

ownership and for his desire to promote home ownership. I am particularly grateful for that, and we have done that in this bill. Also, he is a champion for the homeless, which, again, I believe we address in this bill.

Then there is the in-between group, those people working for self-help, working very hard to move from welfare to work. They often qualify while they are working for certain subsidies, be they food stamps and, in some cases, section 8 housing, essentially making work worth it. If you are willing to work hard every day, we are willing to at least subsidize housing for you and your family. So his presentation about the need for more section 8 vouchers, I believe, was an excellent one and one with which I am in complete agreement.

I say to my colleague from Maryland that this bill is a work in progress. To be able to find an offset or a new revenue stream to meet the need for new vouchers now and to be able to sustain them in the future is a set of actions I wish to take. I am working closely with the administration to find an offset that would be both reliable and sustainable, and I look forward to our continued working relationship. I welcome his ongoing support and collaboration. Again, this bill is a work in progress. I really do thank the Senator.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me begin where others have also begun by complimenting the distinguished chair and ranking member. They have an extraordinary working relationship. They are excellent partners in moving this important bill. I commend them both for their work.

This has not been easy, especially this year, but they have demonstrated once again what happens when two people of intelligence and determination can work together to achieve the product that we have before us. I certainly hope that our colleagues will recognize that work and will be as supportive as I hope we can be on a bipartisan basis.

If there is one area where I hope we can take another look in conference it is section 8 and the question of public housing. The affordable housing crisis, as many know, is now at record levels. But we are in a situation where very little is available in the form of new vouchers to deal with millions of children and senior citizens who are currently at risk, not because we don't have the desire but because we haven't had the resources.

We have considered the demand for section 8 housing. We have looked at

public housing in many ways but have not funded it adequately because we have felt the need to fund other priorities. In fact, we have used section 8 as an offset to fund other programs. That offset has now been completely depleted.

But 5.3 million American households suffer from the worst-case housing situations—defined as paying more than 50 percent of their income in rent or living in substandard conditions. I believe Senator SARBANES mentioned that.

In my home State of South Dakota, the average waiting list for public housing is now 9 months for section 8. It is a very serious problem even in a rural State such as ours where one wouldn't think that the availability of public housing is nearly as much of a problem as it might be in some of the larger cities.

But we have seen a half decade of a budget freeze on housing assistance. From 1977 to 1994, the number of HUD-assisted households grew by 2.6 million—an average of 204,000 additional households each year from 1977 through 1983, and an additional 107,000 households per year from 1984 to 1994. But in 1995 we saw a reversal of that policy—a freeze on new housing vouchers despite the growing need.

In 1999, we saw the first new vouchers in 5 years. The President has made a modest request for fiscal year 2000 of 100,000 for this year. Last year we made available 50,000 new section 8 vouchers, the first in 5 years. In my own State, again, 321 families would receive section 8 assistance with appropriations of 100,000 new vouchers. To provide no new vouchers is, frankly, a flaw in what is otherwise a very important bill. I hope we can begin to work on it much more constructively.

In some areas, housing costs have risen faster than incomes of low-income working families. In addition, due to the aging and gentrification of older housing, the number of affordable rental units has actually declined.

The section 8 housing voucher program clearly provides one of the only means—if not the only means—to subsidize the rents of apartments that families locate on the private rental markets. They don't give families a free ride. I think everyone hopefully understands that. There is no free ride for families. They still must find the resources to pay between 30 and 40 percent of their incomes for rent. They have to take some responsibility in their own right. Without vouchers, many low-income working families simply are unable to secure affordable housing.

Another problem, of course, related to public housing and section 8 housing is the Community Builder Program. The bill currently would require the firing of 410 HUD employees, which would eliminate local service in almost two dozen communities, including South Dakota. That also would be a problem.

I realize our distinguished colleagues had to make some very tough choices. I applaud them for making many of the choices they did and coming up with as fair and comprehensive a bill as we have before the Senate. I intend to support it strongly and enthusiastically. I do hope, though, when we get to conference, we can address the section 8 and public housing programs. I believe that is the one area where, as good as this bill is, we still can demonstrate real progress.

Failing that, I am very concerned about the implication for housing for low-income people across this country, in South Dakota, in rural areas, as well as in urban areas that I know are commonly associated with public housing programs. This is not just an urban problem; it is a rural problem as well. I know the distinguished ranking member understands that and is very knowledgeable and cognizant of that issue and problem. I hope we can do better in resolving it once we get to conference.

I congratulate my colleagues and yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I add another cosponsor to amendment No. 1744. I ask that Senator ABRAHAM be added.

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

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, let me first thank the distinguished minority leader for his kind comments. I share his concern about the availability of affordable housing. At an appropriate time, I want to discuss some of the problems in a little more detail. I recognize his concern and the concerns raised by the Senator from Maryland, the Senator from Rhode Island, and others. There is a bigger problem, and we will discuss that later.

We have been in quorum calls for almost the last hour. We have an amendment Senator MIKULSKI will offer shortly on behalf of Senator INOUE. However, we are open for business. This is daylight. This is a good time to present amendments, to argue amendments, with great coverage. Everybody is paying attention; everybody is awake. We beg and plead with our colleagues to come down and get going so we can finish this up at an early hour.

I see the distinguished junior Senator from North Carolina who wants to share some views on the very serious problem caused by the hurricane in his State.

I yield the floor.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

HURRICANE FLOYD

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, I am here to talk about the terrible devastation that has occurred in my State of North Carolina, which most of my colleagues, I know, are aware of, and to

give them an update on a report I gave last week.

The people of North Carolina are suffering in a way they have never suffered before. This is absolutely the worst disaster that has ever hit the State of North Carolina. There has been tragedy, and there have been acts of heroism. It has been an extraordinarily difficult situation, particularly for the people of eastern North Carolina. Thus far, we have 37 confirmed deaths as a result of the hurricane. We have four additional North Carolinians at this point presumed dead. We expect, as the waters recede, as FEMA officials and other local folks are able to get into houses that have been covered by water, that we will find additional North Carolinians who have lost their lives as a result of this flood. Let me give one example.

We have one entire family that was wiped out by this flood—six members of the family. This happened in Pine-top, NC, which is one of the worst hit areas of eastern North Carolina. Ben and Vivian Mayo, Keisha Mayo, and Cabrina and Destiny Flowers were all killed as they tried to escape in a small boat but the boat capsized. Yesterday, rescue team members who were working in the area discovered another member of the family, Teshika, who was 50 feet from her grandparents' home at the time of her death. She was 5 years old. That is six members of this family who died in the course of this hurricane. This is a terrible tragedy. I ask all of my colleagues and the American people as a whole to please give their thoughts and prayers to these families as they go through an extraordinarily difficult time.

We had business losses that we have never had in the history of North Carolina. An example is Jamie Milliken's family who operated an electric supply company in Brunswick County. As a result of the flood, they have lost \$2 million worth of merchandise. They had no flood insurance. Some of the hardest hit businesspeople in eastern North Carolina are the farmers.

The bottom line is—and I will talk in a little more detail about this in a few minutes—there are many farmers in eastern North Carolina who will be put out of business. They were already struggling, already having a very difficult time making ends meet. This has been a year where they have been hit and hit again: Hit by drought, hit by low crop prices, hit by low livestock prices. And then, when they are teetering on the edge, they get the final nail in the coffin, which is the effect of this hurricane on their businesses and on their farms. The effect has been devastating.

We have also had enormous problems with housing and homelessness. The truth is, we have people who are desperate. For example, we got a call in my office from a mother whose daughter is stranded in New Hanover County, where Wilmington is located. She lost everything: Her home, her car, all of

her possessions, and her job. Her mother says her daughter has absolutely no idea how she will go about rebuilding her life and she can't stop crying. Every time she calls her, she is crying. She has no idea how she will deal with the situation.

We have about 10,000 people in eastern North Carolina who still remain in shelters, who cannot get to their homes because of the floodwaters, and they have nowhere to go except the shelters. Mr. President, 50,000 homes have been affected by this hurricane. We expect that number actually to go up as we have more time to go in and see what damage has been caused.

I might add, I spoke with the Director of FEMA, James Lee Witt, a bit ago. He pointed out to me something that the people in North Carolina have already thought about. When the floodwaters recede, because the water has been contaminated by a variety of things, including wastewater treatment plants being flooded, including dead livestock, including any of a variety of things, the water is contaminated that has gone into people's homes. When that water recedes, folks are going to want to go home. They have been out of their homes for a long time now, living in shelters. They will want to go home. The problem is, their houses will be contaminated. They will have enormous health threats as a result of the contamination caused by the floodwaters. We will be confronted with a situation of trying to decontaminate the houses, and in some cases that may be impossible. It may be required that the houses simply be torn down and rebuilt.

I might add, many of these people whose houses have been flooded had no flood insurance. To be fair to them, they had no reason to have flood insurance. They didn't live in a floodplain. They didn't live in an area that had ever been flooded. They had no reason to believe their homes would ever be flooded. They are the victims of this hurricane.

Water supplies. We have thousands of people in eastern North Carolina who have no clean water. Many people who had wells as the source of their drinking water, the water they use on their farm, the water they use to bathe—the wells are gone.

In Greenville, which is probably the largest city in eastern North Carolina, they are facing an entire shutdown of their water supply due to a break in the water main. If this occurs, every restaurant, every business, will have to close and it will affect every resident in the area.

We have about 120 million gallons of hog waste caused by broken and flooded lagoons spilling into floodwaters. Water is flowing directly from our sewage systems into these floodwaters, which are contaminating homes, contaminating businesses, contaminating farms.

We also have a problem with our roads. We have more than 900 roads

that have been washed out where floods have been recorded. One example of this is Interstate 95. You can just see the extent to which Interstate 95 has been flooded. It is totally impassable. We still have, I might add, many sections of Interstate 95 and Interstate 40 which are still impassable. We have 10 bridges that have been destroyed during the course of this.

I mentioned earlier our farms and our agriculture in eastern North Carolina. These folks have been devastated. They have been through extraordinarily difficult times. Now the bottom line is their farms are underwater.

Just some examples of the crop losses we expect to be incurred: Cotton, we expect to lose 80 percent of the cotton crop in North Carolina; soybeans, 75 to 80 percent; peanuts, 75 to 80 percent; sweet potatoes, to date, about 25 percent of that crop has been harvested. We expect to lose anywhere from 75 to 80 percent and possibly greater of the sweet potato crop. Mr. President, 50 percent of the tobacco crop, which we all know is an enormously important economic crop in North Carolina, has been lost.

Livestock: I just finished meeting a few minutes ago with livestock farmers, hog farmers from eastern North Carolina, and they have been totally devastated. They have virtually no insurance. A lot of these farms have lost many thousands of dollars. In fact, the average amount of equipment that is located on these farms is worth \$500,000. That equipment is not insured and it has been largely destroyed because the people had to leave their farms so quickly when the water started to rise. There have been more than 100,000 hogs that have been drowned so far; about 3 million poultry. Widespread starvation is facing many of the animals that still are in eastern North Carolina because they are cut off from feed sites and they are cut off from rescue efforts.

The fishing industry has suffered a great deal so far, and they are going to continue to suffer. Many fishermen have lost their boats, and we expect many of the environmental results of this hurricane's devastation in eastern North Carolina to cause problems with our fishing reserves for many years to come.

Finally, debris and contaminated water has done enormous damage to the soil of eastern North Carolina, of which our farmers are so proud and have relied upon for so long.

I can show just a couple of other examples of the flooding that exists in eastern North Carolina. Many folks have seen these photographs from some of the television stories. But here is an example of the level of the flooding in a rural area in eastern North Carolina. These are people who never had water on their property. They never had any notion they had to be worried about that.

Here is an example of what I saw when I traveled this past weekend over

eastern North Carolina. What is shown in this photograph I saw all over eastern North Carolina. You can see that it is not just flooding. The flooding is up to the roofs of these houses and it is extensive and you see it over and over and over. It is all over the areas of eastern North Carolina. Can you imagine the folks who spent their lives living in these homes and the devastation this has created for them? Everything they own and spent their lives putting together is in these homes that have been flooded.

Finally, I made mention of the farming operations. Here is a farm in eastern North Carolina. Everything we see underwater in these sections is all farmland; all had crops on them, all a total loss, 100 percent total loss. This scene is repeated over and over. I spent hours in a helicopter going over eastern North Carolina and landing in various places. I can't tell you the human tragedy associated with this for people who have spent their lives here. For these folks who farm this land and who live in eastern North Carolina, this is not just a place they live. This is a way of life for them, and they have now lost it. This is something that is going to be difficult, if not impossible, for the people of eastern North Carolina to ever recover from.

Having said all of this, there are a number of people we need to thank because the reality is there have been and there will continue to be acts of heroism as a result of this catastrophe in eastern North Carolina.

First, FEMA; FEMA has done an extraordinary job so far. I expect them to continue to do an extraordinary job. Their Director, James Lee Witt, has been on top of this problem. He has been in regular contact with all the people who are involved, including myself and Governor Hunt. The American Red Cross has been omnipresent in eastern North Carolina and will continue to be so. They have done a wonderful job.

The Salvation Army and the Marine Corps have done a wonderful job. The Army, the troops who are located in eastern North Carolina, the Coast Guard, the Navy, the National Guard have all worked extraordinarily hard to deal with this problem.

I might add, our mayors and our State and local officials have done a wonderful job. I include in that group our Governor, Jim Hunt, who has been on top of this situation from the very beginning. I am proud of the job he has done.

I am also proud of the job that has been done by many of the folks in eastern North Carolina. The bottom line is North Carolina has been devastated in a way that we have never been devastated before. We have people who are struggling, who are confronting situations they never in their lifetimes thought they would have to confront. People's lives have been lost, people's futures have been lost, and their businesses have been lost. There are farm-

ers who spent their lives farming this land who will have a very difficult time getting back to the place where they can farm their land again.

What we ask is simply for the prayers and support of my colleagues in the Senate and of the American people because the reality is we are in a difficult situation. We need their help. We know the American people will respond in the way they always have to this kind of tragedy, which is to support us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, let me express my gratitude to the Senator from North Carolina for outlining the tragic situation he faces in his State. As one who has faced similar circumstances in my State, seeing nothing but the tops of flooded buildings, I can tell you I was very grateful for then-chairman of the committee, Senator MIKULSKI, who came to my State and worked with us during the floods of 1993. I know there is nothing more important to these people who have lost everything than to know that somebody is trying. There is no way we can make them whole. We intend to see that FEMA meets their needs.

I have already discussed with the senior Senator of North Carolina some of the needs. I assure both Senators that we on the committee will do whatever is necessary to make sure FEMA has the resources needed. We believe they have adequate reserves right now, but we are going to continue to work on this problem and follow FEMA's activities. We look forward to working with the Senators from North Carolina to make sure we do have adequate resources available.

I join with the Senator from North Carolina in saying we appreciate and congratulate James Lee Witt and the entire FEMA operation for what appears to be a very prompt response to a disaster situation.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I am grateful for the courtesy of the distinguished manager of the bill, Mr. BOND, for his willingness to work with me to make sure that FEMA is fully prepared to respond to the needs of victims of flooding caused by Hurricane Floyd. I do not exaggerate when I say that North Carolina is facing the worst flooding in its history.

There is no need for me to catalogue the details of the enormous suffering caused by this storm because I know that Senators understand and share my dismay in hearing the incredible damage reports still coming in from my home state. I am so very grateful for the kind words of my colleagues who have told me they are thinking of—and praying for—the people of Eastern North Carolina, and I know they join in pledging that the federal government will do its part to alleviate their suffering.

So, Mr. President, I genuinely appreciate Senator BOND's efforts to assure that FEMA is currently funded at a level to respond to the developing situ-

ation in Eastern North Carolina. I hope it is understood that this is a serious and ongoing situation and that state and local officials are still scrambling to grasp the enormity of the loss to life and property. North Carolinians have become gratefully familiar with the splendid work FEMA does in the wake of natural disasters, but our familiarity does not minimize the heartfelt gratitude we feel for the dedicated public servants who are helping the victims of flooding.

I have the utmost faith in Senator BOND and his fine staff, and I appreciate their willingness to consider any additional needs that FEMA may identify as this bill goes to Conference. At the same time, I certainly understand that there will be an effort to make an accurate accounting of the funding—if any—that FEMA needs and I pledge that I do not intend to make unreasonable demands upon appropriators. It is important that we do not act heedlessly in our understandable haste to help those in desperate need, and I will certainly make every effort to make sure that any aid requested is genuinely necessary.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I certainly appreciate the diligence of Senator HELMS and his willingness to work with me as we both seek to make sure FEMA is ready to help the victims of Hurricane Floyd. I know how deeply he cares for his constituents, and I join him in sending my thoughts to the people of Eastern North Carolina—as well as those suffering in other affected states—as they begin the hard work of recovering from this very serious natural disaster.

I certainly intend to work with him every step of the way to make sure that FEMA has the financial resources it needs to continue the important work already underway in North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I, too, wish to, first of all, express my support for the people of North Carolina. I believe the way we express our support and our concern is not only with kind words, which we would like to say many, but with deeds. Right now James Lee Witt and other emergency management people are responding with gallantry and are trying to get a swift assessment of damage. We want to work with you, Senator HELMS and Governor Hunt, to really be able to get emergency assistance to the communities and to do it in a way that is swift, helpful, and also affordable.

I, too, have been hit by damage in my State. Senator BOND is right. One of the first things we did together was to be in Missouri because they had been hit by floods. A short time later we were hit by ice storms and floods.

You know what is so heartbreaking: After the floods and the waters come, then the water goes down, and you just see broken dreams, the hard work of lifetimes just washed away. You go

into a home, and there is the tattered photograph of the wedding picture, there is the mud-saturated picture of the graduation, and the appliances when you open the door. I think what I remember also, most of all, in addition to the tears, is the mud, the smell, and so on.

The first thing is that it breaks your heart. We want to make sure it does not break their pocketbook. That is what we can work on.

Hurt hearts. I believe the people of North Carolina will have so many communal ways that those hearts will be healed. But the immediate thing we can do is to make sure that the devastation to the pocketbook is not permanent and that they have the opportunity to restore a way of life.

So I just say to the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. EDWARDS, that he is not alone nor are those thousands and thousands of people. We have been thinking about you. We have been praying for you. Our hearts are filled with sadness that people have lost their lives. We really do not want to see the loss of their way of life.

Mr. EDWARDS. Will the Senator yield for a moment?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Yes.

Mr. EDWARDS. I want to take a moment to thank the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Missouri for their very kind comments. I know they will, as they always have, step to the front and help the folks in North Carolina who need help so desperately.

I would add to that, I say to Senator BOND, that Senator HELMS is working very hard, the senior Senator from North Carolina, on this problem. He and I have talked about it on a couple of occasions already. We will continue to talk about it. He is working very hard on this problem. So is our Governor.

We appreciate very much your help and support. I appreciate your thoughts and prayers. This is one of those times where we need all the help and support we can get, I can promise you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—Continued

Mr. BOND. I am prepared to enter into a colloquy with the distinguished Senator from Maine who has a matter of great importance in her State.

Ms. COLLINS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me begin by praising the terrific work done by the Senator from Missouri and the Senator from Maryland in putting together this appropriations bill. I know a lot of the issues are very dif-

ficult. They have worked together in a bipartisan way to come up with a bill that is responsible fiscally and yet meets some urgent needs of many people in our Nation. I commend them both for their efforts in this regard.

I appreciate the Senator from Missouri giving me this opportunity to engage him in a discussion on an issue of great importance to Maine and the Nation as a whole. That is the issue of providing fair Federal assistance to our homeless men, women, and children, regardless of where they live. Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI have been leaders in addressing housing issues affecting underserved and vulnerable populations, especially our Nation's homeless population.

Under their leadership, the Department of Housing and Urban Development homeless assistance grants have increased from \$823 million in fiscal year 1998 to \$975 million in fiscal year 1999. I am very pleased to note that the appropriations bill that is before us now would further increase funding for vital homeless assistance grants by providing a little more than \$1 billion for these critical programs.

Senator BOND's continued dedication to this vital and often forgotten issue has served the public well, as has the commitment of the Senator from the State of Maryland. I salute them for their effort to direct the funding of the resources to those most in need.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Senator from Maine for her kind words. I know of her personal commitment to helping the homeless. I strongly support these important programs which do benefit the homeless men and women in America. I hope we can come up with a permanent solution to homelessness, especially for those persons with mental disabilities.

Ms. COLLINS. Although Congress has done a good job in recognizing the need for more funding in this area to serve this very vulnerable population, I have become extremely concerned about the process that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has used to award a particular kind of homeless grant, and that is the continuum of care grant. This has been a real problem in my State, and I suspect the Senator from Missouri has heard from other States as well.

Mr. BOND. Unfortunately, we have had a number of Members express to us their concern about the continuum of care grant award process. Many believe that the HUD process has proven to be confusing for applicants and perhaps even incomprehensible to anyone outside the HUD compound.

Ms. COLLINS. I note that has been exactly the very unfortunate experience in my State. Let me give you a little background.

The needs of the homeless population in Maine have increased in recent years. Often when we think of the homeless, we think of large cities. In fact, there are homeless people throughout this Nation, including in rural States such as Maine.

From 1993 to 1996, Maine's homeless population grew by almost 20 percent. It is estimated that more than 14,000 people are homeless in my home State today. Despite this great and growing need, however, the Department of Housing and Urban Development denied both the applications from the State of Maine for continuum of care funding last year. In effect, the HUD competitive homeless assistance funding distributed to the State of Maine went from \$3.7 million to zero. You can imagine the impact on my State.

Moreover, we were stunned by HUD's decision because Secretary Cuomo, in 1998, had awarded Maine's programs with the HUD "best practices" awards of excellence.

A vigorous public campaign by people in Maine and repeated efforts by the congressional delegation ultimately compelled HUD to provide \$1 million to the city of Portland to renew certain projects. This money, though welcomed, was far from sufficient to allow the State to meet the needs of its homeless population.

That is the experience I wanted to share with the Senator from Missouri and the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. BOND. What happened to Maine, and other States, in the competitive award process simply should not have occurred. To me, it is quite puzzling. As many of us know, the problem of rural homelessness is complicated; it is pervasive. I live in a rural area. Rural areas have higher poverty rates and a higher percentage of the population living in inadequate housing, which are key factors contributing to homelessness. Providing service to the rural homeless is not easy. It is complicated by distance, isolation, and lack of effective communication.

Ms. COLLINS. It seems to me that HUD needs to understand the impact on the homeless, on the very people we are trying to serve, of simply shutting States out from the housing award process. HUD needs to take greater care to work with States where funding may be in peril in order to ensure that we are not hurting the homeless people of our Nation.

Contrary to what HUD seems to think, homeless men and women do not disappear. Their needs do not disappear when funding is cut off. In fact, their desperate needs still exist.

To address these problems, I have introduced a Senate bill which would require a minimum distribution of continuum of care homeless assistance funding to each State. I realize that I cannot offer that on this bill because of the rule XVI issue, but I hope the chairman and the ranking minority member will agree with me that this is an important issue.

Would the chairman agree that the goal of HUD should be to make every effort to ensure that every State can receive some homeless grant funding because every State has homeless people, unfortunately?

Mr. BOND. I certainly agree with the sentiments expressed by the Senator