

that comes with recognizing genocide, past or present, foe or friend, alike. I urge the Members of this House to join in an effort to call upon the leadership to hear the genocide resolution, and I hope the leadership will heed that call.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ANGELS IN ADOPTION AWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this week we have had a lot of focus on various sad issues, but there was a wonderful situation that occurred in Washington this week: people came from all over the country for a program called Angels in Adoption.

There was a wonderful couple from the fifth district who came to receive the Angels in Adoption award, George and Brenda Ball. I nominated them for this award and had the opportunity to talk with them and meet with them while they were here. They are a wonderful couple who have taken into their home a lot of children who need love and care, and I would like to share parts of an article written about them from the Winston-Salem Journal and hold them up to ourselves and to others for the great work that they are doing. They live in a little town called Tobaccoville, and here is part of the article:

"When George and Brenda Ball hear of a child in trouble, they open their arms. Never mind that, before they married in 1980, he had already raised five children and she had raised three. Never mind that they are great grandparents in their 60s. Their house still rings with the voices of children. Over the past 19 years, they have cared for about 30 foster children and adopted seven of them, most with special needs. They plan to adopt their current foster child, an 18-month-old girl . . .

"I see it as an award for Forsyth County and North Carolina and for all the foster parents and adoptive parents," Brenda Ball said. "I'm just thrilled to death."

"The Balls took in their first foster child, Kelly, in 1986. 'We just didn't have any children in the home,' Brenda Ball, said. 'We kept hearing all these horrible stories about children being abused and neglected.'

"The decision to adopt Kelly was a hard one, she said. 'We weren't sure we were ready to commit the rest of our lives to having children around,' but they did not want to put Kelly through

any more heartache so they decided to keep her. Kelly is now 21 and married. After Kelly, the decision to adopt became easier.

"Next came Eugene, 22, who now lives nearby with his biological mother. The Balls have always encouraged their adopted children to stay in touch with their biological families and are willing for them to be reunited if the parents are able to care for them.

"With Kelly and Eugene in the house, Brenda Ball decided to retire from her job in reservations with U.S. Airways. George Ball is retired from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools, where he was an assistant supervisor in housekeeping, and from the Air Force.

"We made the decision that, with all their needs, it was more important to be here for them,' Brenda Ball said. 'We just decided that children needed us more than we needed the money.'

"And the children kept coming. The Balls asked for children with medical problems because they knew they could handle them. Most of their adopted children had mild to severe medical problems caused by premature births and the effects of alcohol and drugs that their biological mothers used when they were pregnant.

"George Ball, 68, roller blades and plays basketball with the children. His wife stays on the move.

"The Balls have served as surrogate parents to the children in their neighborhood. 'I never know when I cook a meal how many will sit there or how many shifts will run,' she said.

"She is happy to think that her children are not among the many who have to worry about where their next meal will come from, or who move every month when the rent comes due, or who lie awake at night listening to their parents fight over drugs. 'There is nothing sadder than a kid wanting a family,' she said. 'That is why I have ended up having eight.'"

We are so fortunate to have wonderful people like George and Brenda Ball and all the Angels in Adoption, and I salute them tonight.

FEMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I have before me a speech given by James Lee Witt who was the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency during the Clinton administration. It is actually testimony given on May 22, 2004. I think it is very relevant to the debate we had here today about what went wrong and how we are going to fix it and how we are going to understand what went wrong.

Basically, Mr. Witt predicted what happened. Here is some of his testimony.

Particularly on this issue of Department of Homeland Security and FEMA as an independent agency as the orga-

nization that responded for 8 years to the American people's needs in a customer-served focused way, that has been destroyed. It is not there now. It is buried down in the bottom of a huge bureaucracy. It now has no communications within the agency itself, nor does it have communications with State and local government where, before, we had a partnership working with State and local governments.

There is not even communications from FEMA headquarters in Washington to their 10 regional offices. FEMA employees call me constantly. They have got so many vacant offices within FEMA headquarters now that I doubt they could respond to a catastrophic event.

This was testimony on May 22, 2004. Because, when we left in 2001, FEMA was ranked as one of the top agencies in the Federal Government to work for. Just recently in the Washington Post, it was ranked dead last at 28. The morale within the agency is so bad some of the senior level people have quit, some that have the historical knowledge and capabilities to respond, recover, repair, everything the agency did. Our Nation right now suffers on the interoperability of public safety communications. It is zero.

This is James Lee Witt, May 22, 2004, talking about the state of the Federal Emergency Management Agency that this administration had said of the former director, Brownie, you're doing a great job. Of course, Brownie is now gone. But it is a much bigger problem than Brownie, the political hack appointed by the President to head this agency, which had been downgraded, underfunded, and basically dismissed by the Bush administration. It is a problem that is of tremendous magnitude.

Today, the House voted to investigate itself. I doubt that we will get an honest report out of the Republican majority here.

We offered an amendment on the floor. We said: if you put FEMA into this bureaucracy, you will degrade its capabilities. On a virtually partisan line vote, I think 10 brave Republicans voted with us, that amendment was rejected. I guess we were a little bit wrong. It is even worse and quicker than we could have thought that FEMA has been destroyed. It is extraordinary.

I hear so many speeches on the floor every night. One gentleman ended tonight with: "We will never forget 9/11." We will not forget 9/11? What was the most basic lesson of 9/11 that killed many first responders who could have survived? The fact that they did not have secure interoperable communications. And what has the response of this administration been? The President recommended zero dollars to assist local communities, sheriffs, police, fire, emergency personnel to purchase interoperable or upgrade to interoperable communications in his budget this year. And the appropriations moved through this House doing the same.

Now, my colleagues will say, oh, no one could have anticipated this, and how could we have known, and this was a disaster of untold magnitude, and those local officials, they did not do their job. But it is actually the Congress that has to bear a lot of the responsibility here. It was the Congress that agreed with the politically motivated plan out of the White House to stick FEMA into the Homeland Security bureaucracy. It was the Congress that agreed with the President to cut the budget of FEMA, to cut the disaster teams from three to two. And we wonder why they could not respond and why people died unnecessarily?

We need a fair and honest evaluation and investigation comparable to the 9/11 Commission to unearth the facts around this. There are things that need to be done besides restoring FEMA to an independent, professionally led agency status with a robust budget. We are also entering into the greatest rebuilding effort and restoration and relief effort in the history of our country. We need to see that those monies will not be misspent; that those monies will not go to crisis profiteers; that they will get to the people and the communities that need it and the rebuilding will be done appropriately; that we will invest in the infrastructure that was not invested in to protect New Orleans.

And it is not unique to New Orleans. I have jetties failing in the State of Oregon. The Corps of Engineers has no money to fix them. If they fail much more, it will cost 10 times as much to rebuild them. I have a dam that was failing in my district, and the corps had to scramble all around the country to find the money to begin to rebuild that dam. It is not their fault. Congress has not given them the funds, and the President has not recommended the funds to protect the American people from disaster.

So we need to invest not only in a reconstructed FEMA but also in a more robust budget for the Corps of Engineers for prevention. And we need to make certain the dollars we are borrowing, because every dollar of this is borrowed, are spent wisely. And maybe we should reconsider the tax cuts for people who earn over \$300,000 a year and have estates worth \$600,000. Maybe they should contribute to the recovery effort too.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN MEMORY OF WILBUR MYRICK, A GREAT AMERICAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to honor the memory of a great American, my father-in-law, Wilbur Myrick. He saw a lot of change during his 95 years on this Earth.

He lived during the time when indoor plumbing replaced outhouses and water wells, when wooden stoves were replaced by electric stoves, and when food no longer needed to be cooked fresh, but could be refrigerated and cooked in a microwave. He saw transportation change from a wheel and wagon to cars, buses, and then airplanes. And he even saw a man walk on the Moon. He saw great medical advances like the eradication of smallpox and the treatment of life-threatening diseases with advanced medicine and surgery. He saw communications change from mail to telephones to faxes and to e-mail.

He lived through World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the gulf war, and the war on terror. He saw America rise to a world superpower, and he saw the Iron Curtain spread across Europe only to see it crumble years later. He saw the tragedy at Pearl Harbor and the tragedy on 9/11. He saw leaders like Churchill and Roosevelt.

In his later years, Wilbur still kept up with current events. He would sit and watch C-SPAN and call me about specific bills. He could quote the bill number and tell me what it was and what it would do, and then he would ask what were we going to do about it.

□ 1815

It taught me a lot about him and how much he loved America. If only we had more Americans like Wilbur Myrick. At a time when most Americans are filled with apathy, he stood out as an example of who we should all strive to be. He was filled with hope, hope for a better tomorrow and for a better America.

Perhaps the best words to be said about him are from his granddaughter, Mia Myrick Alderman:

“My grandfather died last night.

“Granddaddy was old, very old. His 96th birthday is just over a month away. He is no longer languishing in a convalescent home, his body giving out more every day. He is free again and with the others, the others who have gone before him. My grandmother, his wife, who called him ‘Myrick.’ His large family, including a sister who died during the 1918 flu epidemic when my grandfather was 9 years old. He did not get sick and all by himself he cared for his family and their farm. A strong 9-year-old, my grandfather grew to be a strong man.

“He was not a complicated man. I do not know much about his life before me. I am the oldest of his five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren, but I know all about my granddaddy, who was just 51 when I was born.

“My grandfather is just another old man to die in a small North Carolina

town called Weldon. One of many who die every day, but to me he was a magical, special person. He was not in any way unique compared to all the other old men in Weldon, but when I went to visit my grandfather as a child he was very unique to me: His North Carolina-Virginia border accent; those southern sayings; the way he hugged me and laughed; the way his house and even the earth around his house smelled; the things he knew, secrets I thought only granddaddy knew, like how to thump a watermelon to see if it is ripe. I find myself doing that any time I buy one. I am not sure how it works, but I believe in magic. I loved my grandfather.

“I remember sitting on his lap as a very small child touching the black hair on his arm and I loved him. The last time I saw my grandfather in the hospital, I held his hand and looked at the hair on his arm, now barely there and I knew he would soon be free.

“When my grandfather died I lost forever a person and a culture that was magical and unique. Fascinating to me as a child and with me always in my child heart. My grandfather was a very unique and important man to me and I wanted to do this one last thing for him.

“As another old man from a little town called Weldon dies, so does my granddaddy, a very important man.”

STORMS DO NOT RECOGNIZE STATE BOUNDARIES, WHY DOES FEMA?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, first of all, to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the gentleman from California (Chairman THOMAS) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MCCRERY). It is because of their flexibility and sensitivity that the residents of Florida who suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Katrina are one step closer to getting emergency tax relief for those affected by the hurricane.

Today, we provided emergency tax relief for Floridians affected by Hurricane Katrina as well as for those affected in our neighboring States to our west. I am so pleased to have been able to come together with my Florida colleagues, Messrs. Foley, Diaz-Balart, and Shaw to make this possible.

As a Member of Congress that represents South Florida, I can empathize with the victims of Hurricane Katrina because my home, South Florida, has been struck by numerous hurricanes and is threatened by them every year.

The scenes of the destruction throughout Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama have reminded South Floridians of the devastation of Hurricane Andrew, a Category 5 hurricane which struck South Florida 13 years ago.