now.

The Grand Forks Herald is the newspaper of a city of 50,000 people. Every day since Congress took the Memorial Day recess at the front of their masthead they say, "10 Days Since Congress Let Us Down." I suppose it is now 18 days since the House adjourned without passing the disaster bill. The editorial makes the point, and every citizen in Grand Forks makes the point, that Congress ought to move on this disaster bill and move now.

On March 19 the President sent his request to Congress. When the flood occurred and the President went to Grand Forks, ND, and spoke to several thousand people in an airplane hangar at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, he made the point that he was seeking a significant disaster relief bill and that he hoped that Congress would not add extraneous or unrelated amendments to the bill. What he hoped would not happen has happened. The result has now been substantial delay—at least 3 weeks' delay, and probably more.

Madam President, my desire would be that everyone call a political truce, that we simply recognize that the disaster bill is to respond to disasters, and that the way to provide hope and help to the victims of the disasters is to pass a bill without the major areas of controversy that have now been sent to the President.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST

Madam President, for all these reasons, I now send to the desk a clean supplemental appropriations bill for myself, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. WELLSTONE, and Mr. JOHNSON.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 18, H.R. 581; that all after the enacting clause be stricken, and that the text of the clean supplemental appropriations bill that I just sent to the desk be inserted in lieu thereof, that the bill be passed, and that the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. NICKLES. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, let me describe what it is I was just proposing. The major items of controversy that now exist in the legislation the President vetoed are the so-called anti-Government shutdown provision—the so-called continuing resolution provision—and the census issue.

I know the President in his veto message was going to object to more than those two. The bill that I sent to the desk and asked unanimous consent be considered was the conference report that was agreed to in both the House and the Senate, with the anti-Government shutdown provision and the census provision removed.

The shutdown provision has substantial amounts of controversy attached to it. I have no objection at all for that

to be considered at any time. I just do not think it ought to be considered on a disaster bill.

My bill removes the census portion of the disaster bill. I do not object that the Senate consider the census provision at some point. But there are plenty of other opportunities to consider it. As soon as the President signs the bill and disaster aid begins to flow, we will have other bills come to the floor of the Senate. My understanding is that there was a proposal to be brought to the floor of the Senate tomorrow. Both of these issues could be offered as amendments to that bill. I have no objection to that. If somebody wants to offer that, let's offer that and have a debate. I have no objection nor concern about that.

I just do not want these provisions to be provisions that interminably delay a disaster bill which should have passed, now it is 3 weeks ago.

If the newspaper reports are correct, it looks like this issue will not be resolved this week, nor probably next week.

How long do victims of a disaster have to wait? When will Congress understand its obligation, and the historical approach of dealing with disaster bills, of not adding highly controversial issues to a bill that deals with disasters?

It seems to me that this should be a time for cooler heads to prevail; a time for both sides to back away a bit and decide to pass the disaster bill without these provisions.

I have taken the time again today simply to attempt to describe what our region of the country is faced with, to describe why we are upset and angry about what has happened to this piece of legislation. And I will no doubt be on the floor additional times today and during this week.

I hope that in the coming couple of hours Members of Congress will decide this is not a strategy that does anything other than hurt victims of a disaster.

Does it help the political party? I don't think so. I mean, I guess that is why a political party would run ads over this weekend in my State, because they think they are being helped by it. I don't think anybody is being helped by it. I think the net result is that victims of a disaster get hurt.

I mean, if there are some who do not care who gets hurt as you march toward a political victory, that is one thing. But I don't think this is marching toward anything but chaos in any event, and I think it is clear who is getting hurt. Victims of the disaster are getting hurt.

I started today with a description of Rane Steffan, who is living in a camper trailer, has been for some while, perhaps will be for some while, with her kids. She does not want much. She, her family, and her children want a job because she doesn't have a job, because most of the businesses in this area have been closed—wants a job and a

home. She wants decisions to be made that will allow that to happen in her city, and in her community. And until this piece of legislation passes that cannot happen.

On behalf of Rane Steffan, and so many other thousands of families whose lives are on hold, I hope very much that both sides of the aisle will decide to pass a disaster bill free from contentious unrelated political matters. We need to get aid to those who need it as quickly as is possible.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader is recognized.

URGENT SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. NICKLES. Madam President, first, I objected to the unanimous-consent consideration. My friend and colleague from North Dakota expected it. He knew I would do so. He basically tried to pass the bill as designed by one Senator. That is not the way the legislative body works. The way the legislative body works is that there are procedures. It goes through committees. Senators add amendments trying to influence the behavior of Congress, trying to influence the behavior of Government, trying to set policy. That is what happened in this bill.

I might tell my colleague from North Dakota I did not vote for the bill anyway. I think this bill was not just a disaster bill. This bill grew, and it grew too much. The President submitted a bill in, I think, early May, for approximately \$4 billion. This bill grew to over \$9 billion. I voted against it.

Now, the President vetoed the bill, and he vetoed it supposedly because Congress put in a provision that says if, for whatever reason, we do not get an appropriation bill passed by the end of September, we will continue operating at this year's level of funding. I happen to think that is a perfectly responsible thing to do. The President does not like it. Maybe some Democrats do not like it, I guess because they want to spend a lot more money than this year's level. I think it was a responsible thing to do so we would avoid a shutdown, so Government employees, Government agencies, everyone would know that if in the event we did not pass an appropriation bill, we could continue operating at this year's level. I think that is proper. They did not. The President vetoed the bill. I wish he had not vetoed it for that reason. If I was President, I would have vetoed it because it spent too much money. That is one of the reasons why we have divisions of power. We happen to be equal branches. We do not just write an appropriation bill just designed by the President. If so, we would not have a Congress. We would just let the President write the bill.

But that is not the way the system works. We have equal branches of Government. So the President can submit his proposal, and then we will act on it.