

a carefully constructed plan to get this economy moving forward. What really troubles the Republican leader—and I know he said as much this morning—is that President Obama pays for it. Over and over, we hear from the Republican side: Don't add to the deficit. Pay for what you do.

The President came out yesterday with his proposal of how to pay for it. How does he pay for it? For one, he takes away the subsidy to the oil companies. There is a Federal subsidy that comes out of the Treasury and goes to oil companies across America, raises gasoline prices through the roof, making them able to enjoy the biggest business profits in the history of the United States. Isn't it time to cut back on that subsidy and use those resources for the President's plan to get the economy moving forward?

The President limits the tax deductions and credits for those in higher income categories. I find it hard to understand why the Republican position is that we cannot ask those who are well off, the most comfortable people in America, to pay one penny more in taxes. Their position is absolute: not one penny more in taxes for the wealthiest in America. I think it is fair to limit the tax cuts to the wealthiest so that we can provide tax cuts for working families. That is sensible. It is not only morally right, it is economically right, and it troubles me when I hear the Republican leader reject that out of hand.

It appears that the warmth of the August Sun is cooling now in September, and those who went home and heard how unhappy America is with congressional roadblocks and obstruction have forgotten that lesson. They have forgotten what they heard. They are coming back now and saying that once again we are going to have a face-off and a confrontation.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. DURBIN. There is one other area I wish to speak to. I know my colleague from New York is going to be on the floor shortly. The area I wish to speak to is disaster relief.

I strongly support the disaster relief funding bill. As Americans undertake the physically and emotionally difficult task of rebuilding, cleaning up, and recovering from hurricanes and flooding and even earthquakes, we must see that the Disaster Relief Fund is there so they can get back to their own lives as quickly as possible.

The year 2011 has been a record year when it comes to natural disasters. The cost of recovery from Hurricane Irene alone could reach \$1.5 billion. We have seen it this year in Illinois. It has been tough from Chicago to Cairo in the southern portion of our State. We have had blizzards and floods and tornadoes and troubles all around. Our State, like most other States, has seen the damage and has felt it personally. People are trying to put their homes back together again.

Here is a photo—I saw this in person when I visited the State earlier this spring—around Cairo in the southern part of the State. It was an awful situation. We had flooding along the Ohio River that troubled and bothered the folks who live in southern Illinois as well as Kentucky and adjoining States, Missouri. Some of our towns, such as Cairo, were literally threatened with being inundated. They had to blow levees, which basically means to open up a place for the river water to flow. That flooded farmland in Missouri and Illinois, and we have to be sensitive to the fact that there were real losses there that need to be paid for. That record flooding really slammed the southern part of our State. The devastation was felt in the entire region.

The damage was not just there. I hear from people throughout the southern part of the State who are still struggling today because of this flooding. Anthony Miles in Urbandale, IL, is an example. Flooding from the Ohio River rose so high that he could not even find his lawnmower in the front yard. All he could see was the river water. In Metropolis, IL, my friend Mayor Billy McDaniel said that people are still trying to get the floodwater damage repaired in that town months later. Harrah's casino in Metropolis, which is a major employer and source of revenue in that area, was completely inundated with water, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in repairs need to be done.

Some argue when it comes to these disasters that we cannot afford to help people in America. It appears to me that the guiding principle and motto of the tea party in America is this: Just remember we are all in this alone. That is what we hear over and over from them. Whenever we have a problem facing us in America where we come together as a family to solve it, the tea party stands on the sidelines and says: Don't do it. Let them fail.

This morning, Senator REID quoted a leading tea party advocate in the House who said: The Federal Emergency Management Agency should be put out of business.

I wonder where he lives. I wonder if his home has been spared. I wonder if he has seen people who through no fault of their own have lost everything because of a disaster. When that happens in America, we step in and help one another. We don't get tied up in some political debate. We don't find ourselves completely stopped from stepping forward and doing what is right, and we can't let it happen this time either.

Those who say we have to cut other government programs and education, medical research, for example, to pay for the devastation, whether from Hurricane Irene or flooding or earthquakes or tornadoes, I just don't think they understand there are critical areas of government spending that have been cut back already, and to cut them even further would jeopardize the future of

this country and the well-being of many families.

I wanted to show a chart here which demonstrates the amount requested by the administration over the years by different Presidents for the Disaster Relief Fund. In each and every one of these cases, regardless of whether it was a Democratic or Republican administration, how much of these funds do you think were offset with funds from other accounts in the Federal budget? None. Zero. In 2000, when more than \$3.5 billion was appropriated for disaster recovery, how much was offset? None. In 2005 and 2006, when communities all over the South were recovering from Hurricane Katrina and more than \$2 billion was appropriated each of these 2 years for recovery, how much of that was offset? None. Under Republican Presidents, such as President Bush, as well as Democratic Presidents, such as Presidents Clinton and Obama, we have not required offsets in the rest of the budget when we have literally faced a disaster. We have stepped up, provided the money, and moved forward.

The number and cost of disasters have grown dramatically over the past few years. I do not want to engage the Senate in the debate about climate change because I know people get red in the face and want to come to the floor and tell us their political views of the science of this question. But I will tell you this: The property and casualty insurance industry of America testified before my committee recently and said they see what is coming—more disasters and more costs than we ever imagined. One of the experts said to be prepared to say every summer of your life from this point forward: This is the hottest summer I can ever remember. That is what the future is going to hold.

As these temperature swings get worse and worse, they precipitate these terrible storms. I am not an expert on much, but I am perhaps a little bit of an expert after almost 30 years of flying 48 roundtrips a year between Illinois and Washington, flying on commercial airplanes. I think I know a little bit about that, maybe even a little more than most. This is one of the roughest periods I can remember. For the last several months, the storms and turbulence have been greater than I can ever recall. I hope it is an anomaly. I hope it never happens again. We are told by the experts it is likely to continue. It means more storms, more damage, more disasters, and we do not have the funding here in Washington waiting to pay for it.

We have to step forward as the need arises and meet our obligations to the families and businesses that have been negatively affected. We know that this damage which I showed in the southern part of my State reaches all over the State. This is an area of Galena, IL, the home of General Grant, the President, Ulysses S. Grant, and this area in the northwest part of my State also

has been flooded, causing extreme damage to the people in the area. It is just another example of what we have been through.

If we freeze the money for disaster relief, as some have suggested, it would mean the repairs being made to recover from floods and storms from April and May will not be reimbursed. From Metropolis, IL, and southern Illinois, they are facing damage there that needs to be repaired—the city of Carmi as well.

On Friday, President Obama requested \$5 billion in new disaster funding, \$500 million in supplemental money for fiscal year 2011. The President recognizes 2011 has been an exceptional year for natural disasters and that the recovery from Hurricane Irene alone could tax FEMA beyond what it is capable of providing.

This money is desperately needed for the families and businesses trying to clean up and put themselves back on track. I strongly support the supplemental appropriations for the disaster relief fund. Let's help our fellow Americans get back on their feet.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT PATRICK HAMBURGER

Mr. JOHANNS. Madam President, I rise today to honor a fallen hero, Nebraska Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Patrick Hamburger, a native of Lincoln who later settled in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Staff Sergeant Hamburger served his country as a flight engineer while mobilized with the Nebraska Army National Guard's Company B, 2nd Battalion 135th General Support Aviation, based in Grand Island. Staff Sergeant Hamburger and 29 fellow soldiers paid the ultimate price in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on August 6, 2011. He was the crew chief on the Chinook helicopter downed by enemy fire in Afghanistan. It is through extraordinary sacrifices such as his that we are able to enjoy the freedoms we have today.

Staff Sergeant Hamburger's unfaltering devotion to duty and pride in his country went beyond the time he spent in uniform. Patrick lived to help others. From his childhood in Lincoln, to mentoring fellow soldiers, those who knew him recall that he was always looking out for others. Patrick's brother Chris remembers his kind spirit by stating:

He didn't worry about himself half as much as he worried about everyone else. You could have been a complete stranger and if he

could have helped you, he would have done it.

Thirteen years ago, that mentality and sense of patriotism led a young high school senior to take an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the State of Nebraska against all enemies, foreign and domestic. That oath brought opportunities for Staff Sergeant Hamburger to share his mechanical talent with his fellow soldiers.

Those closest to him will tell us his pride and joy were his family, his friends, and the "V-Day Express," the Chinook helicopter he maintained. He loved being a soldier, and he took great pride in his service.

The decorations and badges earned during his 13 years of distinguished service speak to his dedication and to his skill: the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (4th Award), the National Defense Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with 10 year device), Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with Mobilization Device), the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Combat Action Badge, the Senior Aviation Badge, the Nebraska National Guard Homeland Defense Ribbon (with M device), the Nebraska National Guard Emergency Service Medal, the Nebraska National Guard Service Medal (10 year device), and the California National Guard Commendation Medal.

These medals, as well as Sergeant Hamburger's willingness to serve others in need, speak clearly to his commitment to upholding the values and ideals that all Nebraskans hold dear. We are proud of his character and the ways in which he represented Nebraska. I am confident that in the coming months, Nebraskans will surround and uplift his family and friends as they mourn the loss of a truly remarkable son, brother, and friend.

Today, as we bow our heads with the Hamburger family, I ask that God protect our servicemembers, both here and overseas.

We are truly grateful for the service and sacrifice made by those in uniform and their families.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Vermont.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

APPROVING THE RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 66, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 66) approving the renewal of the import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

DESTRUCTION FROM HURRICANE IRENE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spoken to so many of my colleagues—I know I have with my good friend, a distinguished Member of this body, the Senator from Montana, and others—about what has happened in Vermont. We are a little State. We are 660,000 people. We are a State that has sent volunteers all over the country where people have been hit by earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and flooding, but now Vermont has been hit.

I was born in Vermont. My family came to Vermont in the 1800s. The only thing that could even begin to match what we have seen were the horrible floods of 1927. I was not alive then, but I remember the stories my parents told me. Certainly in my lifetime we have never seen anything like this. Vermont continues to grapple with the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene. It does not make a difference if you are a Republican or a Democrat, all Vermonters are joined together to rebuild after this disaster.

I wish to call the Senate's attention today to the severe and extensive damage done to our State's transportation infrastructure and to how the washed out roads and bridges are affecting the lives of all Vermonters.

Here are a few of the scenes of the destruction. This was a main highway. You can see one lane here. Look what happened. The road does not begin to pick up again until we get over here. That was a highway that had been used for decades. It is Route 100, south of Plymouth.

Plymouth, VT, is where Calvin Coolidge was born. He was spending time there with his father when he got news that he had suddenly become President and was sworn in by his father, who was the justice of the peace. The deputy sheriff thought they may need security so he stood there with a pitchfork in one hand and a lantern in the other.

But this photo shows you what has happened. They tried to build a temporary bridge up there. As you know, being from a northern State, Mr. President, we are going to have snow in Vermont in a matter of weeks and, of course, companies stop making asphalt in early November.

This is a photo I took of U.S. Route 4. I took it from a helicopter when Governor Shumlin and I toured the State