

have continued to work to encourage satellite companies to expand the areas where they provide local television stations, and we have had many successes.

However, there are still problems that we need to fix. For example, while everyone in my district has access to local programming from at least one satellite company, many folks still cannot receive all four network stations via satellite.

I am pleased to report that I helped insert a provision into this legislation that would change the definition of "unserved household" to eliminate a major impediment to satellite companies wishing to offer all four television networks to consumers in so-called short markets (those that do not have a full complement of all 4 networks locally). This provision will help ensure that all consumers in short markets have access to all four network television stations.

In addition, this legislation contains a provision that will allow DISH Network to again be permitted to offer network programming from other areas when there are no stations of the same network in the local market. DISH Network had previously been prohibited from offering these "distant" network television stations. Under S. 3333, DISH Network would be able to offer these distant channels only after it rolls out local television channels via satellite in all 210 television markets. This provision will inject competition into the satellite television market, especially in rural areas where often there is either one or no satellite providers.

The transition to digital television presented new issues for this reauthorization. As such, S. 3333 contains technical updates to reflect the reality that television broadcasts are now digital rather than analog.

This legislation is a big step forward in updating the laws governing satellite television in rural areas, and I urge the Members of this body to support this important legislation.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3333.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### CLARIFYING MINIMUM ESSENTIAL COVERAGE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5014) to clarify the health care provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that constitutes minimum essential coverage, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5014

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS THAT CONSTITUTES MINIMUM ESSENTIAL COVERAGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Clause (v) of section 5000A(f)(1)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by section 1501(b) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, is amended to read as follows:

“(v) a health care program under chapter 17 or 18 of title 38, United States Code, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in section 1501(b) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5014, a bill to reinforce that health care provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs constitutes minimum essential coverage under the individual mandate.

Very specifically, this bill clarifies that coverage at the VA for individuals who have spina bifida as a result of their parents exposure to Agent Orange counts as minimum essential coverage.

I want to be clear that this bill does not in any way change veterans health care, nor does it put anyone but the Secretary of Veteran Affairs in control of veterans benefits.

The bill has no cost. A similar version of this legislation passed the Senate by unanimous consent. This legislation is consistent with the commitment that the Congress has made to the veterans of our Nation.

Finally, I would like to highlight that it is supported by numerous veterans service organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the AMVETS, and the Disabled American Veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, millions of American workers are in danger of losing their health care coverage because of the Democrats' unprecedented social experiment. One of the central flaws of the Democrats' health care overhaul is that it forces every American to buy health insurance and allows Federal bureaucrats to decide if their coverage is acceptable. If your insurance does

not meet the government's standards, then you will be taxed. That's why we're considering this bill today.

Certainly, none of us wants to see hundreds of disabled children of veterans lose their health insurance because of the Democrats' grand experiment on health care. I agree with the goal of this legislation and intend to support it.

However, where is the fix for the millions of American workers and retirees who will be forced out of the health care coverage they currently have?

Fortune.com reported internal company documents from four major U.S. employers reveal they are considering "dumping the health care coverage they provide to their workers in exchange for paying penalty fees to the government."

These companies currently offer health benefits to well over 2.3 million employees, retirees, and their dependents, a number that exceeds the population of 15 States as well as the District of Columbia.

AT&T reports they could save \$4.1 billion per year if they simply dump their employee health care coverage and pay the employer mandate tax instead. When will the Democrats put a bill on the floor that protects 1.2 million AT&T employees, retirees, and their dependents from losing their coverage?

Caterpillar would reduce its expenses by 70 percent if they eliminate health benefits and, instead, pay the tax. Where's the protection for these employees?

A survey conducted by the City University of New York for the Financial Executives Research Foundation found that three-quarters of chief financial officers believe the Democrat health overhaul will be "negative both for Americans and for their own companies."

Sixty-two percent of CFOs say they will have to increase employee copays by 48 percent. Forty-eight percent believe they will have to reduce the quality of the health care package they offer employees. And 46 percent say they will have to reduce employee benefits.

Even more troubling, The Philadelphia Inquirer recently interviewed legal experts who advise employers on how to structure their health plans. According to their report, some health care benefit managers "see a future in which employers no longer provide coverage because the cost of dropping health insurance for employees, about \$2,000 per person in Federal penalties to employers, is far less than the current cost of providing family coverage, about \$12,000 per employee. There is an opportunity to get out of providing health benefits to employees."

While I support the goal of the legislation before us, it is not enough. We must repeal this dangerous experiment with government control of health care and replace it with reforms that will allow all Americans to keep their health coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield so much time as he may consume to the ranking member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

Mr. BUYER. We're doing some unnecessary housecleaning today. I'm not certain whether you're cleaning out the garage or you're cleaning up the bedroom or cleaning up the mess you made in the kitchen. But one thing's clear: we're cleaning up a mess, a mess that we don't have to have done today, a mess that I tried to fix with the chairman the day before we voted on the health bill, and you wouldn't even do it then.

Yeah, we're cleaning up a mess, a mess because it was all about political expediency. Well, we've got to get a bill. The President's got political capital out there. We've got to get a bill.

Eighteen years I've been in this town. Whenever this town gives into a do-something mentality built on the emotion of the moment, people are going to get hurt, and that's exactly what's happened. People get hurt.

The health bill was never intended to have been signed into law by the President. It was a political document that was passed in the United States Senate to achieve 60 votes, to get to the conference table.

Oh, no. We'll just take that document that was drafted, not even vetted, and just bring it over to the House with all of its errors and just pass it, even when those of us with earnestness and sincerity to correct your bill, a Republican conservative to correct your mistakes, and you wouldn't even take it.

I go to the Rules Committee, to the Rules Committee, and lay out the mistakes in your bill. The stench that comes from the Rules Committee, with their pride, is that we stop all those amendments.

Are you kidding me? You stopped all those amendments. Oh, what pride.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is reminded to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BUYER. All right.

Mr. Speaker, there was a stench that came out of the Rules Committee. The stench was pride. They wouldn't swallow their pride to correct a bill when they had the opportunity to do it, so they came to the floor saying that, geez, we're not going to take any of those amendments.

So, now, Mr. Speaker, we're having to take up your time and this precious time on the floor to correct a bill that we shouldn't have to do. That's what we're doing here today, Mr. Speaker. And we're doing it with veterans.

Now let's talk about political corruption. Oh, Steve, you're dancing on the edge here; you mean there could have actually been political corruption on the night of the health bill? You bet.

What is the difference between politics and the super bowl of politics in the arena and corruption? Where do you cross the line? Is it really crossed? When do you end up in the nebulous?

Let me tell you about the Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan referee of the Congressional Budget Office, okay?

What was supposed to have happened? Let's do a little flashback here. Sunday, we're going to vote on the health bill. What happens? At midnight on Friday night, that bill that came over from the Senate, we finally get to see it. What's wrong? There are problems in the bill.

The drafting of the bill only mentioned TRICARE For Life, not the protection of TRICARE. So IKE SKELTON immediately, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, files a bill to be brought to the floor for which Chairman LEVIN, you were here, and it was the Ike Skelton bill to protect TRICARE, a correction that had to be made. But it was made outside of the bill. I sought to make it a correction inside the bill.

We also had the problem with the drafting on the protection of veterans programs of title 38 under chapter 17, veterans programs. Well, there are other veterans programs under chapter 17 that were left out, including chapter 18, which is the spina bifida program, a serious problem. Oh, no, no, no, Steve. We're not going to take care of that. I guess we'll do it later.

□ 1100

Chairman LEVIN, you kept your word. You kept your word to me, so you are a gentleman. We tried to get it done on that day, and it didn't get done. And you kept your word to me, and we are back here today. But we shouldn't have to have been back here today I guess is my point.

Now, let me go back to the corruption. The corruption was I was still in earnest to have this corrected in the bill. The VFW was also very upset. So was the American Legion. So was DAV. So was the uniformed services. A couple other VSOs went ahead and rolled over like a political dog and let you scratch their belly. But I will tell you what, these other ones stood firm because they knew the bill was flawed.

Here is a quote from the commander of the VFW: The President and the Democrat leadership are betraying America's veterans, and what makes matters worse is the leadership and the President know the bill is flawed, yet are pushing for passage today like it's a do-or-die situation. This Nation deserves the best from their elected officials, and the rush to pass legislation of this magnitude is not it.

He's right. That's what happened on that day. That's why we are having to come back and clean up the mess.

Now we go to the day of the bill itself. What are we going to do? We are going to have the motion to recommit the bill. So what's Mr. BUYER going to do? We are going to put in the motion to recommit the bill to correct these mistakes with regard to the TRICARE program to cover our military and their dependents and protect their ju-

risdiction, also make sure that the other veterans programs, the CHAMPVA and the spina bifida program are protected. And what happened?

I get a ring, ring, ring, ring, a phone call from CBO. CBO says, We believe that your bill may score at \$4.4 billion. Are you kidding me, \$4.4 billion? We just did IKE SKELTON's bill on Saturday, and it did not score. But my bill is now going to score on Sunday and IKE's didn't score on Saturday? Are you kidding me?

Now the stench is coming from somewhere else, Mr. Speaker. CBO, the Congressional Budget Office. What happened to fair dealing? What happened to being a referee and nonpartisanship? So I say to CBO in that phone conference—some of the individuals who were in that conference are sitting right here; correct me if I am inaccurate—Go back and look at your numbers and call me back because there is no way this can score. They then call back and they come back and said, We have concerns; your bill may score at \$4.4 billion.

Okay, I tell you what. This is what I told CBO: do not send me a letter tomorrow that says the bill doesn't score. In my heart, I know what you are doing. You are blocking to prevent me from bringing a motion to recommit the health bill on the House floor so the Democratic leadership and Democrats do not have to take a tough vote and actually admit that the VFW and the American Legion and DAV were right that the bill is flawed and doesn't protect veterans.

Now, because all this is boiling, what does the White House do? The White House does not want to recreate another Joe Wilson moment where someone stands up and challenges the President's veracity. So what do they do? The White House press shop goes and contacts the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs, and they get the Secretary of the VA to say what BUYER has brought out is unfounded. They get the Secretary of the VA to do the dirty work. The individuals who are serving the Secretary of the VA are not serving that man well at all, because whatever that he said was unfounded has been founded. It's been founded because we are correcting what I said the mistakes were made.

Let me continue on with the corruption wave. Let me talk about those who sit up on the perch. Oh, my gosh, they are not there. Our friends in the media, they are not there. Where are they? No, they are not there because let me tell you what they did that night. They participated in the marginalization of me, the mistakes, because they said, well, we have got four Democratic chairmen say there were no mistakes. The Secretary of the VA says there are no mistakes. The bill must be okay. BUYER, you must be an alarmist.

And so Tom Philpott, a very good writer, someone who I respect in this

town, with the Baltimore Sun, actually writes an article about how I must have been an alarmist because the four leading chairmen and the Democratic leadership and the White House and the Secretary of the VA say, Steve, what you are talking about with regard to TRICARE and spina bifida and the other veterans programs was unfounded.

Then why are we here today correcting those mistakes? Because they are founded. They are real. So where is the press now to write the story that the VFW, you were right when you challenged the leadership for passing a flawed bill?

Well, let me tell you now, let me close the loop with the corruption in the CBO. I didn't bring that motion to recommit the bill, did I? I couldn't bring it because they said the bill scored at \$4.4 billion. So I couldn't bring it here on the floor. So I told CBO, guess what, you win. I can't bring it. But if you tomorrow, you send me a letter that says it didn't score, I tell you what I am going to do. Because you said it scores at \$4.4 billion, that means that the savings that the Democratic leadership was talking about as a pay-for for their health bill, the savings of \$4.4 billion was taken out of veterans programs. That's where the savings came from.

So I said, okay, fine, if my motion to recommit scores at \$4.4 billion, then the savings that they talked about over here, where you got savings in the health bill, let's vote for the health bill, it was taken out of the veterans programs. That's where it came from.

So what happens on Monday morning? I issue a press release that says \$4.4 billion is taken out of the veterans savings programs. Within 2 hours what does CBO do, Mr. Speaker? They issue a statement to me that says the bill doesn't score. My amendment didn't score. Oh, my gosh.

To every Member out there who has had an experience over the years dealing with CBO, protect yourself. Right now you cannot trust CBO. You cannot trust their veracity. I stand here with a gentleman with honor, and I am sickened by what CBO had done. I was sickened by the super bowl of politics that occurred on that night, that here we had a bill that is very meaningful to the American people, we know there are errors. The gentleman whom I have complimented knew in his heart that there were problems with the bill we are going to have to come back and correct. We shouldn't have had to do this.

I felt compelled, though, to tell the story. I am a retiring Member of Congress. There are things I love and defend about this institution. But there are also things that are called the dark side of human behavior that are toxic and poisonous, and they disturb me to no end. So to Members: hold onto your honor, put your face into the cold wind, and do not accept it when individuals act with corruption. Stand and

shove them back. Our country is too great.

Especially to have played politics with veterans programs is the ultimate to me. The children of Korean and Vietnam war-era veterans with spina bifida, are you kidding me? That's who we are going to play games with? The other veterans programs, who are those individuals? They are the widows, they are the war widows, and we are going to play politics with war widows.

There is a word, I guess, we don't like to use very often. It's called "shame." It's because it's a very, very powerful word. That's shameful what we did. When an error is in front of you and you have got the opportunity to correct that error, you correct it. If you do not, it is shameful. And I will accept responsibility, too.

But if I am going to accept responsibility as a leader of this House that I was unable to see it through, someone else better also step forward and accept responsibility, Madam Speaker. And you turn and you then face the veterans at the conventions this summer and you tell them, Yes, the bill was flawed, but I apologize and the bill was corrected; and with the issues that were brought up by Mr. BUYER, they were founded. I apologize for challenging his veracity because what he said was right. And the Madam Speaker should say, I was wrong.

And under the President, you should also say to the Secretary of the VA, I apologize to you, Mr. Secretary; we put you in an uncomfortable position whereby you laid your honor on the line and made a statement that was not truthful. And the President should apologize then to the Secretary of the VA. That's how you clean up the mess.

So it's not just the legislative mess; there is a mess here with regard to individuals' integrity and their honor. And so if you wonder why the American people are upset and disgusted with Washington, DC, it is because they see that this is what's happening. I assure you we lost our majority, and you are about to lose yours.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members that they should direct their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

Members also are reminded that it is not in order to draw attention to occupants of the gallery.

Mr. LEVIN. How much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has no time remaining. The gentleman from Michigan has 18½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. Let me say a few words. I really regret that the minority has decided to use this bill as an opportunity to talk about the health care bill I think in totally irresponsible ways. I don't think it is fitting for the service of the veterans of the United States of America that you decide to essentially use this time to talk about

issues unrelated. I don't think that is consonant with why you are here and why we are here. So I am not going to debate the health care bill.

We are talking today about a bill to make very clear, if there is any need, about one provision. Talk about playing politics, that's what's been endeavored here by the minority speakers. And I think it's deeply regrettable. There is a difference of opinion as to whether there was any mistake at all on this specific issue. There is a difference of opinion.

The Secretary of the VA said that this issue was already covered. That was his judgment. There is no need for anybody to apologize to the Secretary. And so there was this difference of opinion as to whether there was any need to correct. And a lot of us said there was no such need. When it was raised, this issue by Mr. BUYER, we said that. So instead of acting on something that we thought was not necessary, what we said was we will take further steps to make sure there is no concern.

There was a lot of rhetoric that went around regarding that issue. And I want to just read a letter that came out shortly thereafter from the commander in chief of the VFW. It was a letter to our Speaker.

□ 1115

It was a letter to our Speaker, and this is what the letter said:

"Dear Madam Speaker, I want to apologize for saying in a Sunday press release that you and the Democratic leadership are betraying Americans, America's veterans. Your support of America's veterans, military, and their families is and has been above reproach." Above reproach.

And so now using this opportunity to try to cast any aspersion, I think, is more than unfortunate, if I might say so, it is disgraceful.

There was said something about we were doing something in health care reform on the emotion of the moment. Talk about emotions?

Now, we had worked on this, health care reform, in our country for decade after decade after decade after decade, and more decades. Health care reform was an effort in the best American tradition to try to advance what has made this country great—and that is acting as a community to meet the needs of individuals, to combine responsibility and community.

So, let me get back. If you want to go out and talk about repeal, as the gentleman from California has, go and talk to the seniors who are going to benefit from the health reform bill, go and talk to the kids who are under 26 who are going to receive coverage through this bill, go and talk to the people who otherwise would have their health care rescinded as some entities tried and then, to their credit, backed off when we raised the issue.

Now, if anybody is playing politics today, it's no one on this side led by our distinguished Speaker.

So I urge adoption of this legislation, and I will enter into the record three letters.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Washington, DC, May 12, 2010.

Hon. BOB FILNER,  
Chairman, House Veterans Affairs Committee,  
Cannon House Office Building, Wash-  
ington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN FILNER: On behalf of the 2.1 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliaries, I would like to offer our very strong support for your legislation H.R. 5014, which would clarify and protect all VA health care programs under Title 38, Chapter 17 and 18 to constitute as minimum essential health care coverage.

VFW applauds your efforts to clarify this critical issue. We sincerely appreciate your commitment to America's veterans and their families and we look forward to continuing to work with you on issues of concern.

Very Truly Yours,

ROBERT E. WALLACE,  
Executive Director.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,  
Washington, DC, May 12, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker, House of Representatives, The Capitol,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: The American Legion fully supports the amended language to H.R. 5014, to clarify the health care provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that constitutes minimum essential coverage.

After careful review, The American Legion believes this legislative change would provide the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with the continued authority to provide timely access to the nation's best quality of health care for veterans and their eligible family members consistent with the recently enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, especially those covered under chapters 17 and 18 of title 38, United States Code.

The American Legion applauds your leadership on this critical issue and your continued support of America's veterans' community.

Sincerely,

PETER S. GAYTAN,  
Executive Director.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA,  
Silver Spring, MD, May 12, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker of the House, The Capitol,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER, Please know that Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) endorses and supports enactment of H.R. 5014, which effectively clarifies for veterans that the health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs does in fact constitute the minimum essential coverage required under the recently enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

This should put to rest, finally, any and all qualms of any and all veterans and their families who might feel uneasy that the provisions of the new law might adversely affect their health care through the VA. Passage of H.R. 5014 should reassure them, and we look forward to its swift enactment.

Thank you again for your continuing commitment to our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

JOHN ROWAN,  
National President.

I yield back the balance of my time.  
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr.

LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5014, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR FLOOD VICTIMS IN SOUTHEAST

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1337) expressing the sympathy and condolences of the House of Representatives to those people affected by the flooding in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi in May 2010.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 1337

Whereas, beginning on May 2, 2010, the State of Tennessee was hit by unprecedented rainfall that resulted in the massive flooding of areas in and around Nashville;

Whereas according to the National Weather Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the two-day rainfall totals of 13.53 inches more than doubles the previous record of 6.68 inches set in September, 1979;

Whereas the storms causing the rainfall claimed the lives of dozens of people across Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi;

Whereas the storms destroyed homes and displaced thousands of people across Tennessee;

Whereas the flooding affected travel along hundreds of roads throughout Tennessee, including interstate highways 40 and 24;

Whereas the storms closed schools and universities across the region;

Whereas Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen has worked with Federal, State, and local officials and agencies to coordinate rescue and recovery efforts;

Whereas, on May 3, 2010, Governor Bredesen declared a state of emergency for 52 counties, requesting Federal assistance for areas that were affected by the storms;

Whereas, on May 4, 2010, President Obama declared that a major disaster exists in the State of Tennessee and directed the Federal Emergency Management Agency to work closely with Tennessee to monitor the response efforts relating to the storms and flooding and identify and respond to any immediate emergency needs for the citizens and communities of Tennessee that are impacted by the devastating floods;

Whereas citizens and emergency responders of all stripes worked together to aid their neighbors after the storm; and

Whereas volunteers are giving their time to help ensure that evacuees are sheltered, clothed, fed, and comforted through the trauma caused by the storm: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) offers its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of those who lost their

lives as the result of flooding beginning on May 2, 2010, in the States of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi;

(2) expresses its condolences to the families who lost their homes and other property in the flooding throughout Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi;

(3) expresses gratitude and appreciation to the people of the State of Tennessee and the surrounding States, who continue to work to protect people from the floodwaters and aid in the recovery efforts;

(4) expresses its support as the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues its efforts to respond to any needs of the citizens and communities affected by the flooding and assists in the recovery efforts; and

(5) honors the emergency responders across Tennessee for their bravery and sacrifice during this tragedy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In the first weekend of May, the great storms came through from the West and struck in Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The flooding damage was record-breaking. The damage done in all States was great but in the State of Tennessee was the most severe, my home State. The most destruction, I guess, and the most damages occurred in the district of the Honorable JIM COOPER of Davidson County and environs. But in my own County of Shelby, there was extensive damage.

I joined with my colleagues in calling on our Governor to issue a request for a declaration of emergency, and that was done by Governor Bredesen. The Federal Government has responded in a magnificent manner.

President Barack Obama, in his historic speech to the Democratic National Convention in 2004, said how there was not a red United States of America and there was not a blue United States of America, but there was only one United States of America. And in this particular instance where people suffer in States that are all considered politically red States, the United States of America has responded with all of its resources to help our people, and our people need help.

FEMA's been on the ground. FEMA Director Fugate was in Tennessee in no time. Secretary Napolitano has been to Nashville. Secretary Donovan of HUD and Secretary Locke of Commerce have been to Memphis and to Nashville as well. And others have been there. I had FEMA officials at my town hall meeting on Saturday. They have let