

With that, Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time to my colleague from Oklahoma, Senator INHOFE.

Mr. INHOFE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. President. I thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. President, in Oklahoma we have gone through tragedies that are indescribable. The Murrah Federal Office Building was the most significant terrorist attack on domestic soil in the history of America. It is one that you can't describe standing here on the Senate floor. I have been there. And I remember so well the thundering march, the cadence of the fire trucks as they were going to try to extract so many people out of the building, and all types of volunteers.

We saw the same thing yesterday. It was indescribable. I note the story of a horse that was picked up and taken a quarter of a mile in the air, and dropped on top of a car, then a car on top of a house, and the twisted "I" beams. The power, the indescribable power that was there.

James Lee Witt—I am very complimentary of James Lee Witt, a man I have known long before he was Director of FEMA. As chairman of the committee that has jurisdiction over FEMA, I work very closely with him. And I tell you right now, he had his hands on there. He was personally involved in it. He explained to us that this is the most significant tornado that he had seen in terms of the devastating damage and power that was there.

You always remember one or two things. I recall in the helicopter ride going across a little town called Moore, OK. Everything was devastated in that town, except right across the street from the most devastating part of this tornado stood the First Baptist Church of Moore, OK. It had been untouched.

As my senior Senator from Oklahoma said, we are so appreciative of everyone coming together, for all of the comments of our colleagues since we have been back, the prayers that we had this morning from the Senate Chaplain and others, and people like the Governor of Oklahoma, the mayor of Oklahoma City throughout yesterday, the police departments and the fire departments, all of the volunteers, and certainly FEMA bringing this all together.

We are very thankful, and we in Oklahoma will be bound to that. We ask for your continued prayers for the families, for those who lost their lives, and for the families of those who lost their lives.

I thank very much all of the government coming together to help us rebuild the damage that has been done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BROWNBACK addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for a period of up to 5 minutes.

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

KANSAS TORNADOES

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, the State of Kansas was also hit by the same system that hit Oklahoma which caused so much tragedy and damage. I would like to speak for a few minutes on that.

We had a number of families that had homes destroyed. We had five people killed in Kansas, hundreds were injured, and thousands of people lost their homes and businesses. I know they are in the hearts and minds of all Americans today, and we will stand ready to assist in that in any way we can.

The devastation that these tornadoes left in their paths is just shocking.

I want to show you a picture of the aftermath. This was actually taken of the damage that took place in Moore, OK. You can just see the devastating power that is in one of these systems that can rise up so fast and cause so much destruction. In Wichita, the trail of destruction was 15 miles long and 5 miles wide.

As I mentioned previously, five Kansans lost their lives, and more than 70 people were injured from the fatal twisters.

More than 500 homes have been damaged or destroyed, leaving many people homeless.

I have the second picture that I wanted to show people, a view of what has taken place. This is an aerial view of the Lake Shore Trailer Park in South Wichita. You can see where the path of the tornado was, where it was the most intense going through with just absolute destruction in the wake of that path of where it went through.

More than 50,000 people have been left without power.

Sedgwick County, KS, where Wichita is located, has reported that over 1,100 structures were destroyed, and more than 7,100 structures were damaged.

In the town of Haysville, right next to Wichita, 27 businesses have been wiped out, and virtually eliminating the business district of this Wichita suburb.

The father of one of my staffers—the person who is actually my scheduler—is the principal of Chisolm Life Skills Center in Wichita. His entire school was demolished by this tornado.

We are very proud of the rapid response of people who have reached out to help us through this terrible tragedy—the State and local authorities in Kansas, the rescue personnel, the Kansas National Guard, FEMA, and citizens of the Wichita area. They have really reached out in that typical Midwestern tradition of helping others when they are having difficulty.

I am also pleased to report that the President has responded quickly to the

situation in both Kansas and Oklahoma by ordering Federal relief to those counties hit by these devastating tornadoes. The American Red Cross and the Salvation Army have provided 800 numbers for those wishing to help victims of these disasters.

I have pictures of a couple of victims. This apartment complex was destroyed in the wake of the path of the tornado. This is a picture of Suzie Dooley and her daughter, Sarah, who is 13, and their family dog, Wilma, trying to gather themselves after losing their mobile home near 55th Street, South, in Wichita. Their faces show the destruction they have been through, but also the hope and thanks they are alive and were not injured in the process.

The Red Cross and Salvation Army are offering shelter for people in Wichita who need help. The Red Cross has an 800 number, 800-HELP-NOW, to contact to provide help. We can provide a local phone number. They are on the Internet at www.DisasterRelief.org. Funds can be sent to the American Red Cross in Wichita. The Salvation Army has an 800 number as well.

I know the nature of Kansans and Americans is to help one another in a time of need. I will work with Federal and State authorities to provide fast and effective relief to families and communities harmed by this natural disaster.

I know I speak for my Senate colleague, my fellow Senator from Kansas, Senator PAT ROBERTS, in saying we will continue to keep the victims and their families in our actions, thoughts, and prayers as we hope much of the rest of the country will in this very difficult time.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I am sure all of our colleagues express our deep sympathy to the Senators from Oklahoma and Kansas and the communities that were so devastated by these storms.

We have all seen these disasters happen, and then the inspiration that Senator NICKLES alluded to, with everyone coming together. Clearly, this takes a lot of effort and a long time to dig out.

Our prayers will be with these Senators and these citizens of the fine States of Oklahoma and Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I add my words to those who talked about the tragedy in Oklahoma this morning. I remember watching television last night and seeing the power and the destructive might of those storms that swept across Oklahoma and parts of Kansas as well.

I have a feeling for what the people are going through, as a result of the disasters that hit North Dakota in 1997. We had the worst flood in 500 years in Grand Forks, ND, and we had 95 percent of the town evacuated, the largest mass evacuation of a city in the United States since the Civil War. I know the trauma those people are facing, and I know the difficulty of recovery.

Our hearts go out to the people in Oklahoma and Kansas who have been so affected. I hope they know that we are prepared to respond and to help. We in North Dakota remember very well how people reached out a helping hand to our State, so many people from around the country who actually came to North Dakota to help us rebuild—the Red Cross, the other organizations, the Salvation Army. We had a woman from California who came to town and gave \$2,000 to every family that had been affected, a gift of tens of millions of dollars.

We remember very well the Federal Government's rapid response, the agencies of the Federal Government that moved to assist the people who were affected. FEMA did an absolutely superb job under the leadership of James Lee Witt. We will never forget it. The Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the leadership of Secretary Cuomo, did a superb job, and we will never forget their help. The SBA was quick to move in to help businesses. We know all of those agencies will be ready to respond in Oklahoma and Kansas as well.

I hope that we see the Congress respond. I believe the people in Oklahoma and Kansas deserve the same kind of rapid and full response that we received in North Dakota. Frankly, I hope they don't face some of the delays we faced in trying to get a congressional response, because when people are devastated, they should not have to wait for help. This Government is big enough and strong enough and this country is generous enough to move to help immediately.

Mr. President, again, our hearts go out to the people in Oklahoma and Kansas who have lived through this trauma; and to those who have lost relatives and loved ones, we share their deep sorrow.

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, this week is Teacher Appreciation Week. Yesterday was National Teacher Day.

For a number of our colleagues, education is such a core subject—both of the 105th Congress and now in the 106th Congress—Members want to express themselves on this subject.

I am joined today by the distinguished Senator from Mississippi with some opening remarks about Teacher Appreciation Week.

I yield up to 4 minutes to the Senator from Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, let me congratulate my friend, the distinguished Senator from Georgia, for organizing this special order and allowing this opportunity to speak on the subject of Teacher Appreciation Week.

TRIBUTE TO TINA SCHOLTES, MISSISSIPPI'S
TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am proud to cosponsor the Senate Resolu-

tion proclaiming this week Teacher Appreciation Week.

This week, in every state, students and parents are taking time to thank the school teachers, and we should too. They are the true heroes in our nation's effort to enrich the lives of all our citizens through education.

I want to pay tribute today to a special Mississippi teacher. She is Mississippi Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Tina Fisher Scholtes, of Sudduth Elementary School in Starkville, Mississippi. Tina has been an elementary school teacher for sixteen years. She has spent the past fourteen years teaching first grade in Starkville.

First grade lays the foundation for formal education. Every parent hopes their child will begin school with an excellent teacher. Tina Scholtes is without a doubt an excellent teacher. Being an excellent teacher requires hard work, along with respect for children and an understanding of the learning process. Tina has those attributes and more. She also cares about outcomes. She wants all her students to succeed.

Beyond the Masters Degree she earned at Mississippi State University, Tina has completed professional development for teaching reading and mathematics; the special needs of teaching deaf students; National Board Certification; and training other teachers. Her resume is evidence of her capacity for gaining knowledge and sharing it with others. While continuing her first grade teaching, she has returned to Mississippi State University where as a clinical instructor she directs the activities of student teachers.

Tina has brought new teaching techniques into the schools where she has taught. She serves as a mentor to new teachers and has developed school wide curriculum reforms. She also has used local television programs to provide early childhood education lessons to parents.

Another indication that she is a dedicated teacher is her participation in the Parent Teacher Association where she served as President while teaching at Emerson Elementary School. Tina recognizes the importance of teachers participating in the community and is active in her church, and in other community activities.

I was very pleased that Tina Scholtes took time to visit my office when she was in Washington recently for the National Teacher of the Year recognition events.

I congratulate her on all her successes. The first graders in Starkville, Mississippi are lucky, indeed, to begin their lives as students with Tina Scholtes, and we are all grateful to her for being such a good example for other teachers to follow.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 4 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Labor-Education Committee, Senator JEFFORDS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator JEFFORDS is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to participate in honoring our teachers in National Teacher Appreciation Week.

I think we all remember those early years of our lives when we started school. I still remember the first day of first grade. I remember going to school in my father's hand and fearing what was going to happen to me. I remember Mrs. Anderson who greeted us all individually at the door and how immediately I warmed up to her. It was then I realized this really wasn't going to be as bad as I thought. I can even remember where my seat was that year.

Ms. Maughn, in second grade, was another wonderful person. The teacher I remember more was Viola Burns, my third grade teacher. That was the beginning of World War II. She realized I needed a little further work so she had me read Time magazine and come back to her to talk about it. I also had her in the sixth grade. She was an incredible individual who helped shape my life.

Then fourth grade was "teacher unappreciation year"—I don't want to remember that. We rebelled. We ran through five teachers before we settled down. I wiped that from my memory. I feel sorry for those five teachers.

I think everyone has memories and understands what an incredible help a teacher can be in our lives.

My mother was a music and art teacher; my sister, a third grade teacher; my niece is a teacher; the man across the street was the principal of our high school.

Those schools are gone. My former elementary school is now a private school, a Christian church school; middle school is the fire station; my high school is now the middle school.

I still remember the teachers. It is not brick and mortar but the teachers that make a difference. Dindo Rivera goes around the country talking about the changes in education and how important it is. If an office worker had fallen asleep 20 years ago, woke up and walked through a modern office, they would be in incredible despair. They wouldn't know what to do. They wouldn't know how to answer the phone.

But he goes on to say that if a teacher had the same experience of falling asleep and waking up now, that teacher would walk into the classroom and find that not much had changed. But the world has changed and our teachers cannot be made the scapegoats. We should not indicate that it is their problem. We, as a nation, have to recognize the teachers need help and we have to give it to them. That means we have to develop professional training. We have to be sure our colleges are producing teachers who are well qualified. At the same time, we have to recognize that our Nation will not prosper if we do not realize it is the teachers who make the difference. We are increasing standards and doing all these things to envelop them with modern technology