

leading to try to redirect some of that attention to right here at home.

We have over 30 million people who live on the gulf coast right now, today, this Friday. The work of rebuilding is being thwarted, is being hampered, is being delayed by outmoded, unrealistic Federal regulations and bureaucratic redtape that is choking this recovery.

Now, normally this redtape is a nuisance. We work through it. It is inconvenient. It is a nuisance. But we just sort of move through the redtape of Government. But in this case, it is literally a noose that is around the necks of people, of business owners, large and small, family members—strangling their efforts to recover their communities that were devastated.

Just to put some pieces in the picture I am trying to paint, I would like to just share some details about Cameron Parish. You do not hear much about Cameron Parish because there are only 9,658 people who live there. We hear a lot about New Orleans. We hear a lot about Jefferson Parish. We hear a lot about even St. Bernard Parish. But little Cameron Parish, down on the southwest border, that was directly hit by Rita, the “forgotten storm.” We have not. The legislative delegation from Louisiana has not forgotten it, but many others fail to remember it.

Cameron Parish lost five fire stations, four community recreation centers, four public libraries, three maintenance barns, two parish multipurpose buildings, Courthouse Circle; Cameron Parish Police Jury Annex Building—destroyed; Cameron Parish Sheriff’s Department Investigative Office—destroyed. The health unit was destroyed. The school board office was destroyed. The mosquito control barn was destroyed. And the waterworks district No. 10 office was destroyed. Virtually every public building was destroyed, except the courthouse, which was built in the early part of the century. It is several stories high, and it sort of shines white on the coast. If you flew over it, you could actually see it. It is quite large, and many people’s lives have actually been saved by going to the courthouse during storms, where they have been kept from the high water. But everything else in the parish is gone. This little parish can no more put up a 10-percent match to rebuild four libraries, all their schools, than the man in the moon.

Now, normally, if the hurricane was not so bad, the State of Louisiana, which is a big State—not huge, but we are not small, we are medium-sized—would be strong enough to step up, give Cameron Parish the 10 percent of each of these very important public works for the 10,000 people or so who live there. But the problem is, Katrina and Rita were so devastating to the whole State that our State is not strong enough.

That is why we have a Federal Government. When the State is not strong enough, because of the storms, the Nation steps up. I am asking the Presi-

dent of the United States to step up and use his authority to waive this 10-percent match so the people of Cameron and the people right next door to them on the Texas line who were equally hard hit and the people to the right of them on the map—the good people of Mississippi—there are towns in Mississippi that lost every school, every library. The State of Mississippi will have a difficult time as well. But the State of Louisiana is having an unusually difficult time because of the devastation.

I want to say again—because I think numbers can paint a picture or tell a story better than even words can—the per capita damage to Florida from Hurricane Andrew was \$139. The per capita damage to the State of New York was \$390 from the attacks on the World Trade Center. These two events were unprecedented and unheard of. Most storms are like \$20 per capita, \$50 per capita. They hardly ever go over \$50 per capita.

When Hurricane Andrew came through, it really woke us up to the poor people of Florida. It wrecked Homestead, FL, and was a great weight for the State of Florida. But we all pitched in and helped, and this match was waived.

When 9/11 hit, it shook the foundations of this Nation. It also shook the great city of New York. But it was waived, and we all pitched in and helped.

Here we have Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and we sit here wondering: Where is the Government? Where is the President? Where is the minority’s thinking on this subject? Our per capita damage is \$6,700. It defies anything we have ever seen.

Our State has been asking for this 10 percent reduction for 18 months. Do we have to keep asking for it? Do we have to keep supplying data like this? What is it going to take to get them to understand if there was ever a situation where the 10 percent should be waived, if there was ever an example like Cameron Parish, this is it.

So this amendment is pending. It is being opposed by an undisclosed person. But the minority is opposing it. I will meet the minority more than halfway. I am asking the administration, please, over the weekend, to reconsider. Let us get this done on this bill. Every day, every week counts. If we cannot, the majority leader has said—and I, of course, will support the effort, and many of the members of this caucus are supporting it—we will do it on the supplemental. The problem is, it will take us weeks. Perhaps the supplemental will run into a veto threat. Who knows? Because there are lots of issues that are going to come up on that supplemental. But this issue is clear. It could be easily fixed on this bill. I am going to work through the weekend to see if we can find any kind of compromise that could give a green light to the people of Cameron Parish. Let me say that even without that light,

we visited Cameron Parish several times. Their little girls’ softball team that was in contention when the storm hit went on to win the championship. Without a cafeteria, without a school, without a gym to practice, with most of their teachers’ homes underwater and their own homes underwater, and most of them living in trailers or in tents, this team went on to win the championship. So when people say that people in Louisiana don’t have resilience, we are being as resilient as we possibly can be under these circumstances. All we are asking is to please look at the data, please consider our case and allow us to get this 10 percent waiver so that the public works can move forward on fire stations, police stations, libraries, and infrastructure, most certainly essential to communities rebuilding. As we rebuild, we are rebuilding on higher ground. We are rebuilding with better building materials. We are mitigating against future storms. We are not building in the old-fashioned ways. But if this 10 percent doesn’t get waived, we are not going to be building new or old or otherwise. We won’t be building.

As I said, we may not be a fancy coast, but we are America’s energy coast. We are proud of the fish that we bring in right off of Cameron Parish. We are proud of the shipping industry. We are proud of the ship channel that brings liquefied natural gas to keep the lights on in this Chamber and sends gas to New York and Philadelphia and California every day.

This is Cameron Parish. They are not sunbathing down in Cameron Parish. Yet we can’t find it out of the goodwill of our hearts—we are spending all of this money to rebuild Iraq, and I have 10,000 people down on the coast. Does anybody remember they are Americans, taxpaying Americans with no libraries, no schools, and no possible way to put up their 10 percent match because they lost everything? I would think that somewhere in this trillion-dollar budget and maybe in the heart of the minority they could find some room for the people of Cameron Parish. Please consider our request over this weekend to get this 10 percent waived.

I thank the Chair.

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. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LINCOLN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

EPIDEMIC OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the epidemic of gun violence is endangering many in our communities both large and small. Illegal guns are being used at an increasing rate to harm our children, our neighbors, and our police officers. We must not allow this spiral to continue.

One example of a community heavily affected by gun violence is in Pennsylvania, where in 2004 the State led the Nation in homicide rates among African-American victims. Handguns were used in 81 percent of the State's murders. In Pennsylvania's largest city, Philadelphia, more than 2,000 people were injured by firearms last year alone. According to the Philadelphia police department, this represents an increase of 31 percent in just 3 years. Philadelphia saw 406 people murdered in 2006, up from 380 in 2005.

Just a short trip south of Pennsylvania lies another example of the how guns are affecting our communities. According to the nonprofit organization Ceasefire Maryland, a crime is committed with an assault rifle every 48 hours in the State of Maryland. The Maryland State Legislature is attempting to address this horrifying statistic by considering a bill backed by Governor Martin O'Malley that would ban 45 different assault weapons statewide. This action could serve as an excellent example of a legislature taking a commonsense approach to reducing gun violence. Congress and President Bush have allowed the Federal assault weapons ban to expire.

Month after month, we watch these tragedies unfold on the news and yet Congress has not taken the necessary steps to help control these acts of violence or ease the anxiety that many parents and families feel each day as their loved ones go to school, church, or work. According to the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, gun crime rose 49.4 percent nationally between 2004 and 2005. Almost 5.9 million people were victims of gun violence between 1996 and 2005.

The American people have a right to demand that their schools, places of worship, and other public places be better protected from gun violence. Much more can be done to break the cycle of gun violence that plagues our communities. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass commonsense legislation that will help address this problem.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:30 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 700. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the

pilot program for alternative water source projects.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 700. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the pilot program for alternative water source projects; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolution was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 9. Joint resolution to revise United States policy on Iraq.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 987. An act to endorse further enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and to facilitate the timely admission of new members to NATO, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-905. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Membership in a Registered Futures Association" (RIN3038-AC29) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-906. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Conflicts of Interest in Self-Regulation and Self-Regulatory Organizations" (RIN3038-AC28) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-907. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Advertising by Commodity Pool Operators, Commodity Trading Advisors, and the Principals Thereof" (RIN3038-AC35) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-908. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Entry of Certain Cement Products from Mexico Requiring a Commerce Department Import License" (RIN1505-AB68) received on March 6, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-909. A communication from the Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, the report of proposed legislation entitled "National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-910. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, the report of proposed legislation entitled "Nuclear Fuel

Management and Disposal Act"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-911. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Operating Permits Program; State of Missouri" (FRL No. 8284-8) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-912. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Iowa; Interstate Transport of Pollution" (FRL No. 8285-1) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-913. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Kansas; Interstate Transport of Pollution" (FRL No. 8286-3) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-914. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Missouri" (FRL No. 8286-1) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-915. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Polymer of 2-Ethyl-2-(Hydroxymethyl)-1,3-Propanediol, Oxirane, Methyloxirane, 1,2-Epoxyalkanes; Tolerance Exemption" (FRL No. 8116-9) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-916. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prothioconazole; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8113-6) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-917. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "State-Administered Programs" (RIN1890-AA13) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-918. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Interim Final Rule Relating to Time and Order of Issuance of Domestic Relations Orders" (RIN1210-AB15) received on March 7, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment:

S. 377. A bill to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-33).