

The Governor of South Dakota, Republican by the way, said: On a disaster bill you ought to deal with disasters. He said: For those who say nothing is getting hung up, that's just wrong. And not just he said it, a Republican Congressman from Minnesota, JIM RAMSTAD, said: Those who say there's money in the pipeline are being disingenuous at best. There is no money for housing. There is no money for buyouts and relocations of the homes and businesses that have been destroyed. There is no money for sewage systems. There is no money for roads. There is no money for a whole series of things that desperately need resources.

This is the Republican Governor of South Dakota. He said, "If you've got a disaster bill, you ought to deal with a disaster." He was complaining about the congressional leaders here for sticking controversial measures in a disaster relief bill. And he has it exactly right. For those who say nothing is being hung up, " * * * Janklow said the delay in the legislation is blocking reconstruction of sewage facilities, highways and a State-owned rail line in South Dakota."

Mr. President, this is how the flood victims feel.

This is from the largest newspaper in our State. The headline is very clear: "You are playing with our lives." Let me just read what this disaster victim said:

Ranee Steffan has strong words for members of Congress who think flood victims can wait while bickering continues in Washington . . .

"You are playing with our lives" . . . [she was speaking] from the sweltering travel trailer she and her family now call home. "This isn't some game. . . . [She said] You should come here and walk in my shoes for a day."

Homeless for 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 she believes think[s] Grand Forks residents are "getting along just fine."

They are not getting along just fine. We had one of our colleagues say, "Well, we can send you a bunch of trailers."

People in North Dakota do not see trailers as a long-term answer to their housing needs. Frankly, trailers in a North Dakota winter are not a very acceptable form of housing. We need to rebuild housing, housing that can withstand a North Dakota winter. We do not need a bunch of trailers sent to our part of the country. That is not the answer to what we face.

We have heard a lot of talk about what is happening and what is not happening, what people out there are asking for, what they are not asking for. How about hearing from the people out there. How about listening to them.

This is the mayor of Grand Forks in a letter to Senators LOTT and DASCHLE, this courageous mayor who has become, I think, an inspiration to the country because, in the face of adver-

sity, she has provided extraordinary leadership. Let me just make clear she is not a partisan. To my knowledge she is not a member of either political party. I have no idea what her political identification is. She has always said she is an independent, that her husband is a Republican. That is as much as anybody knows about her legal affiliation.

Here is what she says:

I urge you to strip all of the controversial amendments from the disaster aid bill and send the humanitarian emergency provisions of the bill to the President for his signature.

That is what she says. She continues:

We are grateful for the emergency aid provisions included in this bill. These provisions, especially funds for the Community Development Block Grant program, will be essential for Grand Forks to be able to recover and rebuild. North Dakota's short construction season dictates that we must take action quickly to rebuild and relocate homes away from the floodplain.

But the political fight over provisions unrelated to disaster relief have stalled this bill and delayed the recovery process for Grand Forks and other cities in the Red River Valley. This disaster aid is needed now. We are simply unable to make decisions about how and if we will be able to rebuild our city without knowing the extent of Federal resources available. We need funds now for housing, for buy-outs and relocation and homes of businesses, for roads and bridges, for school districts and many more urgent needs. With each passing day thousands of residents of Grand Forks and other communities are unable to get on with their lives and are forced to live in shelters, in government-issued trailers, or with relatives.

Again, thank you for the emergency provisions included in the disaster aid bill. I urge you to strip the controversial, non-disaster related measures from the disaster bill and send the humanitarian emergency provisions to the President for his signature.

This was the elected leader of the city of Grand Forks.

Last night, we heard that identical message from the head of the chamber of commerce, from other leaders of the business community, from people from all walks of life, a member of the police department, a member of the city works department, all of them talking to people across the country via satellite as they told their story, what has happened in their community, and what they are asking for now.

It has been 83 days since the President asked for disaster legislation. It has been 53 days since the dikes broke. It has now been 20 days—20 days—since Congress agreed to a disaster package but left town without enacting it before the Memorial Day recess.

Let me just read part of a letter from one of my constituents: "The people here have no homes, no jobs, and no other homes to go to. They have no toys, no bikes, no clothes, or anything else for their children, and you go home for a break. What are you thinking of?"

That is a sample of the literally hundreds of letters that we have gotten from the disaster area.

This is a letter from another constituent:

Perhaps you should visit here and see and feel the pain and devastation. Spend 3 days here, and you will soon understand why people are depressed and the anxiety level is extreme. We are stressed out.

Also, I am sure that if this disaster had hit your district, you would want to pass the legislation with a sense of urgency. That's all we expect.

What this means to me and my family: Relief from the flood of the century. It brought flood waters into our community, our house and six rental properties I own and manage. Indeed, the amount of damage I have sustained is mind boggling. I'm on the brink.

We urge you to pass the disaster relief bill today. Please don't delay another day. We can't wait.

I have hundreds, if not thousands, of letters like this from people out there who are asking their Government to respond. These people are proud people. They are independent people. They are hard-working people. But they have been hit with a series of disasters unprecedented in our State's history.

The worst winter ever, followed by the most powerful winter storm in 50 years, followed by a 500-year flood, followed by a fire in the midst of flood that destroyed much of the town of Grand Forks, a city of 50,000 people that had 95 percent of that town evacuated. That has never happened in America's history, a town of that size completely evacuated. The town right across the river, East Grand Forks, in Minnesota, a city of 9,000, was entirely evacuated. We are not going to be able to rebuild much of these towns. Many of these homes are just absolutely destroyed. Those homes need to be torn down. They represent a health hazard. The businesses, too, need to be torn down. We need to move back from the river to a more defensible location, but that cannot happen until and unless this Congress acts.

I just conclude by saying when the shoe is on the other foot—and I have been in the Senate 10 years—we were ready to help. We never delayed anybody's disaster bill ever. I never even thought of adding controversial provisions to a disaster bill that someone else needed. I just ask our colleagues to give us the same chance and extend the same respect to our constituents. They desperately need help and they need it now.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

EXCESS SPENDING IN DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I claim the time we had to talk about how to get this job done. We have talked for some time about the need. Now the question is, how do we now find a vehicle to get that done? That is what we ought to be spending our time talking about.

Let me yield to my friend, the Senator from Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for yielding.

In my view, we have had a long-standing problem in the Congress with emergency appropriations, supplemental appropriations, or so-called disaster bills. The problem has been—and truly there has been a disaster such as in North Dakota and Minnesota with the Red River flooding, and that is legitimate. But then built on top of that is a lot of spending that has nothing to do with the emergency nature of this piece of legislation.

I went on ahead and supported this supplemental appropriations bill even though I had some concerns about the amount of spending that was in the bill. In my view, the truly emergency provisions that are in there run in the dollar range from \$2.5 to \$4 billion. The bill is an \$8.6 billion bill.

The only thing that made me go ahead and support this particular piece of legislation is a provision in there that said that we would not shut down the Federal Government. I felt it was an appropriate bill. I did not particularly like all the spending that was in there, but I wanted to get something moving ahead so that we could take care of the needs of the people in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Mr. President, I am disappointed that the President chose to put politics ahead of people. I kept this need to take care of those people in mind, even though I was not entirely happy with the bill. I am disappointed he took such a narrow view. By vetoing the 1997 supplemental appropriations and rescissions bill, he has actually delayed its progress after the Congress has moved ahead. This bill would have provided funding for future disaster relief needs and ensured that we would not face a disaster of another Government shutdown.

Now, the majority was accused by the minority of being "hard headed and cold hearted" for not submitting the bill to the President sooner. I cannot imagine how outraged they must be now that the President has vetoed the bill. I hope that those who promised to tie up the Senate until this bill is passed are now willing to fight just as hard to override this veto, thereby providing funding for disaster relief and ensuring that there will not be another Government shutdown.

Let's be clear, this bill is not about holding up money for the flood victims, as some have suggested. Flood victims are currently receiving disaster relief from FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. To date, FEMA has already allocated over \$150 million to victims of the flood. Almost \$40 million in housing assistance checks have been issued to more than 21,000 flood victims. In addition, the Small Business Administration has approved more than \$75 million in disaster loans.

In short, the flood victims are being cared for. This bill replenishes funds for FEMA and ensures stability for future disaster funding.

Just as importantly, this bill is about preventing another disaster, the manmade disaster of a Government shutdown. This seems to be nothing more than a political move by the President designed to ensure that he can shut down the Government again, just as he did before when we were trying to balance the budget.

This is the same strategy we have seen from the President before. He impedes, stalls, and ultimately vetoes any compromise we reach, playing political games with public safety, and the productivity of our Federal employees. He then tries to get political mileage out of it by blaming the majority in Congress. When an agreement is finally reached, I have no doubt he will take credit for that, too.

I find it ironic that the President said during his State of the Union Address that the Federal Government should never be shut down again.

Why, then, does he now veto a bill that does exactly that: Ensure that the Government won't be shut down again? The continuing resolution portion of this bill has ensured that Congress and the President will be allowed to continue budget negotiations in good faith without harming the taxpayers or Federal employees and their families.

The President needs to put partisan politics aside and focus on what is good for our country.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, might I ask, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

MFN STATUS FOR CHINA

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, over the Memorial Day recess, I made a week-long trip to East Asia. This included stops in Seoul, South Korea; Pyongyang, North Korea; Beijing, China; Hong Kong, as well as Misawa Air Force Base in Japan. I spent most of my time on the three issues of most immediate concern to us in northeast Asia this year. First, food and security problems on the Korean Peninsula; second, the negotiations over China's entry into the World Trade Organization; and third, Hong Kong's transition to Chinese sovereignty, now less than 3 weeks away.

I also discussed longer term issues, including environmental protection, human rights, and United States-China security relations. These are complex subjects, with great implications for our national interest in all sorts of areas. With respect to the three imme-

diately issues, I think our basic strategies are well conceived, and we have good people in the military and the Foreign Service working on them. I am in the process of drafting a trip report that will address them in much more detail.

But we in Congress must first take up a different issue; that is, whether to support the President's decision to renew China's MFN status. So I will return to the floor in coming days to discuss the basic security, trade, environmental, and humanitarian issues we face in China and in East Asia generally. But today I will concentrate on MFN status—why it is legally right; why it is morally right, and why, given our compelling interest in issues like security in Korea, more fair and reciprocal trade with China, and a smooth transition for Hong Kong, it is right for our national interest.

LEGALLY RIGHT

First, renewal of MFN status is right under our law. The Jackson-Vanik law, which has governed renewal of MFN status for nonmarket economies since 1974, is the main law in place. It conditions MFN on two things: the existence of a bilateral commercial agreement, and freedom of emigration. Under the law, the President's choice is clear. We have a bilateral trade agreement signed with China in 1980, and China allows free emigration. Therefore, as a legal matter, the President was right to renew MFN and we should back him up.

MORALLY RIGHT

Second, renewing MFN status is morally right. At times, people in Washington are tempted to see a vote to revoke MFN as something which might promote human rights in China. This is a fine sentiment. People who advocate revoking MFN status to promote human rights are very well intentioned. But the effects of revoking MFN would be the opposite of what they intend.

To revoke MFN status, very simply, is to raise tariffs from Uruguay round to Smoot-Hawley levels. To take one example, that means raising tariffs on toys and stuffed animals from zero to 70 percent overnight, again, automatically, from zero to 70 percent tariff overnight. That hits one of China's major exports to the United States, at about 6 billion dollars' worth last year. And who makes them? On the whole, it's young Chinese working people trying to improve their lives.

What would happen if we revoke MFN status? The result should be obvious. Millions of innocent Chinese workers in toy factories and in other walks of life would lose their jobs. The Chinese Government would certainly be hurt, but it would still be there the next day. But the lives of these workers would be ruined. So, far from improving human rights, revoking China's MFN status would cause immense human suffering in China.

Of course, that would discredit our human rights efforts with the Chinese