

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FRIST. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator LANDRIEU.

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

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to say a few words about the issue that the Senator from Louisiana is going to talk about, but I do not want to take any of her time away from her. I know it is late in the evening but if I could, I will say a few words before leaving the floor. I hope that my Senate colleagues who are following this debate and conversation, as well as those who are viewing these proceedings, understand what my colleague from Louisiana, Senator MARY LANDRIEU, and her colleague, Senator VITTER have been through.

They have faced a disaster virtually unprecedented in modern American history. Having been through a few minor disasters and floods in my area, I cannot imagine the stress that they have been under to serve the public, which is their responsibility in the Senate. Though I do not know Senator VITTER as well, nor have I known him as long, I can certainly attest to his concern for the people of Louisiana. I can speak personally about the concern of Senator LANDRIEU.

From the moment I got her on the telephone—and it was not an easy task—while she was still fighting flood waters in her hometown of New Orleans, until this moment today, she has been consumed with one focused objective, what she can do to spare the suffering of the people she represents and to rebuild and recover from this terrible disaster.

I visited New Orleans a few weeks ago with a bipartisan delegation, met with her as well as Commander Allen, who is heading up the FEMA effort now, as well as Governor Blanco and Mayor Nagin, many of them local officials. It is clear now that they have faced challenges that most public servants do not dream of. The reason we are here tonight is because she is reaching the end of her patience. I have talked to her during the course of this day, and I know what is boiling up inside of her.

The thought that we would leave Washington, the capital of our Nation, for a week or 10 days and be back in our home States is a real concern to her because she knows while we are gone, people in Louisiana will continue to suffer because of our inaction and our unwillingness to respond to the basics. Look at what has happened so far. The administration announces initially no-bid contracts to some of the most recognizable big hitters in Washington, corporations that always seem to win when others are facing misfortune.

The administration says it is going to cut the wages for construction workers who are going back to work to rebuild in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, exactly the opposite of what these families need to get back on their feet.

The administration has refused to come forward with the emergency housing that is needed for so many of these people who are literally at their wits' end, trying to keep their families together, living in the most extreme circumstances.

This Senator from Louisiana has been on the floor repeatedly, appealing to both sides of the aisle, but particularly to the majority, for help with health care for the people who have been displaced. Someone lucky enough to have health insurance when Hurricane Katrina hit may have lost not only their home but also their job and their health insurance, and now they are adrift. Senator LANDRIEU has been working with Senator GRASSLEY, a Republican, and Senator BAUCUS, a Democrat, to make certain they have health care coverage. It is not enough to say if they show up in an emergency room, somebody will probably take care of them. Is that what you would like your medical future to be for you and your family? That is not what Senator LANDRIEU wants and that is what she is fighting to change.

We have also seen the suggestion we cut back on cash payments to people who have no job, may not even have access to the unemployment checks or whatever they are entitled to at this moment.

I think one of the worst and crowning blows is this notion that somehow every penny we put into rebuilding America, rebuilding the Gulf Coast States—New Orleans, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama—has to be paid for by cutting other programs that may help poor people. Today the Agriculture Committee is considering cuts in food stamps, \$500 million or \$600 million in cuts in food stamps so we can provide help to Hurricane Katrina victims. So we will literally take food from the mouths of babies and mothers and families across America to give them to the babies and mothers and families of Hurricane Katrina? Is that what it has come to in America?

The suggestion we would cut Medicaid, the health insurance for the poor and elderly and disabled in America, so we can provide that same Medicaid, that same health insurance for the poor and elderly and disabled and displaced in Hurricane Katrina, is that what it has come to in America?

I think what troubles me the most is the situation here where there is an insistence by some of my colleagues that every penny we spend investing in rebuilding the Gulf Coast States has to be met by a cut in spending for the most vulnerable people in America. None of these people who are insisting on this match of cut for spending said that when we were talking about re-

building Iraq—\$18 billion, without a single dollar of it set off against any cut in spending. Not one of them brought up this idea of cutting spending to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in America. But when it comes to the most vulnerable, those helpless victims of this hurricane in those States, they are demanding this setoff that, frankly, will make life more painful and difficult for vulnerable people all across America.

This is a real test of who we are and what we stand for. If we are truly in this together, if we are going to be unified as a nation and react as a community and as a family, we can do better. America can do better. I salute the Senator from Louisiana. I will turn the floor over to her, thank her for her leadership, and say this Senator and many others will fight with you to the bitter end to make sure the people you represent understand that they do not stand alone.

I yield the floor.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Illinois, who has been such a champion for people in need, for people who need their Government to step up and to be with them in times of difficulty. That is what governments are all about.

We appreciate the self-sufficiency of people. We appreciate the value of upward mobility. We appreciate the values of family that Illinois and Louisiana treasure, about moving forward. But we also understand when life throws you a curve ball, when you are hit by a monster storm, when the home you have worked for all your life and might in fact have been paid for is literally washed away before your eyes; when the business that your father or your mother handed down to you and you built up to be something to be proud of, to turn over to your children, is gone in the flickering of an eye; when your child is in an accident and it was unexpected and the health insurance doesn't pay for it and you have a child now who is in great need—you would think we would have a government that would not question whether we should be there to help.

We would say: Of course. This is America. This is what we do. We help each other through difficult times. That is the way the country used to be. That is the country I grew up in. But I am standing here now on the floor at a quarter to 11 on Wednesday night. We are getting ready to pass a very important bill. We, the other Senator from Louisiana, Senator VITTER, and I, have been patient—persistent but patient over the 31 days since this first hurricane hit Louisiana and devastated our largest city and rocked the whole southern part of our State back on its heels. We have been to countless meetings, countless conferences, countless telephone conversations, countless visits back to our State and region, visiting from shelters to briefing rooms. We have outlined what we need. I have to stand here now at a quarter to 11 on

a Wednesday night with the idea that Congress is basically prepared to go home and do nothing other than what we have done, which is give \$62 billion to an agency that does not work.

That is where we are. Thirty-one days after the worst natural disaster in the history of the country, the subsequent breaking of a levee system that is primarily the fault of the Federal Government—not only but primarily the fault of the Federal Government from decades of neglect and disinvestment, disengagement, and disinterest—and I have to go tell my constituents that people in Congress needed a break and we had to go home, and the only thing we could do is give \$62 billion to the agency about which the only thing we all seem to agree, Republican and Democrat, House and Senate, is that it doesn't work.

I sent a letter—I have sent many, but this is another letter—to the leadership, to say:

Although a month has passed since Hurricane Katrina destroyed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Americans, survivors of this disaster and Hurricane Rita [throughout Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Alabama] still await direct federal assistance.

They are not getting much direct Federal assistance because the assistance has gone to FEMA. FEMA is not resourced, organized or prepared to handle it, so people are not getting the money.

So, instead of doing something before we leave to actually get the money to people it could help, we may do nothing.

In order to provide immediate relief to millions of Americans, I am suggesting that part of the FEMA money be reallocated. There is \$43 billion tonight—we checked today—of the \$61 billion or so we have appropriated. There is about \$43 billion sitting there, \$43 billion the taxpayers have already appropriated, we have already voted for, sitting there.

Some of us are suggesting that we take a few billion of that \$43 billion that is sitting there doing nothing and do something important with it, such as send signals to Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama that they could be reimbursed for their hospital and health care expenses for the 2 million people who have been displaced from their homes, from their neighborhoods, from their church communities, so there would be no question that they could get that reimbursement and States could begin planning how to provide critical health needs.

The Senator from Tennessee said that everyone will be getting health benefits. If you are a middle-income family and had private health insurance with your employer, and your employer went out of business, you don't continue with that health care unless we pass all or part of the Baucus-Grassley bill that provides a way for that health care to be continued.

The Senator says you can get health care. Yes, you could go stand in line in

an emergency room and wait for a day, 2 or 3 days. The lines were long before Katrina, and after Katrina and Rita, I had a mother tell me she waited 2 days with her child with cerebral palsy in her arms—for 2 days trying to get health care.

Unfortunately, many people go to the emergency room to get health care. But in this case, we have many people who don't usually get their health care from emergency rooms that need the Grassley-Baucus bill to be able to extend their private coverage at a reasonable and affordable rate until we can figure out a better way to keep them with health insurance, get them back in their jobs, get them back into homes, and decide how to do that.

That is why I sent a letter today saying I think we should act on the Emergency Health Care Relief Act—not 2 weeks from now, not a month from now, but right now. Take a few billion dollars and instead of letting it sit there doing nothing under the FEMA headline, take this money and use it for health care.

In addition, we have had 71,000 small businesses at a minimum—it could be more—71,000 small businesses, from restaurants to small manufacturing shops to high-tech businesses to agricultural-related businesses to art stores. I could go on and on and on. These are people who worked their whole lives to create a business for themselves and their children. They may employ three or four people. But it was a successful business. They were proud of their business. The business is gone.

Instead of Congress acting to help small business through the Small Business Administration, we have decided we want to give all the money to FEMA. If FEMA gives it to small businesses, fine; if they do not, OK with us. We are going home for 2 weeks.

So I sent the letter saying, Could we take some of that FEMA money—they have \$43 billion—just \$720 million of the FEMA money and give it to the Small Business Hurricane Relief and Reconstruction Act, sponsored not by Democrats but by the Republicans, by the chairman of the committee, the very able Senator from Maine, Senator SNOWE, who 2 weeks ago moved a bill out of her committee at the request of the Small Business Administration, and because of the need of small businesses in the gulf coast, moved a tight, comprehensive, direct package. But, no, we can't do that. We have to go home without helping our small businesses.

When I was on the committee the Small Business Administration testified. This was a week ago. They said 25,000 businesses had put in applications for aid and they had approved seven. That was last week.

I think that we should do anything we can do to give some money to the Small Business Administration, through already approved law—nothing new on the books—that they asked for,

that the Republican chairman of the Senate committee said absolutely this is what we should do, with the ranking member, the Senator from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY, agreeing. It passed unanimously out of our committee. We have very liberal members of our committee, and very conservative members of our committee who passed this unanimously, but for some reason we can't do this before we leave because the House leadership and the administration don't think that this help for small business is an emergency.

I might want them to call some of the 71,000 small businesses that don't have their business any longer and ask them if they could wait another few weeks for no reason, just because we can't manage to get a bill that passed unanimously over here, for the White House or someone in the administration to say, you know, that would be a good idea. FEMA is not working so well. While we try to work on getting FEMA to work better, it would make sense to us to take \$720 million of the \$43 billion that FEMA has and get it to the small businesses to help.

Another part of this letter is \$3.3 billion for immediate funding for elementary, secondary, and postsecondary relief for children. We go to school early in the South. Up here around Washington people do not go to school until after September. But down South, we all go back to school around the middle of August. In Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama, kids that just finished with their new backpacks, got in their little uniforms, parents are excited, kids are excited, they had just started school the week before the hurricane.

Then, on August 29th, Katrina, a category 4 or 5 hurricane, with 165-mile-an-hour winds, slammed into the gulf coast and destroyed hundreds of schools—public, private, parochial.

The superintendents, in their self-reliant way, started making phone calls and saying 250,000 children need to go to school. So they start making all kinds of arrangements, principals and teachers, mothers and fathers without much money, having lost their home and in some cases their business, scrambling to find schools to put their kids in. Why? Because a smart, good educator from Louisiana, the superintendent, who is universally admired in our State, said to people 12 days after the storm, You might have lost everything, but if you still have your children, do me a favor. Get them in school because it will bring normalcy to them. It will calm them from this tragedy, and it will provide some order for your family.

Wealthy people had many options. Middle-income people had fewer options, but they kind of made it work. The poor have struggled with this issue.

Our States have said it has been a month. We know there are 250,000 children, just elementary and school-age kids, that are enrolled in other schools,

strange schools. Children have been doing beautifully though, showing up to a brand new school, sometimes without any of their friends with them.

I have been through the shelters. I have seen the children leave, I have seen them come back. They are doing a great job.

The only people not doing very well are the Members of Congress on the House side and the administration that can't seem to find \$3 billion to let the States know that those children's tuition will be paid for. Maybe public schools can survive this. Maybe public schools just know: I am a public school and I know I am going to get our money. But what about the parochial schools?

Let me also remind you that these schools are employers. They employ teachers and support staff. Maybe they can wait until January, but since the administration has said we want to give help—\$4,000 a child or up to \$7,500 per child to make sure the States of Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas are whole—we should allow the schools that have taken in these children to be compensated at some great expense to the schools that were already full.

Let's take the State of Arkansas. They took 75,000 people; maybe they have 25,000 children or maybe only 20,000 children. Those children have gone to schools in Arkansas. They have taken them in. Those schools have not received one penny for those children and are not quite sure if they will. They have taken them in anyway, though. The parents do not know if their children are going to be paid for or if they will have to pick up a second tuition. Some of them have already paid tuition for the school they were in before the hurricane hit.

I am wondering, why is this complicated? The administration has said they are for it. LAMAR ALEXANDER, Senator KENNEDY, two Republicans, and a Democrat have pretty much agreed on how to do this. It only costs \$3 billion. Again, we would just as soon take it from FEMA since they are not doing very well with the money we have given them. It wouldn't cost us anything and we would get that done for our States, something positive and concrete. But, no, we have to go home.

The fourth thing in the letter we sent today was to see if we could get some direct funding, \$1.5 billion we say here, for just 3 months, it would just cover about 3 months of basic payroll for sheriff departments, for police, for fire fighters in the cities and counties and parishes that were the hardest hit.

Today, in the city of New Orleans—and this is a picture of one neighborhood—the headline in our hometown newspaper is that the city is to lay off 3,000 city employees. When a city has been destroyed, as this picture indicates, and people in your city look like this picture, which can be seen all over south Louisiana—this is what most homes in the southern part of Mis-

issippi and throughout south Louisiana look like. Whatever town, county, or city she lives in, you can obviously tell she will not be paying any sales tax. If you could see a broader picture, there are no stores standing where, if she could get up and walk, she could buy something and pay sales tax. Obviously, she will not be paying any ad valorem tax on this house.

Counties and parishes all over south Louisiana made their payrolls in August. They made their first payroll in September. They made their second payroll the end of September. They have no revenues coming in. They come here and ask for \$1.5 billion and are told: Why don't you go back and tighten your numbers a little bit. Why don't you go back and just see if there is any way this lady could pay a little tax. I have never seen or heard anything like this in my life.

FEMA has \$43 billion unallocated. Throughout the entire region, they have no sales tax to operate, no property tax to operate, and are getting ready to declare bankruptcy. And Congress says, they have to tighten their numbers. If we give them the money in New Orleans, if we give the money to them under current law, we have to pay it back.

How is New Orleans or Waveland or anyplace that looks like this, how are they going to pay any money back? If we do not get this law changed before we leave, the only money New Orleans could get under the current law, which is why we keep saying FEMA is not working—under the current law a city or county can get a maximum of \$5 million by loan, which they have to pay back.

Do you know how much the annual operating monthly payroll is for the city of New Orleans? It is \$40 million. How would the \$5 million help the city of New Orleans to stay in business when in 1 month they spend \$40 million just on operating expenses for the city that looks like this? I come and ask for \$40 million for 1 month and get told it is too much to ask for? Don't ask for too much, Senator.

OK, well, we will ask for just 3 months of operating expenses for some of these communities. I suggest if you are giving tax credits to get people to come back, you might need a city they can come back to, or a county they can come back to that is actually operating. I don't know too many businesses that want to operate in a place with no police protection, no fire protection, no sewer, no water, and limited utility maintenance for electricity because the city is shut down. Maybe there is a community like that somewhere in the world or in America, but I don't know of one. Even people who live in rural areas—and I have been out to Montana, Idaho, and beautiful places in the West where you never see anyone—have a beautiful ranch in the middle of nowhere, and there is a fire department that would come if their ranch caught on fire.

We have cities and communities on the gulf coast that are letting their police and their firemen go, and we are sitting around passing tax credits.

I am sure this woman could use some of the tax credits we have passed. I have not figured out exactly which one, but I will work on that tomorrow, something she might particularly benefit from.

I have sheriff's departments, cities, counties, and parishes that do not know how they will make payroll. FEMA has \$43 billion, and I cannot get \$1.5 billion to help them stay in business. Anything we might do in December could actually work.

I don't know how to express any more the tragedy and the magnitude of this disaster. I hope perhaps some people listening would pick up the special edition of National Geographic, "Why It Became a Man-made Disaster, Where It Could Happen Next." The pictures are hard to look at. The text is even more difficult to read—not because the words are large but because it makes you so sick when you read it because it was avoidable.

This was all avoidable, but there were many failures along the way at the national level, at the State level, at the local level. I hope we can learn from what we did so people do not think: Well, the Senator from Louisiana is just talking about the people from Louisiana.

Let me read you the last page, which is why I am spending time on the floor, why I am going to stay on this floor, why I am going to push this issue, so we get something for the people of Louisiana and the gulf coast before we leave, something for their health care or something for their education or something for their small business or something for their police and fire departments, something for their operating budgets, so we can have something to work with when we get back.

But the reason I am also pressing it is because I know, as sure as I am standing here, there is going to be another disaster. If we do not fix FEMA, if we do not fix some of these systems and set a precedent—not a precedent because it is already in the law; but actually act on what the law already says, which is all we are asking, not anything new; but we are setting a precedent by acting on what the Federal Government already has—it is going to happen to someone else. And I am likely to tell you now who that someone else is going to be.

The next Katrina? According to NOAA—which is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—meteorologist Joe Golden, the five places in the United States at greatest risk for a calamitous hurricane are Tampa Bay, FL—heads up, Senators from Florida—Mobile, AL—heads up, delegation from Alabama—Houston, TX—heads up to the Texas delegation—New York City and Long Island, NY, and Miami, FL.

This is a picture of the likely areas of threat in the dark color on this map in

the National Geographic article. So not only do we have to get this right for the gulf coast, which has been hit hard and knocked down—but not knocked out—we have to fix this so it does not happen again, and if it does, the people of Florida do not have to suffer the way the people of Louisiana and Mississippi have had to suffer; so the people of New York would not have to go through what we went through.

But I do not know if I have hope about that because also in National Geographic they remind us of something that I knew of as a kid. Everybody in Louisiana knows about it. It was Hurricane Betsy—the largest natural disaster in the history of the country. There is a hurricane that all the old-timers know about that hit in 1965, Hurricane Betsy. It flooded a great area of the metropolitan area, Plaquemines Parish, Saint Bernard Parish, and the Lower Nine, which was also terribly affected by Katrina.

As a result of Betsy, the Federal Government did the same thing. President Lyndon Johnson came down at the request actually of Senator Russell Long from Louisiana who said: Please come, see what has happened, and help us.

President Johnson, I am proud to say, came down and seemed to do more than we are doing now. I have a memo I am going to submit for the RECORD that he himself wrote—that I got from the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library today—upon his return, as he indicated to Congress what needed to be done. Maybe this would inspire us to do more.

Anyway, that hurricane occurred. We set out to build a levee system, a bold, aggressive plan for a levee system. But somewhere along the way that plan fell by the wayside. Congress got distracted. Other priorities came up. Even though our delegation, decade after decade, Republican and Democrat, pleaded, begged, and used our own political chits to add money to the executive budget every year for levees and flood protection and important dredging projects, it was never a promise that was fulfilled.

So we find ourselves, 40 years after Betsy, having basically a collapse of a levee system. I would like to be optimistic, but I am not sure I can be, because in 1927 the great flood before Betsy did the same thing. The picture I have in the Chamber is eerily the same, except there is no overpass. This first picture was taken in 1927. This other one was taken in 2005. You would think that a sophisticated country such as ours—sophisticated governments such as ours—would understand that every now and then you have to make smart investments and smart decisions about levee protection and about growth.

So I am hoping, since we had this once in 1927, we flooded again in the 1960s, and now in 2005, we could learn some lessons about how to prevent this because it is preventable. We are not the only people in the world who live

below sea level. There are examples all over the Earth of people who have to live close to the water for trade and commerce purposes who have managed to discipline themselves, restrain themselves, wisely spend their money, and invest it in the protections that their homeowners and their businesses and their people need to have a long and prosperous and safe existence.

But we did not learn it in 1927 sufficiently. We did not learn it in 1965. And I am hoping today we can learn it in 2005.

Before we build the levee system, though, we have to face the immediate issues, which is why we sent this letter to the leadership, why I have said: Let's not go home until we take some money from FEMA, which has \$43 billion and is not spending it very well. And everyone agrees with that. There is not a person in Congress now who is defending the way FEMA is distributing this money. It is not because they do not have some good people at FEMA. I have met many of them. They are caring and compassionate individuals.

But FEMA is not organized to manage this crisis, and they are the agency that should be coordinating it. They are not resourced. They are not staffed. They are not organized because they were put in the Department of Homeland Security, stripped of much of their independence. Their budget was slashed. Most of the people who knew how to run disasters either left or were asked to leave. So they have a group of people who are not as experienced, not as well organized, and not prepared.

As a result, our people in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are suffering. So instead of complaining more about it, which we have done ad nauseam almost for 31 days, we said: OK, let's move on here. Let's take some of the money that is not being used and direct it immediately to things that would really make a difference in people's lives and, most importantly, would send a positive signal that help is on the way.

So I do not know why we are not able to do this, which is why I have called up this bill, the Grassley-Baucus bill, why I am going to push and insist and use all the power I have as a Senator from this State of Louisiana, with anyone else, Republican or Democrat, who will help to try to get this message to the White House, to the House leadership: Please do not abandon the people of Louisiana again, and the people of Mississippi again, and the people of Alabama again by leaving before we do something to help them in a direct and concrete manner.

Now, there have been a lot of press releases issued. I will submit those for the RECORD. There are lots of messages that people give out, that people are asked to say—things like: The President has called on all Americans to help those in need; the President has asked for this; So and so has asked for this; please tell people they are not alone.

We have programs such as the opportunity zones, urban homesteading. I think there is some merit in some of this that has been proposed. I am not opposed to exploring options for anything to encourage home ownership. But right now our State, the city of New Orleans, cannot keep people on the payroll. If we do not do something immediately to give money to our local governments, to sheriffs, to first responders, for firefighters, I do not know how anything else we do is going to matter because there will not be a city to do it in, or there will not be a county that is functioning when the schools manage to get rebuilt, when any businesses decide to take advantage of the tax credits we have given them to open, there will not be a city to move into.

We are trying to get some of our neighborhoods back in New Orleans, and the mayor and Federal officials and the Governor and the council have been working through a complicated plan that is not universally supported. But I can understand why we have to go neighborhood by neighborhood, because some neighborhoods are totally uninhabitable. You want to bring some life to the city, but what is the use of moving people back into Algiers, which is where we want to move them on the west bank, or back into the CBD, if the mayor has to let 3,000 people off this week and 3,000 people off next week? Who would the people in the central business district call when they need a permit?

I don't think this is too complicated. It is time for us to act. We have passed some tax credits in a bipartisan fashion, \$6 billion in tax credits to help people with casualty loss, to let people take some money out of their IRA tax free, to tell the IRS, don't collect any taxes for people. If anybody owes you money or if people are late or don't expect any quarterly reports, that has all been helpful. We have given a \$2,400 credit to employers. One thing we can do in this Congress is pass tax cuts. We have become very good at passing tax cuts. We are appreciative of these tax cuts, \$6 billion. But I can tell you that our State needs \$9 billion. Maybe we could live with \$6 billion if we eliminate some things that we need. Perhaps we could wait for a couple of months to get this emergency health care relief act.

We need the \$720 million for small business relief already passed in a bipartisan way. We need money for our elementary and secondary schools. And most importantly, we need money for our community disaster loans and for several hospitals in the region. When the whole community was collapsing, when certain hospitals had to evacuate, these three hospitals in the metropolitan area—West Jefferson, East Jefferson, and Oschner, two public hospitals and one private hospital—stayed open the whole time, never closed their doors, even with water rising and winds out and all sorts of disaster and

difficulty. Because of their sheer determination to do so, they stayed open. As a result, Oschner can't qualify for insurance because they never closed their doors. But if we don't give them some immediate help, this well-respected institution may not be able to keep their doors open. They are one of the largest employers, most respected institutions. What are we going to do, say, sorry, come back in a month? They may not be here in a month.

We don't even have on this list our universities. The University of New Orleans, Southern University, Dillard University, Xavier University, Tulane University, Loyola University, and our largest community college, Delgado, which had five feet of water around it. These are not only the brainpower that is going to help us rebuild a city greater and better, higher and stronger and smarter, these are employers who employ thousands of the professionals who make up the heart of our region. We don't even have them on the list. They were on the front page of the New York Times, on CNN last night, saying: Does anybody know we are out here? We are not able to make payroll.

Why wouldn't they be able to make payroll? They have no students in their university. So what does the president of the university tell his faculty: Go to Atlanta and come back in 2 years? And if Xavier is not functioning, and Dillard is not functioning, and the University of New Orleans is not up and operating, and Tulane can't get completely back up, and Loyola, who do the small businesses we are trying to give tax credits to, who do they sell their products to if there are no large businesses that have survived?

Let me talk about one other employer, the Catholic Church. There are people in this Congress who have this idea that in a storm such as this or in a hurricane or disaster, let's have faith-based initiatives. Churches do beautiful work. The synagogues do beautiful work. People of faith have done so many things that I want to say thank you to everyone who has helped in every way. But in my city, as a Catholic city predominantly, the Catholic Church not only runs schools and senior centers and feeding centers and homeless shelters, they don't think of themselves as a business. They think of themselves as a ministry. They, in fact, are one of the largest employers in our region and have been since before the Government actually existed in the way we know it today. In other words, the Ursuline nuns, the nuns of the Holy Sisters, the Sisters of the Poor, the Jesuits came to the city before we even had an American Government and helped to stand the city up. That is how long they have been there. They have helped decade after decade, through the Revolutionary War, the Battle of New Orleans, the Civil War, through every tragedy, the nuns, the priests, the teachers have been there.

Now their schools are ruined. Their hospitals are ruined. They come to ask

the Government for some help. We act like, go ask a faith-based institution. They are a faith-based institution. Whom should they go ask? They have to let off maybe 1,500 people. Why would we want our largest employer to let go people so these people who are trained in the ministry, who deliver services, who are the social workers of the city, the psychologists of the city, the counsellors of the city, the teachers of the city could go to Atlanta or Houston or Michigan or Dallas and come back in a couple years? We need them to stay there and help us build the city and community.

I am sure that is true in Waveland. I am sure it is true in Pass Christian. I am sure it is true throughout the gulf coast of Mississippi. Instead we get: Go ask a faith-based institution for help. Go ask a church. They are the church. They can't even save their own employees so how are they going to help everyone else? I don't know what has happened to us as a country. It makes me frightened to think about how far we have come as a nation that we don't understand the role of the Federal Government at a time such as this, that we are so focused on tax cuts, on other priorities, that when hard-working Americans, hard-working American citizens, who have done nothing but work hard all their lives to build some equity, to get to a place not of luxury but of peace and comfort, lose everything in the blink of an eye, we have to come up here to the Federal Government and beg on their behalf, instead of the Federal Government saying: This is why we are here. That is what being part of a nation is all about. If one State is hurting, the other 49 can lift them up. Or if two States are hurting, the other 48 can lift them up.

Instead, we have to listen to editorial after editorial saying: Why can't Louisiana be more self-reliant? The State needs to demonstrate self-reliance.

The Budget Director of Louisiana reported to our legislature that their revenues will be short \$1 billion out of a budget of approximately \$14 billion. But the State needs to be self-reliant; the people in Louisiana are not self-reliant.

I want to show a picture of a woman who I think is self-reliant. She is not on a wagon train out West, but this is what I think about self-reliance. She has her baby in her arms. She is doing the best she can in a very tough situation. I want to show some other pictures of self-reliance.

This is a woman for whom no one came. She probably has no car, but she has the two babies that she can carry, and I am sure if she had a third, she would have managed to put a third one in her arms and wade through 5 feet of water to try to get these children to safety. This is what Senator LANDRIEU thinks is being self-reliant.

There is another picture in this magazine of some people in a boat. There is a picture in this magazine of about 10 people in a boat. The boat does not

have the Coast Guard emblem—and let me thank the Coast Guard. They saved 32,000 people in the course of 3 and 4 days; 32,000 the Coast Guard alone saved out of houses, off porches, off roofs. That is not counting the thousands of people who were saved by Wildlife and Fisheries.

But there is a picture in this magazine of a boat that looks like it is sort of a blown-up boat with about 12 people in it. There are no paddles. So the people in the boat found some wood floating in the water and picked up the wood and started paddling.

This is the picture. I hope the cameras can see it. They are going to have to really blow it up, but here it is. It is not very large. But this is what the Senator from Louisiana thinks is being self-reliant. People found something that floated, put themselves and their children in it, found some old wood, and started paddling to safety. And I have to listen to news people saying that our people are not self-reliant?

I will not apologize for asking for help on behalf of the 4.5 million people who live in my State—Black and White, Hispanic and Asian—who have been devastated by this storm, 2 million of whom have lost their homes and their neighborhoods. Most of them have never asked the Government for one thing, have never been on one program, and they come here to ask for a little bit of help and they are told: You need to be more self-reliant. How much more self-reliant can people be other than to raise their children, send them to school, balance their budget, pay for their house, pay their bills on time, and serve in the military? How much more self-reliant can they be?

I thought and I think they thought they lived in a nation that when something such as this happened that was unexpected and not their fault, somebody would be there to help them. All we have is photo ops, message boards, and press releases. But when it comes down to actually passing some legislation with some money attached to it that could actually help someone, we cannot seem to find the will to do it, despite the fact that what we are asking for we can take from the FEMA money and not add anything. Republicans and Democrats have come together almost unanimously in support of these, but yet we are going to go home without doing anything.

Mr. President, I hope I have made my point. I will be back in the morning to talk about some other aspects of this recovery. Again, to be perfectly clear, FEMA has been given \$51 billion. There is \$43 billion, as of yesterday, that is unallocated. Everyone agrees that FEMA is not what it used to be, that it is not working very well. For whatever reason and for whose ever fault that might be, we cannot fix that overnight. So I am asking to take a few billion of that money that is just sitting there and allocate it to programs already established, that are already working, that are desperately needed, that have

been agreed to by Republicans and Democrats alike before we leave so we can give hope to people.

I am going to stand here on this floor all day tomorrow and use every pressure point I can to see that some agreement can be reached to do something before we leave and when we come back, to agree to up-or-down votes on some critical bills on which we need action now. We don't get action on them, anything we do in January or February or March or April, in large measure, will be for nought because the counties, cities, parishes, police departments, and fire departments that we are trying to help may not make it that long. Without them, it is very hard, if not impossible, to build our communities and build our cities.

In conclusion, people want to come home. Some people may not be able to.

But as a Senator from Louisiana, I want people to know from our State that everyone is welcome home. All people are welcome, and we want everyone back. We are doing the very best we can to try to provide and prioritize what we need to do first, second, and third in order to get people back and get our communities started again.

Not only is New Orleans a great city, but the region is pretty spectacular and special. The whole gulf coast is a place that when you grow up in New Orleans, you know about Waveland, Pass Christian, places that are very special to people along that gulf coast. Generation after generation of families have vacationed together and lived together and worshipped together and gone to school together, and it is gone.

We would like the help of this Nation to build it back higher, stronger, and better. We don't want to waste a penny, but we need this help now.

Let us act when we come back early in the morning to get some of this done and to work with our colleagues to see that we can get help to the people who are desperately in need of help.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:33 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 6, 2005, at 9:30 a.m.