

My remarks today cannot justify the significance of his contribution. Sam moved with his family from Seattle to the Tri-Cities in 1949 and went into business as a tavern owner. The Tri-Cities was just at the beginning the epicenter of the nuclear age, a sleepy little town in Richmond that sprung to life when the Hanford site was selected in 1943 as the location of the Manhattan Project, plutonium production activities as part of President Roosevelt's strategy to win World War II. The Manhattan Project transformed the entire region from literally an agriculture and fishing economy centered on the Columbia River into a Federal booming town. It changed the course of our State and Nation's history.

Central Washington was booming, and Sam thought it was the right place for a salesman like him and his family; so he went to work right away on community and business issues.

It was his vision for the community that continued to push the community and the representatives who came here to Washington and those in Washington, DC, to further see the future in Washington State.

Hanford had grown due to the Federal investment in the Manhattan Project and later in support of the Cold War. At that time, Sam, a former salesman and tavern owner, found himself rubbing shoulders with the likes of Senators Jackson and Magnuson, and stories about Sam, Scoop, and Maggie are numerous and legendary.

I think this picture shows that even at that time, with my predecessors, Senator Warren Magnuson and Senator Scoop Jackson, Sam Volpentest even back then was right in the thick of things. The fact that he still consulted with Senator MURRAY and me up until the last several months showed his dedication to what this country needed to be focused on.

In 1956, Sam decided that Richland, WA—one of the Tri-Cities surrounding Hanford—looked too much like a construction camp. That is because it was a community that literally sprang up overnight out in the desert. Sam wanted that community to continue to grow.

The N-Reactor was one of the most critical investments in the Tri-Cities, with Sam Volpentest's fingerprints on it. The Hanford site evolved as our Nation's nuclear needs changed. Sam's efforts helped America stay in the lead during the nuclear age, put Americans to work, improved the lives of those living in central Washington, and it played an incredible role for our country.

In the mid-1960s, as the nuclear age transitioned, Sam saw the writing on the wall: the Tri-Cities would need to evolve with it. As Hanford's nuclear weapons material production activities began to slow, Sam's vision drove him to change his strategy as well.

I come back to a critical point I want to say. In the 1940s, as World War II raged in Asia, Europe, and North Afri-

ca, my State responded to the Federal Government's call. As Federal investment grew during the early days of the Manhattan Project, this remote area of our State responded with the energy infrastructure that was so critical in helping launch the nuclear age. This world's first large-scale production nuclear reactor, the B Reactor, located in our State, played an incredibly vital role.

The reason I emphasize that is because Sam realized that once that goal was achieved, the region needed to keep playing an important role in our national security issues, and that was through the contributions of its workforce and materials needed throughout our time period post-World War II.

Our contribution and Sam's continuing contribution was to make sure the Federal investment and cleanup work at Hanford was actually achieved. Sam knew that the Tri-Cities had a lot to offer our Nation, but he knew that the economy needed to have diversity and that cleanup was part of it. So what did Sam do? He went about convincing Federal officials, private investment, and other resources to come to Hanford and explore more efficient ways to clean up the waste, and not just at our site in Washington State but around the world.

Sam's vision led to a larger vision that has leveraged the workforce in the State of Washington. Those efforts led to the establishment of one of our National Laboratories, the Pacific Northwest National Lab in the Tri-Cities. Today, Federal research dollars spur research and development in countless scientific areas—from proteomics research, nuclear materials cleanup, biofuels, and many more.

Sam did not just want to get the work done; he wanted the workforce and the community to be safe. Sam worked to further the economic development and success of his community through a variety of government and community organizations.

One of his most important projects was helping the business community get access to small business contracts that were being part of the Federal work commissioned at Hanford. Some of the most notable projects Sam Volpentest is responsible for in the Tri-Cities in Washington State are a six-story Federal building in Richland, the inception of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, three freeways, twin bridges over the Columbia River, the N-Reactor Hanford Generating Plant, the Fast Flux Test Facility, the Life Sciences Laboratory and the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory, the Hanford House/Red Lion Hotel, the Iowa Beef Processing Plant, and Sam's namesake, the Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center.

This training center is probably one of Sam's greatest accomplishments because it still today provides Hanford workers with real-time training in safety and response. The training facil-

ity now has trained countless first responders from governments all over our country and all over the world on how to respond to safety incidents from a more robust public participation. Sam's efficiency at this training facility gives those who are first responders the on-the-job-training they need.

Sam was often asked when he was going to retire—for example, whether it would be at age 65 or 75. He said: Why would I want to do that? Don't retire. Look to the future. Ask what you can do for your community that has been so good to you. Get out there and do something. And even if you do it for free, it will make you feel great afterward.

That was Sam Volpentest, a great Washingtonian, a great member of our country. We will miss "Mr. Tri-Cities," and we will try to live up to his legacy of accomplishment and continue to bring about a good cooperative relationship between a key part of Washington State, the great Tri-Cities, and our Federal Government, in making sure the Volpentest legacy continues.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

AMENDING THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thought the CR—the continuing resolution, as it is known around this place—was going to be laid down tonight. I guess it will not be laid down until tomorrow. But I will be offering an amendment the first thing in the morning on behalf of myself and a number of other cosponsors: Mr. KOHL, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. CARPER, and Ms. CANTWELL. I think by tomorrow morning there are going to be a lot more on this list.

It is basically a very simple amendment. All it says is:

Notwithstanding section 101 of this joint resolution, amounts are provided for making payments under the "Community Services Block Grant Act" at a rate not less than the amounts made available for such Act in fiscal year 2005.

Well, what that means is that this amendment, then, will continue the community services block grants at last year's level.

Now, you might say: Well, wait a minute. Isn't that what a continuing resolution does, it continues everything at last year's level?

Well, we have a continuing resolution the likes of which I have never seen. I have not seen it in the last 10 years. I have asked my staff to go back 20 years or so to see if we had something like it.

Here is what the House has done. They have sent us a continuing resolution that continues funding either at last year's level or at the House budget level, whichever is lower—whichever is

lower. Now, what you will find out in there is that there are cuts in education, cuts to a whole lot of things. But most of those cuts do not take effect until next year. Education money goes out next summer. So for the continuing resolution, from now until—what?—November 18, I think it is, or something like that—a couple months—they will not be hit. But there will be a 50-percent cut in the Community Services Block Grants, which means by Saturday they will be cut 50 percent—right now.

Now, the occupant of the Chair, a former distinguished Governor of Virginia, I know he knows about the community services block grants. They do a lot in his State, as they do in our States: the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, housing, Head Start, transportation for the elderly, job search, all kinds of things, even helping low-income people apply for the earned income tax credit. There are a whole host of things done by Community Services Block Grants. It will be cut 50 percent, not next year, Saturday, Sunday. It will be a 50-percent cut immediately.

Now, I am going to read it into the RECORD this evening. I am sorry I have to keep the distinguished Senator in the chair for a little while tonight, but I think it is important for people to understand what we are doing here.

If this were just affecting programs like education next year—we are going to fix that by November, granted. But this is now. This happens now. The poorest of the poor in our country are going to get hit Saturday, Sunday, Monday, because of the wording of that continuing resolution, with a 50-percent cut, including victims of Hurricane Katrina, children all across the country.

We just had the mayor of Baton Rouge here the other day, Kip Holden. He was up here asking for more money for community services block grants. When he found out from my staff what the continuing resolution did in cutting it 50 percent, he couldn't believe it. He said they have been invaluable in assisting Katrina evacuees, getting things done that FEMA could not. He was up here pleading for more funding for community services block grants. He said it was beyond belief that Congress would be cutting this program at a time when it is most urgently needed. But that is exactly what the Congress will do if it passes this CR.

Once again, we are 1 day from the end of the fiscal year. Like an irresponsible schoolchild, the Congress has not completed its homework. It has finished 2 of the 11 appropriations bills. Why do we find ourselves once again in this sorry state of disarray? Consider the Labor-Health and Human Services appropriations bill, which is the bill that funds community services block grants. Under the very capable leadership of our distinguished chairman, Senator ARLEN SPECTER, our subcommittee did its job in a timely, or-

derly manner. We passed the Senate Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill 2½ months ago, July 14. But once it left our committee, it seemed to disappear into a black hole. It hasn't been brought up on the floor. It is not even scheduled to be brought up on the floor. This is the bill that funds the community services block grants.

We didn't cut it. It was bipartisan. Republicans and Democrats on the subcommittee and on the full Committee on Appropriations voted to continue the funding for community services block grants at last year's level. Here we are, 1 day away from yet another end-of-fiscal-year train wreck.

Like actual train wrecks, this one will have real human casualties and victims, real hardship. This has not been done before. I know no one is here. There are no more votes tonight. Senators have all gone home. But I will be back on this floor tomorrow. We get 30 minutes tomorrow morning, 30 minutes to do something to protect the poorest of the poor, those who have no one to fight for them, those who rely upon our community service agencies out there to help them get through a tough time, to provide the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program. Even in Virginia, as well as Iowa, up in the northern part of the country, cold weather is starting to set in. It is in the 30s at night. Pretty soon it will get down to freezing, in October and November. We are going to need to get LIHEAP money out to these people. How are we going to do it when we have cut funding 50 percent? We are not supposed to speak about the other body here, but what could have been on their minds in doing something like this?

Now we are going to bring this up tomorrow. I assume the leadership is going to want us to rubberstamp it, a continuing resolution that will mandate drastic cuts to these vital services for the poorest of the poor, rubberstamp it, get it out of here, 30 minutes of debate tomorrow. We will talk about it. We will rubberstamp it, and we will get on our planes and go home. We are comfortable. We are going to be able to afford heat. We will be able to afford food for our families. We don't have anything to worry about. We make a lot of money around here. Eighty percent of this place is filled with millionaires. That is fine. We are comfortable.

Think about those who are not so comfortable. We are going to see devastating cuts. I mentioned serving victims of Hurricane Katrina. One hundred seventy-one thousand people, estimated not by me but by those involved with the evacuees, 171,000 people are being served under the community services block grants right now. It is 50 percent, this weekend—not next year, now—a 50-percent cut now. I don't know if people understand this. Poor people are going to suffer.

For the record, in fiscal year 2005, the CSBG was funded at \$637 million, \$636.6

million, to be accurate. The House provided \$320 million for next year. Therefore, under this continuing resolution, which says you either take last year's level or the House level, whichever is less, that is what you do. Well, the House level is \$320 million, a 50-percent cut.

I have a chart that shows the funding levels for community services block grants. In each of the last 3 years, it has been cut. The last time it was raised was in the fiscal year from 2001 to 2002 to \$650 million. Ever since then, in fiscal years 2003, 2004, and 2005, it was cut from 650 to 645 to 642 to 636.6. Now they want to cut it in half. What is interesting about this chart is they want to cut it to 320 million. That is the level it was at in 1986. That is how much we provided in 1986 for the community services block grants.

I ask unanimous consent that this chart be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT APPROPRIATIONS HISTORY
(In millions)

FY 2005	\$636.6
FY 2004	642.0
FY 2003	645.8
FY 2002	650.0
FY 2001	600.0
FY 2000	527.7
FY 1999	500.0
FY 1998	489.7
FY 1997	489.6
FY 1996	389.6
FY 1995	389.6
FY 1994	385.5
FY 1993	372.0
FY 1992	360.0
FY 1991	349.4
FY 1990	323.0
FY 1989	318.6
FY 1988	325.5
FY 1987	335.0
FY 1986	320.6
FY 1985	335.0
FY 1984	316.8
FY 1983	341.7
FY 1981	394.3

Mr. HARKIN. We are saying to the poorest in our country: We are going to take you back to 1986.

I have a modest proposal. Why don't we take our Tax Code and move it back to 1986? Whatever people were paying in taxes, we will move everything back to then. How would the most comfortable in our society, the wealthiest, the richest, like that? I rather doubt that that would be something you would ever accomplish around here. Yet for the poorest people in our country, we can take them back to 1986.

I have been here 30 years. I have never seen anything like this: 170,000 victims of Hurricane Katrina; in Texas, 72,000 evacuees have been served by this program; in Louisiana, more than 43,000 hurricane victims. Almost all the community action agencies in the impacted area were up and running by the second day after the storm. They were finding shelter, feeding people, clothing people, getting them medical attention. Now they are helping victims find employment. Community action agencies have been actively working with faith-based organizations all across the gulf coast to provide relief

services. I mentioned what the mayor of Baton Rouge said. He was up here wanting to get more money for community services block grants. What does he get hit in the face with? Not only are you not getting more, they are cutting you in half. He couldn't believe it.

Nationwide, this cut would eliminate or disrupt essential services for some 6.5 million low-income people, including nearly 2 million children. A majority of rural outreach centers will be closed, denying entire rural communities access to services. Many of the one-stop neighborhood centers in suburban and urban areas would also be shut down.

Here is a chart that gives you an idea of what this 50-percent cut means. I mentioned 6.5 million people, 2 million kids. Communities will lose 21 million CSBG-supported volunteers. These are the volunteers the CSBG people pull together to do things. These are volunteers who want to, for example, volunteer their time to drive some elderly, low-income people to a community health center. These are good people, many of them church based, who volunteer their time to drive people to a meal site for a senior citizen meal. They volunteer their time to take low-income kids to a Head Start Program, for example. They are volunteers doing good things, but they need someone to pull it together, organize it, manage it, and get the transportation. That is what CSBG does. So we are going to cut it by 50 percent.

These volunteers are going to say: I would like to volunteer my time to drive these elderly, but you don't have any vehicle for me. Who is setting up the time? Who is making sure they are going to be there when I get there? No one. As a result, we are going to lose all these wonderful volunteers.

Private food banks all over the Nation rely on space, refrigerators, and transportation supported by CSBG. Think about all of the food banks all over America that are already being stressed to the limit. They are supported by the community services block grants. Now we are going to cut them in half. What happens to the space, what happens to the refrigerators, the transportation? Several million Americans will lose nutritional services and emergency food—not next year; this is not prospective. This is next week. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is administered by CSBG. This cut will reduce staff in half, while home heating costs are expected to rise 50 to 70 percent. Cold weather is coming. Heating costs are going up. Cut CSBG.

That is something we can be proud of right? We can be proud of what we are doing here. What a shame.

These cuts are callous, ill advised, and they are cruel. This is cruel. I have no other way to say it. They are cruel. It couldn't come at a worse time. We know the rate of poverty is going up. Winter is coming on. We have had a

couple of disasters, Rita and Katrina. What we are saying is, guess what, we are going to pull the rug out from underneath you. We are going to hurt you a little bit more. Maybe the House didn't know what they were doing. Maybe they didn't know this was in there. I don't know. What my amendment does is, it simply continues the level at last year's level. It ought to be increased by all rights. We know the number of Americans living in poverty has increased in each of the last 4 years. The purchasing power of community services block grants continues to decline. Each year, about 1 million more people qualify for community services block grant services. There is not any money to meet their needs right now. As bad as this is, the picture I am painting, right now community service agencies provide services to only 1 in 5 people in poverty; with \$636 million, 1 in 5 are served. Now we are going to take that down even more.

I don't understand why the majority party in this Congress again and again proposes to slash programs from those who have the least in our society while adamantly insisting that tax cuts for the most fortunate are untouchable and sacrosanct. We can't touch them.

We all recognize that after 4 years of tax cuts, war and emergency spending, budget deficits are out of control. We all know this must be addressed, including with appropriate spending cuts. But what I don't understand is why we are asking the poor to bear the lion's share of the burden when it comes cutting the funding. Why are they on the front line? Why are they being cut this weekend? I object to repeated efforts by the majority party in this Congress to try to balance the budget on the backs of the poor. Even before Katrina struck, the majority party was already planning to slash food stamps by \$3 billion and Medicaid by \$10 billion. Katrina stopped that.

But who is the target of spending cuts? The poor, those who rely on Federal programs for health, education, disability, and veterans benefits.

Last week, a group of House Republicans launched what they call Operation Offset. They insist that all of the tax cuts of the last 4 years are off limits and untouchable, including the huge tax cuts for the most privileged and wealthy people in our society. Instead, Operation Offset would pay for Katrina recovery by slashing programs for the least fortunate among us, including deep cuts in Medicare, cuts in Medicaid, cuts to the School Lunch Program, cuts to the Children's Health Insurance Program, cuts in college aid, needy students, and on and on.

In short, with the leadership in this Congress, tax reductions for the rich are sacred and cannot be touched, while programs for the poor are fair game for deep cuts. I object. I object to this. I believe the clear majority of Americans reject this approach also. It offends their sense of fairness and equity.

This has to stop, and this is the place to stop it on this continuing resolution. We have to stop this one. This is so unconscionable. I don't know how anyone could ever feel good about this or feel we have done our job.

It is unconscionable, it is drastic, and it is cruel to cut the community services block grants in this manner.

I know what people are going to say tomorrow. They are going to come out here and say: Well, the House passed the continuing resolution and they have gone home. If my amendment is adopted, why, it has to go back to the House and they went home, and we will be accused of shutting down the Government.

Mr. President, I am sorry. The House of Representatives can come back on Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday, they can come back to vote on the Terri Schiavo situation. Regardless of what you think about it, right or wrong, I am saying, if they can call the House back for that, if they can do that, they can call the House back to protect the poorest in our society from the cuts in the CSBG. We can pass it in the Senate, call the House back, and they can vote on it. We would not be shutting the Government down. If the House does not want to come back, they will be shutting the Government down. We are supposed to put a knife in the backs of the poorest in our country because the House did this? They can come back. We ought to force them to come back. We ought to force them to do what is right.

It is up to us in this body to have the correct response. We have to seize this opportunity and correct the misplaced priorities of the last 5 years and correct this one.

Last week, September 15, President Bush in New Orleans said:

We have a duty to confront poverty with bold action.

Let me repeat that. You may not have gotten it the first time. President Bush said on September 15:

We have a duty to confront poverty with bold action.

OK, so what we are going to do is pass a continuing resolution that cuts community services block grants by 50 percent—starting this weekend—that service the poor in our country. They are going to cut it by 50 percent. I guess that is pretty bold action. I guess they are going to confront poverty with bold action; yes, they are going to make more poor people. We have a duty to confront poverty with bold action.

I wonder if the President knows this. I wonder if anyone around the President has told him what the House did. I wonder if he is saying: Yes, that is the thing to do. Is the President okaying this? Has he sent word to the House that this is perfectly fine with him, that this comports with what he said last week?

I would like to hear from the President on this one. I would like to hear if he supports cutting community services block grants by 50 percent.

I would like to quote from a letter I recently received from a number of faith-based groups urging Congress to drop plans on the budget reconciliation to cut CSBG. I want to talk about it because it is appropriate to this. The group said the budget:

continues to ask our Nation's working poor to pay the cost of a prosperity in which they may never share. It is clear that programs, such as Medicaid and the Food Stamp Program that are slated for cuts by Congress, will, in fact, have greater burdens placed on them as a result of Hurricane Katrina. These programs represent the deep and abiding commitment of the Nation to care for the least among us.

I could not have said it better. As we look for ways to assist the least among us, we should not hesitate to ask the most among us to help share some of the burden. We need to restore this funding.

I said I was going to give an example of who is hit by this. I have two other letters. One is from Ozark Action, West Plains, MO; Ozark Community Action Partnership:

The result of a Continuing Resolution as proposed, which would be the reduction of CSBG funds by 50 percent, Ozarks Action, Inc., located in rural southern Missouri (Douglas, Howell, Ozark, Oregon, Texas and Wright counties), would be faced with reducing its current staffing levels by 50 percent. As a result many of the services to low-income families would become unattainable.

Currently we have staff located in 10 communities on a full time basis in each of these six counties. The reduction would mean that 5 [full time employees] would be reduced. The issue then becomes which of the six counties no longer will be served or will have significantly reduced services.

In addition to serving the resident low-income population in this high poverty service area, these ten staff carry out the function of providing services to those individuals that have come to the area as a result of the two devastating hurricanes (Rita and Katrina).

CSBG staff also conducts LIHEAP services for both the Energy Assistance program as well as providing the emergency energy services.

I did not mention that. Sometimes low-income people, especially elderly, get caught with the first or second cold snap. They have not thought ahead, and maybe they don't have enough oil in the tank. They need some help right away. They don't have credit, and they don't have money. The community services block grants provide for that, to get them enough fuel oil, heating oil—whatever it might be—to get them through that snap. They say:

This in and of itself will put a large burden on the State to provide adequate service to those in need of energy assistance.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter from Ozark Action, Inc., be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OZARK ACTION, INC.,
West Plains, MO.

The result of a Continuing Resolution as proposed, which would be the reduction of CSBG funds by 50%, Ozarks Action, Inc., located in rural Southern Missouri (Douglas,

Howell, Ozark, Oregon, Texas and Wright counties), would be faced with reducing its current staffing levels by 50%. As a result many of the services to low-income families would be unattainable.

Currently we have staff located in 10 communities on a full time basis in these six counties. The reduction would mean that about 5 fte's would be reduced. The issue then becomes which of the six counties no longer will be served or will have significantly reduced services.

In addition to serving the resident low-income population in this high poverty service area, these ten staff carry out the function of providing services to those individuals that have come to the area as a result of the two devastating Hurricanes (Rita and Katrina). In Howell County, which has seen approximately 15 to 20 evacuee families, Ozark Action is operating as the clearing house and information hub for needs and services. This service would no longer be available with such steep reductions as a result of staff cost. Just in this past five days we have had three additional families move to the area and we believe that as families decided to move further north after deciding that returning home will not be an option or limited option in the future, we will see another wave of individuals moving to the area.

CSBG staff also conducts LIHEAP services for both the Energy Assistance program as well as providing the emergency energy services. This in and of itself will put a large burden on the state to provide adequate service and coverage for those in need of energy assistance.

Additionally, one of the remaining staff conducts Earn Income Tax credit returns from the period of January 1 through April 30th. This would have a major impact on those who receive EITC and will reduce the available income that these individuals receive through the EITC program.

CSBG Funds are used also, in a variety of ways, to support other agency programs where their own funding is inadequate. All such support would of necessity cease.

Sincerely;

BRYAN ADCKOCK,
Executive Director, OAI.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I have another letter from East Missouri Action, again outlining what is going to happen here:

In the event that a continuing resolution is passed which would effectively fund CSBG at the FY-06 House appropriations level—

A cut of 50 percent—

serious cuts in services provided to low-income families in Southwest Missouri would occur.

In-home visits will no longer be a priority. This will require more volunteers for clients who are home bound. Other catalytic activities such as life skills training workshops will be scaled back if not totally eliminated.

[East Missouri Action Agency] serves as the point of service for most other helping organizations in seven of our eight counties. . . . Families will be referred to other helping agency with little or no follow-up . . . we will not have the staff to effectively work with them.

I ask unanimous consent that this letter from the East Missouri Action Agency also be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EAST MISSOURI ACTION AGENCY, INC.

BOLLINGER, CAPE GIRARDEAU, IRON, MADISON, PERRY, ST. FRANCOIS, STE. GENEVIEVE, & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

IMPACT OF CONTINUING RESOLUTION AT HOUSE
FY06 FUNDING LEVEL

In the event that a continuing resolution is passed which would effectively fund CSBG at the FY-06 House appropriations level, serious cuts in services currently provided to low-income families of Southeast Missouri would occur.

1. Working with families and individuals in one-on-one case management fashion to help them achieve self-sufficiency and providing projects to assist them in this effort will have to be eliminated. The remaining resources will have to be expended doing only emergency services.

2. EMAA serves as the point of service for most other helping organizations in seven of our eight counties. EMAA serves as the clearinghouse and screener for emergency services throughout the county. There will be no time for discussion of the underlying causes of the emergency situation with these families. Families will be referred to the other helping agency with little or no follow-up. Partnerships with these other organizations will be in jeopardy because we will not have the staff to effectively work with them.

3. As just recently seen with Hurricane Katrina, EMAA was one of hundreds of CAAs which mobilized relief efforts even before several of the national charitable organizations and the Federal Government itself mobilized. CAAs have always had the flexibility to rise to the need in these situations, however, with this cut, that ability is gone.

4. Community Change projects such as, resource development, poverty awareness & education, housing development, community gardening, emergency service coordination networks, leadership development, childcare development, and other projects to improve the community at large will be greatly scaled back due to the lack of funding.

5. In-home visits will no longer be a priority. This will require more volunteers for clients who are home bound. Other catalytic activities such as life skills training workshops will be scaled back if not totally eliminated. If we do not receive a special grant for income tax assistance, we may have to discontinue the VITA income tax assistance project which leveraged \$1.4 million in our eight county area for 2004. If we do not provide this free income tax assistance for the low income families in Southeast Missouri, for-profit vendors will, which will reduce the benefit to the families even more.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, people say, What do community services block grants do? Here are some of their activities: Parenting education to 175,000 Head Start families, helping people be good parents; transportation for elderly Americans to medical appointments, which I mentioned earlier, such as the community health centers; home ownership counseling for the low income, how they might be able to afford and pay for their own home; mentoring and counseling for at-risk youth; in-home chore services for homebound elderly. Think about that. Domestic violence services. I mentioned refrigerators and transportation services for food banks; transitional housing for homeless families. You wonder what happens to homeless families? Community service action agencies find them transitional housing and especially now with winter coming on. Lead inspection programs,

screening homes for lead-based paint, and we know how devastating that is on low-income children. Food stamp outreach, going out to make sure low-income people know they are eligible for food stamps, that they do not have to go hungry.

Community services block grant networks, let me talk about who these people are. Their local networks were made up of 1,090 local eligible entities, of which 88 percent were Community Action Agencies.

The local agencies use CSBG funding for their core operations developing and for developing and coordinating programs to fight poverty in 99 percent of the counties in the United States.

Who are the participants? Who are served? Twenty-two percent of all persons in poverty—I said about 1 out of 5; we are going to make it even lower than that—more than 15 million individuals who were members of almost 6 million low-income families.

Data provided by 4 million families show that more than 2.7 million had incomes at or below the poverty guideline. Think about this. Of these, 1.1 million families were “severely poor” with incomes below 50 percent of the poverty guideline. That means for a family of 4, we are talking about less than \$7,000, probably \$7,500 a year; 1.1 million families with less than \$7,000 a year. That is who is being served by the community services block grant.

Another 1.6 million families had incomes between 50 percent and 100 percent of the poverty guideline; almost 1.7 million working poor families who relied on wages or unemployment insurance and collectively made up 44 percent of all program participants; nearly 430,000 families were TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; twenty-two percent of TANF monthly caseloads are CSBG clients; and about 1.4 million families are headed by single mothers.

These program serve more than 3.7 million children in poverty, 1.8 million adults who had never completed high school, 1.1 million people who were disabled, 3 million who lack health care.

That is who is served. I just mentioned all the programs that serve these people.

In my own State of Iowa, northwest Iowa, northeast Iowa, southwest Iowa, they are talking about how much they are going to have to cut back. In a five-county area in northwest Iowa, services at seven outreach centers which assist over 10,000 each year, have been scaled back. This is a 50-percent cut. This is not phony stuff. This is real. In a seven-county area in northeast Iowa, the Community Action Agencies already had to reduce office and staff hours in eight family service offices due to reductions in CSBG funding over the last 2 years. With a 50-percent reduction in CSBG, the family services staff will likely be reduced from 16 full and part-time individuals to 7 individuals employed less than 40 hours a week. That is to serve a seven-county area in northeast Iowa.

In Iowa, this is the time of the year temperatures are starting to drop and food supplies are running short as gardens stop producing. I think I just picked the last tomato off my tomato plant last week.

Without staff to take and process applications and provide assistance, the LIHEAP program year starts October 1. That is what, Saturday? That is Saturday. The LIHEAP program year starts October 1, Saturday.

In northeast Iowa, the CAA there faces an inability to ensure that those in poverty will continue to receive home heating assistance and food assistance. If CSBG is reduced—this is southeast Iowa—by 50 percent, the agency will have to reduce staff and close one very rural outreach center. That will mean clients who need emergency assistance for food, utilities, disconnect notices would have to drive about 45 miles to apply for assistance. These are people who probably do not even have transportation. They do not own cars.

The centers—I am reading here from the report—are terribly busy with the increase in the number of families coming to the outreach centers because they have been evicted, about to become homeless, have a disconnect notice from their utilities or their utilities have already been disconnected.

President Bush, September 15, 2005:

We have a duty to confront poverty with bold action.

I hope someone in the bowels of the White House is listening to a little bit of my remarks. They do not have to buy it all. I hope they listen to a little bit of it. I hope that something will click up in one of those heads in the White House and say: Wait a minute. Is Harkin right? Could this possibly be happening? He must be wrong. He is just up there doing his thing. But just in case, we better check on it. I hope somebody at the White House is saying, maybe we ought to check on this.

When they check, they will find out I am right. What the House has sent us will cut it 50 percent starting Saturday, and it will have these effects. One may say, Oh, no, it will not, but it will.

That is why I have not come out on the floor to bemoan the CR for the cuts in education because we are going to fix that. The money for education does not go out until next summer. We have time to take care of that. The other cuts that are in the CR, we can take care of that. I would not go on like this if it was just education because we are going to have time to fix it later on. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about something that is right now, needs the money now, the money goes out now, not next year—now, October 1. October 1, they will be cut 50 percent just like that. There is no carryover money. There is not a lot of money sitting someplace that they can carry over.

We have already cut this program, as I said, in each of the last 3 years. This Senate—well, I should say the Appro-

priations Committee, I cannot say the Senate, the Appropriations Committee passed it at last year's level, bipartisan, Republicans and Democrats.

I hope someone in the White House may have picked up on this. I hope they are going to check it, and I hope one of them will say: We cannot leave our boss hanging out there. Our boss said this and our boss meant it.

I believe he did mean it. But he probably does not know.

The President is busy. I am not faulting him for that. He probably does not know what the House did.

I would like to believe that if this person in the White House who may have listened to this or picked up on it and checked out and found out that that is exactly what the CR does, the continuing resolution does, they will get to someone higher up the food chain to get to the President to let him know about this, and maybe the President will get on the phone and he will call the leadership and say: You have to do this. You have to adopt this amendment. You cannot leave me hanging out there having said this and then turn around and expect me to sign a continuing resolution that cuts the poorest of the poor.

That is what we would be saying. He said that last week. Now he is going to get something and he has to sign it. I would hope the President might get on the phone or at least have his Chief of Staff or somebody do it and tell them we have to fix this. If it means the House of Representatives comes back on Friday afternoon or Friday evening or Saturday morning to fix it, so be it.

So they are going to be a little uncomfortable—oh, my goodness. I assume some Congressmen have probably gotten on a plane, and they went someplace, they have gone home. My goodness, they will have to get on an airplane—not at their expense. The Government will pay for it. They do not have to pay anything for it. They have to go to an airport, get on an airplane, fly back to Washington, put on a suit and tie and go back to the House floor and correct this. I know it is a terrible burden. It is a terrible thing to ask of someone making \$160,000 a year, or whatever we make around here now.

Well, I jest, tongue in cheek. It is not too much to ask. They should do it, and the President should tell them to do it. Come back here and fix this. Do not leave him hanging out there having said that last week.

Heaven forbid that we should have the House come back and work on a Friday. My, my, work on a Friday? Whoever heard of such a thing? The working poor work on Friday. Or maybe they have to come back Saturday and fix it, Saturday morning or Friday night. Poor people work at night. They are working two jobs.

No, I am sorry, I do not mind making Members of the House uncomfortable if they have to get on a plane or come back to the House and fix this. That is a small price to pay to make sure that

we live up to what the President said a week ago. This is not even bold action. This is continuing to do what we have been doing in the last year. It is not too much to ask. It is time that we made the comfortable a little bit uncomfortable so we can give some comfort to those who are uncomfortable.

We will be voting on this tomorrow. I hope that Senators will not be swayed by this, "Well, we cannot do this because the House has gone home." Well, let us comfort the uncomfortable. Let us tell the poorest of the poor we are not going to leave them in the lurch, we are not going to cut them by 50 percent, and let us have them come back and fix this tomorrow night. They can do it.

I appreciate the indulgence of the occupant of the chair for allowing me to talk about my amendment because I will not have much time in the morning. I only have 30 minutes. Some other people may want to talk. I know no one is here. I hope some people may be watching and taking heed of this. I will be back tomorrow morning, in a more succinct manner, obviously, to lay out this case on why we have to adopt an amendment to keep the community services block grants at last year's level.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the Senator from Iowa, Senator HARKIN, has come to the floor to offer an amendment that makes reference to the community services block grant funding and the possibility that if we pass a continuing resolution without adequately funding this program, communities all across America will be denied some basic funds they need.

I have made a point, as I travel around my State of Illinois, of asking village presidents and mayors and leaders how this money is used. It turns out to be money that is essential for many programs. It is one of the most unusual programs in that there is such a wide variety of things that are done with these dollars by communities, from afterschool programs for children at risk to programs for senior citizens that are essential for their well-being.

I am sorry I wasn't here earlier to join with Senator HARKIN, but I come to the floor in support of his effort. America can do better. We can make certain that we fund these essential programs so that the vulnerable across America are not left behind. If we focus on this, as we should have before Hurricane Katrina—and we will in the fu-

ture—it is going to be a stronger nation.

I want to make sure my voice is added to that of Senator HARKIN in support of this valuable program.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REIMBURSING CHARITABLE WORK

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, earlier this week the Washington Post reported that the Federal Emergency Management Agency was making plans to "reimburse churches and other organizations that have opened their doors to provide shelter, food and supplies to survivors of hurricanes Katrina and Rita."

I understand FEMA's good intentions here, but we need to be very careful. There may be extraordinary circumstances when FEMA may need to rent buildings that might happen to belong to a church or mosque or synagogue. And I understand that under both Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, there have been appropriate ways to provide charitable choice and to fund faith-based organizations. I support that. I am currently working with Senators on both sides of the aisle on our Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on legislation to help all of Katrina's 372,000 displaced schoolchildren, including some who are enrolled in private and even religious schools. But the kind of reimbursement described in the Washington Post article makes me want to waive three yellow flags and two red ones.

One obvious concern is constitutional. The first amendment says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Paying churches for work they choose to undertake as churches raises obvious questions. That is not my major concern. My major concern is making sure that we honor what it has always meant in America to be a volunteer, to be charitable, and to respect our religious traditions.

When Jesus fed the loaves and the fishes to the multitude of 5,000, he didn't send the bill to Caesar. As Americans with a strong religious tradition,

we believe in helping our neighbors. In the book of Mark, Jesus tells us to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" and to "love their neighbor as thyself." This idea of loving and caring for our neighbors is not limited to Christianity. Jesus himself drew the commands to love God and love our neighbor from the Old Testament in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. I don't ever remember reading: "Love God, love your neighbor, and send the bill to Washington for the expenses."

From pioneer days, volunteering and helping our neighbors has been an essential part of the American character. No other country in the world has anything similar to what we have in their traditions. They do not give as we give. They do not have that same spirit. It is one of the things that makes this a unique country. Our forefathers would be dumbfounded to think that if a neighbor's barn burned down and the community joined together to rebuild it, that they would expect a check from Washington, DC to pay them back.

In that same Washington Post article, Reverend Robert E. Reccord of the Southern Baptist Convention helped put this in balance when he said:

Volunteer labor is just that: volunteer. We would never ask the government to pay for it.

At my church in Nashville, Westminster Presbyterian, where I am an elder, we took up a collection for the victims of Katrina and raised about \$80,000 in cash. We then filled up the parlor in the church with other things that we were told they needed in southern Mississippi. We loaded up a truck with diapers and Clorox and other necessities, and our associate pastor went down there with that truck for a few weeks to help people in need. Are we now supposed to send the Federal Government a bill for the food and the supplies and three weeks of the pastor's salary? Of course not. No one in our church expects that, nor should they.

So churches and synagogues and mosques and religious organizations that are being good neighbors aren't looking for a Government handout. They are looking to lend a hand. We should respect them. We should thank them. We should honor them. They are performing an invaluable service. We encourage them by providing tax incentives for charitable giving. But we should also remember that virtue is often its own reward and that some rewards are in heaven, and we should be very careful before we start reimbursing churches for their charity.

I ask unanimous consent that the article from the Washington Post to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: