

can do it, and the sooner we will come home and the less lives we will lose in the long run. That is our message.

We respect you. You are the Commander in Chief. You won the election. But you have an opportunity, and it is clear to me that we are losing momentum. This is not a time to deliberate. This is a time to act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

#### TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak about three amendments to the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. I do wish to comment on the Afghan discussion and thank my colleagues who just spoke so eloquently. All three have been leaders on the issue of international engagements. I hope the Senators, particularly Senator McCAIN and Senator GRAHAM, as we contemplate the right moves forward, will think about and be willing to fund nonmilitary programs as well. Many such programs have been shown, in front of the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee, through testimony given by Secretary Gates himself, as well as many military leaders, to actually help reduce violence by supporting development in Afghan villages, empowering individuals, particularly women in Afghanistan who, with a little bit of help and a little bit of support, can be the strength and cement that holds communities together. Educating girls is an important strategy.

One thing we have learned from the failed policies of the previous administration is that we have to use both hard and soft power combined, to make it smarter so we can actually win some of these battles. That is probably what President Obama and his team are thinking about: How do we unite the Congress, get past partisan rhetoric, and come up with a smart strategy to win in Afghanistan. In that way we might not only protect our troops, but we might be able to get them home a little bit sooner. I am sure that is what the President is thinking about. I look forward to working with Senators Lieberman, McCain, and Graham as we move forward, hopefully, in a bipartisan fashion, to protect our troops and to win in a place that we most certainly need to and keep the Taliban at bay.

I came to talk about three amendments. One is an amendment I have pending. It is amendment No. 2365. I see my colleague, Senator HUTCHISON, is in the Chamber. She is a cosponsor of the amendment. Although we are not going to vote on it tonight, I wished to speak for a moment about the amendment. Unfortunately, I will be away from the Senate tomorrow for a longstanding commitment. Tomorrow I will deliver a speech that I promised to give on behalf of Senator Domenici in New Mexico, so I will not

be here for the vote. But I know my colleagues who are supporting this amendment will stand in and carry the torch.

My amendment will help disaster-stricken communities in Texas, Louisiana, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Florida and California. Congress appropriated \$6.5 billion in a Community Development Block Grant for the series of disasters that afflicted these states in 2008. The problem was, that in this particular allocation, we prohibited these communities from using that money to match other Federal moneys that might be available, which makes no sense. Congress has appropriated funds using the Community Development Block Grant to respond to 19 other disasters, and virtually never resorted to adding such a prohibition.

What my amendment will do is revert to the regular language so that communities, such as Galveston—I see my colleague Senator HUTCHISON here. She and I will be together in Galveston on Friday to monitor recovery efforts there and she has been such a leader in this effort. However, there are still many communities in New Orleans and in southwest Louisiana and other parts of south Louisiana for which this amendment is crucial. It doesn't add money to the bill. It just allows us to use money more intelligently.

For communities that are struggling not just because of disasters but because of the atmosphere of tough economic times, it gives local and State leaders a little bit more flexibility to pull down some of the Federal money that has already been allocated to communities that need it the most. It is amendment No. 2365. Senator GRASSLEY is supportive, as are Senator MURRAY and Senator BOND. I thank them so much. We will consider that amendment tomorrow.

Now I want to turn to a new topic and I wish to speak against an amendment offered by my colleague from Louisiana, Senator VITTER, that will be considered tomorrow. I will not be here to vote against this amendment but will submit a statement for the RECORD. I strongly oppose that amendment—amendment number 2359, which will be voted on tomorrow.

This is an amendment I oppose for two reasons. No. 1, it is bad policy. The other reason I am against it is because this amendment only deals with public housing residents and other HUD-housing assistance recipients in the city of New Orleans. It doesn't address the problems of public housing residents right here in the District of Columbia, nor public housing residents in Chicago or New York, nor Baton Rouge, nor Lafayette. Only in New Orleans.

That is perplexing to me, that it is focused on only one city in our State and only one city in the whole country. That is one reason to vote against the amendment, no matter what it says, because it does not include other communities.

But the real reason to vote against the amendment is because it is mean-spirited and counterproductive. What this amendment basically says is that you can be evicted from public housing if anyone in your family commits a crime or gets in trouble with the law.

I understand family members. I am one of nine siblings. I am married and now have two children. I have many brothers and sisters and 38 cousins in our extended family and two wonderful parents. The Presiding Officer has met many members of my family. I like to try to take responsibility for everyone in my family. But parents, no matter how hard they try, sometimes somebody in your family does something that is wrong. Should the entire family become homeless? That is what the Vitter amendment will do. It is such poor policy. It is so mean-spirited. It is so counterproductive. It will mean an increase in homelessness for a city that has already seen our homeless population quadruple.

More than that, the nature of this amendment is so punitive. It penalizes grandmothers or great aunts or moms and dads, or siblings who are trying to do the best they can with very little. Children sometimes do very bad things. Sometimes you will have a family of five children. Four are wonderful and straight-A students. Then you have one child who gets in trouble with drugs or becomes an alcoholic, and causes trouble for the family. Senator VITTER has put in an amendment which he will ask this body to support that would do this: when one member of the family gets in trouble with the law, the whole family gets thrown out on the street.

If this amendment passes, I would like for him to have to go to the sister in fourth grade, because, let's say, the teenage son who is 17 is the one who is causing the problems. I don't want people to think I just pick on boys, but I think people understand we have lots of trouble with this age group of all genders. I would like maybe for my colleague to be the one who has to knock on the front door and tell the mother and the fourth grade little girl, who got an A on her test, performed in the band and has straight A's, that she can pack her bags and spend the night on the street. If I could modify this amendment to make him have to do that, I would. This is not compassionate conservatism. This is mean, and it is nonsense. It needs to be voted down.

To repeat the number, for my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, it is amendment No. 2359, only for New Orleans and only for people in public housing. I hope Members will vote no.

Let me say one other thing about this. Unfortunately, my colleague and some people supported tearing down all the public housing units in New Orleans after the storm because some of them were destroyed. Some people took this as an opportunity to say: We never liked them anyway. They

weren't run very well. Which was often true. So let's knock them all down and too bad for the people who used to live there, even though most of those people worked. I am going to remind my colleague and others, they don't live there for free. Under the law, they pay 30 percent of their income to live in that housing. He wanted to knock them all down.

Some of us fought back and said: OK, we want to reform them. We want to build better communities. We will work with you here. So because I stepped in and a bunch of others stepped in, Catholic Charities and many activists from all walks of life, including the business community, we said: We are going to rebuild these communities. Well here is the most amazing thing about it: it is working. Shawn Donovan, our Housing Secretary, was just there. We had standing room only, with people from every different race and walk of life. We are patting ourselves on the back saying: It was bad 10 years ago. It was bad 5 years ago. But now we are all working together in the spirit of unity in a city that has been absolutely brought to its knees by flooding and by political bickering and bomb throwing. And we made things better. Then this amendment has to hit the floor. It is a disgrace. I urge my colleagues to vote no on amendment 2359.

While I am here, I will say a word about another amendment that has been agreed to this afternoon by 73 votes, unfortunately. It was another Vitter amendment. It was amendment No. 2376. I voted no. There were 26 of us who voted no, but 73 Senators voted yes. I know I am in the minority, but that is what the Senate is about, giving the minority a voice. I wish to say something about this. This amendment reinstated a law that says that if you live in public housing, you have to do 8 hours of community service. That sounds pretty good. People think, we are providing housing for people. They should be grateful. The least they can do is community service.

I am a big supporter of community service. I try to do it when I can. I support community service and I support calling all of our citizens to community service. What I don't support is making poor people and mostly minorities do community service, while other people sit on the sideline and never are required to do it, even though the largesse they receive from our government is much greater than a resident of public housing could ever hope to get even if they lived there for 50 years.

If you lived in public housing for 50 years, you could not possibly benefit as much from the General Treasury as if you would if you were the executive of AIG to whom we gave a gazillion dollars. Did we ask them to do 8 hours of community service? We didn't even ask him to pay the money back. Somebody has to wake up in this Chamber.

I am not fussing at my colleagues because I know people have a different

view about this. But if we want to require law students to do 8 hours of community service for the loans they get, fine. But don't just pick on the poor because they can't fight back, and they don't have any lobbyists up here for them.

Those are the two amendments my colleague could come up with today. I can't wait to see what he comes up with tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### AFGHANISTAN AND THE NATO ALLIANCE

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, Senators LIEBERMAN, MCCAIN, and GRAHAM took the floor a few minutes ago. I have some concerns about the direction we are heading in Afghanistan as well.

Yesterday the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen, came before the Senate Armed Services Committee and said that success in Afghanistan would probably require more forces and certainly more time. I think all of us who are aware of what is going on there—and certainly I was there last year myself; many of us have gone over there to see for ourselves what the conditions are—and I think clearly we can all agree we are going to have more time in Afghanistan.

While the Chairman did not specifically ask for more troops, and had not had a request from GEN Stanley McChrystal, who is the senior American officer and NATO commander in Afghanistan, he did, however, indicate he “believed—having heard General McChrystal’s views—and having great confidence in his leadership,” as we all do—“a properly resourced counterinsurgency probably means more forces, and, without question, more time and more commitment to the protection of the Afghan people and to the development of good governance.”

There are currently approximately 64,000 American troops in Afghanistan. But it is becoming increasingly clear that we cannot achieve our goals in Afghanistan unless we add additional troops and anticipate a protracted effort.

To his credit, President Obama laid out a new strategy in March. It properly put primary emphasis on building the governance capacity of Afghanistan and building up Afghan security forces. He also said he would send—and has—21,000 additional U.S. troops. We know now that was probably not enough and more troops will be needed.

Just this week, the President said we should “not expect a sudden announcement of some huge change in strategy,” and he further pledged that the issue was “going to be amply debated, not just in Congress, but across the country.”

I welcome that debate. We need to agree as a nation on a strategy for victory, on the resources necessary to

complete the mission. We need to block attempts by the cut-and-run crowd to limit the deployments and operations of U.S. troops or to tie their hands as to what they can do while they are there. We do need more Afghan forces. It should also be abundantly clear that if our strategy is going to work, we must have another resource.

I want to call attention to the role of NATO. With the Taliban resurgent and casualties rising to levels never seen before in Afghanistan, we must have more security forces in Afghanistan, and it is well past time for our NATO allies to step up and do their part.

The security of the free world is at stake in Afghanistan. Sometimes there has been legitimate argument about whether there is a legitimate American interest in some of the places we have gone. It cannot be questioned that in Afghanistan our security interests are at stake. In fact, the credibility of the NATO alliance is at stake, and I think whether the NATO alliance proves it can be successful and relevant in today's world is at stake in Afghanistan.

NATO countries need to realize how much it is in all of our interests to defeat the Taliban resurgence and prevent a new al-Qaida safe haven from developing there. We need to prevent ungoverned territory in Afghanistan from being used by terrorists with global reach, and the only way to ensure this is through a strong and stable Afghan Government. But they are not going to get there without the help of the NATO alliance. The horrors of September 11 were only a taste of what the terrorists, with global reach, might accomplish if they have uncontested territory from which to operate.

Our NATO partners need to realize that the credibility and relevance of the alliance itself is now being tested in Afghanistan. NATO no longer faces a threat on the continent of Europe or even on the periphery of Europe. For NATO to be relevant, it must have a global expeditionary role in the defense of our common interests, particularly against the threat of global terrorism. If NATO cannot succeed in Afghanistan, where we all agree NATO must succeed, the alliance will be weakened to the point that will call into question: Will it succeed anywhere?

Many NATO countries are present in Afghanistan, but among them only a few are bearing the brunt of combat operations: Great Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, and, of course, the United States. But just this week, Canada announced its intention to pull out all forces by 2011. Other NATO allies have limited operations of their troops through restrictions on their missions—restrictions that I think are a little embarrassing, frankly.

For example, some nations that have signed up—part of NATO, willing to do their part in Afghanistan—refuse to conduct any operations at night. Others refuse to carry Afghan soldiers on their helicopters. Others are prohibited from participating in combat unless