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## Senate

The Senate met at 3:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, our lips sing Your praises and our souls rejoice in You. We pause now in prayer to enter Your throne room and seek Your face. Thank You for the opportunity You give our lawmakers to protect our freedoms and to share with others the hope that is ours as a free people. Use them to increase joy and peace in our world and to bring hope to the hearts of the dispossessed. Help our Senators to see more clearly the spiritual values that are the heritage and guide for this land we love. Let their thoughts, words, and actions be acceptable to You today and always, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER COONS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, September 26, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m. At that time the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House message to accompany H.R. 2608, the continuing resolution. The filing deadline for second-degree amendments to the House message is 5 p.m. At 5:30 p.m. there will be a cloture vote on the House message with the Reid of Nevada amendment.

### DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago the Senate passed a bipartisan bill to fund the Federal Emergency Management Agency, known as FEMA. For 2 weeks House Republicans have been sitting on that bill and taking no action. The House of Representatives has refused to act on a bipartisan bill to fund FEMA for the next year. Not only have they not moved that bill in any way but they left town. The House of Representatives, as we speak, on the eve of the government shutting down next Saturday, just a few days from now, and with FEMA on the verge of having no money, left. They are gone. They are not in Washington. It is hard to negotiate with people who are not here. It is hard to do legislation when one part of our bicameral legislature is not here.

Democrats are not giving up on funding FEMA and keeping our government open. We are here. The Senate is in session. The House Republican bill that would have killed 45,000 American jobs did not have the votes last week to pass the Senate. It was not even close. There were 36 votes, but that does not mean we have to shut down the government or abandon Americans in need. Democrats have made a good-faith effort to compromise.

Today the Senate will consider compromise legislation to fund FEMA and keep the government open without killing jobs. Our compromise includes a clean continuing resolution, a bill to fund the government for the next few weeks. Republicans in both Chambers have already agreed to and voted for the funding levels in this continuing resolution, so this should not be a controversial vote for them; they have already voted for it.

The legislation also includes \$3.65 billion in funding for FEMA, which will give American communities ravaged by floods, wildfires, tornadoes, and other disasters the help they need. We know House Republicans support that funding level as well since they voted for it last week. Democrats would have given FEMA more, as we did with our vote last week.

It is interesting; President Obama has declared disasters in 48 of the 50 States this year. Unfortunately, though, this bill will force us to revisit this issue in a few weeks when FEMA funds will be depleted again. But this compromise legislation will cure FEMA's immediate needs. I urge my colleagues to do what is right and support this good-faith compromise to help disaster victims now. In effect, we are waiting for the House to take action on the bill that funds everything for a year, which they should do. But in the meantime, we have the opportunity here to vote today on legislation that takes the level that has already passed the House. I do not know how much

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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more we could compromise or how much more fair we could be. I urge my colleagues to do what is right and support this good-faith compromise to help disaster victims and help them now.

The folks on the ground in States that have been hard hit by disasters, people who have seen the devastation firsthand, are all saying the same thing: There is no more time to waste. The U.S. Conference of Mayors has begged us to act, a bipartisan group of Governors has pleaded with us to act, and tens of thousands of Americans in every State in the Union are demanding we act. Republicans must not continue to block FEMA, blocking them from getting the resources it needs to help disaster victims.

This compromise legislation should satisfy House Republicans and includes their own much lower FEMA funding number. It satisfies Democrats because it does not include a \$1.5 billion cut that would kill jobs. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers have warned us that this cut would kill 45,000 jobs at a time when our economy and our country can least afford it.

Here is what the Chamber of Commerce has said. The Chamber of Commerce is not a lapdog for Democrats. I appreciate the work they do. But certainly we need to listen to what they are saying, and my Republican colleagues need listen to what they are saying. This is a direct quote:

This loan program promotes manufacturing in the U.S. and is an important component of America's energy security.

Promotes manufacturing.

Here is what the National Association of Manufacturers said, also certainly not out there promoting Democrats all the time. They try to be fair. The National Association of Manufacturers:

Defunding [this program] would hurt manufacturers and their employees.

How much more direct could it be? Putting this offset in here is absolutely wrong. Democrats believe and American auto producers agree you should not have to choose between saying no to disaster victims and killing American jobs.

As you can see, this legislation is fair to both sides. It will get disaster victims the help they need without killing jobs. It is a commonsense solution that should pass both Chambers with bipartisan support. We will vote on it shortly. I am cautiously optimistic that my Republican colleagues here in the Senate will not force a government shutdown. By not voting for our bill, that is what it is.

Earlier this month when the Senate passed bipartisan legislation funding FEMA, which I talked about earlier, 10 Republicans joined Democrats in voting for the bill. It would have given FEMA nearly twice the funding this compromise legislation gives FEMA. At a time when those 10 Republicans said they believed disaster relief should

be immune from partisan politics, they believe their constituents should not wait a moment longer for help, I can only assume those Republicans are as angry as I am over the delays by their Republican colleagues in the House. In the week since that vote—it has not been long, a very short period of time, a matter of days—the disasters have not gone away in the home States of Missouri, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Nevada, North Dakota, Alaska, Florida, Pennsylvania. These are the States where Republican Senators voted for this bill, and rightfully so. Roads and bridges, homes, schools, in those States and many others must still be repaired and replaced. In fact, millions of dollars of this restoration work—most of it—has been stopped in those 10 States. Work on nearly \$½ billion worth of reconstruction nationwide has been delayed because FEMA is out of money.

Even with construction projects at risk in communities that were only just beginning to get back on their feet, FEMA's disaster fund will still run out of money this week. As to what date, that is debatable. FEMA has devoted every penny in its coffers to pay for food and shelter for families who lost their homes in major disasters in the last few months. There is not a dime left for anything else. Even now that money is going to run dry if we do not do something quickly. That is why I am hopeful Republicans will do the right thing today.

We must remember that we are not talking about zeros on a budget spreadsheet. FEMA takes care of people who have lost their moms and dads, sons and daughters, spouses and friends and others. Without additional funding, thousands of people who have lost literally everything they have owned will be forced to go without food and shelter. The reconstruction will be delayed in communities where homes, schools, roads have been wiped off the map by tragedy so terrible it is difficult to comprehend.

I brought a chart here to show some of the devastation. The upper lefthand corner is a picture of part of Joplin, MO. There is some of it that is wiped out. You see a few structures and cars left in the rubble. The fire is still burning. This picture was taken just hours after that storm hit.

I have talked on the floor about the windstorm, the winds of almost 300 miles an hour—I said, winds of 300 miles an hour, not almost. One of my Senator friends came to me and said, that could not be true; I do not think that is true. I knew I was right because in the last week or 10 days I went to a briefing with the National Science Foundation. They put forward some of the new things they have invented and are now developing, and one of those is to gauge how hard the wind blows. It is interesting to note that we have a number of recorded storms blowing more than 300 miles an hour. On this one they do not have the exact number

down, but probably that. This is one of the worst storms to ever hit our country.

Here is a picture of Nags Head, NC. This is Hurricane Irene. It not only washed homes out to sea, it washed other facilities out to sea and devastated homes underwater. You can see the picture of the two people sitting on those steps. That was probably one of the seaside homes. It could have been a structure right on the coast, but it is gone. The home has been washed into the sea. It is not only in North Carolina but other places.

You can see here in the lower right-hand corner a small picture of the fires in Texas. The fires in Texas burned more than 2,000 homes. They have had thousands of fires in Texas. Look at it. You can see in the background there are homes burning. It is hard to comprehend the destruction that took place there.

Cairo, IL, is a unique place because it is spelled like Cairo, but they pronounce it "Kay-row." That is a picture of Cairo, IL. It is a good-sized city. The Mississippi River has overflowed its banks. It swept away everything in its path. This is more important than politics. Tornadoes, hurricanes, droughts, floods are just some of the devastation that has affected our citizens.

Here we are, having passed a bill and sent it to the House. They have done nothing with it. We have overwhelming bipartisan support here, and they are gone. They had that 2 weeks ago, and they are gone. What we are doing here should be more important than partisan posturing for every Member of the Republican Party—and, frankly, every Member of the Democratic Party. I know it is to me.

President Truman once said:

America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.

If there were ever a time when we have the obligation to do the job at hand, it is here. And to think that work in Joplin, MO, has basically come to a standstill or work in Nags Head, NC, has come to a standstill or in Cairo, IL, and, of course, all through Texas—only a few of the projects as a result of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee are being worked on now.

So I don't think anyone can understand the devastation unless one has been there. I know I can't. No amount of money can ever replace what the people of Joplin or Cairo have lost. When I say "unless a person has been there," I am trying to be as empathetic as I can, but I have never been involved in a flood such as that, anywhere near that, and certainly not the fires we have seen, not a tornado, not a tropical storm. So no amount of money can ever replace what the people of these devastated areas have lost, but at least we can help them get back on their feet. We can help them start over. That is what FEMA does. That is what FEMA's job is. So it is up to us to get the funds to FEMA so they can do their job.

Would the Chair announce the business for the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak for up to 15 minutes, and I may extend my time as the debate goes.

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

#### FEMA FUNDING

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to follow up on the remarks of Leader REID by reminding everyone how unfortunate but in some ways necessary this situation is.

This whole debate, in my view, is worth having. It is unfortunate it is so close to the end of the year because the Senate actually offered a bill, as the Presiding Officer may remember, earlier in September to try to avoid getting to this last minute. But this whole controversy started just a few days after Hurricane Irene had raked the east coast and wreaked havoc from North Carolina, through Connecticut, into Vermont and New Hampshire, and people are still reeling. The way this controversy started was Representative CANTOR said: Before we can provide help, we need to find an offset in the budget. In other words, before we can help the victims of Irene—the thousands of homes that were flooded, the electrical wires on the ground, the businesses flooded out—we have to go to Washington and find a program to cut. I strongly objected then, and I have objected every day since then to that Cantor doctrine. So this is an argument and a debate worth having.

This could have been completely avoided if, the day after, Representative CANTOR, with all the outcry from his own district and newspapers around the country, many of which editorialized against that position, would have just said: I am sorry, I made a mistake. And I have had to say that in my political career: I am sorry, I made a mistake. But instead of saying that, he doubled down, and he doubled down on the backs of people from Pennsylvania, to New York, and actually to Louisiana and Mississippi because it is our projects that have been stopped for the last 6 weeks. FEMA, as far as Louisiana is concerned, was out of money 6 weeks ago.

This is what the Cantor doctrine looks like to a very clever cartoonist. I am going to put this up in my office and keep it forever. It says:

Welcome to the Republican disaster relief hotline. At the tone, please tell us the emergency and how you plan to offset the cost of your rescue.

Here is Grandmother sitting on the roof, with her little cat on the chimney, with her television and her cane, calling FEMA.

I am the appropriations chair of this committee, as my colleagues know. It is a good thing I am chairing this appropriations committee because I happen to know a lot about disaster relief, having to lead the effort for the gulf coast in the wake of Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike. This is not a little matter, as some of the press reported over the weekend. I have read most of the editorials from coast to coast. Some have written: Why is Congress arguing? This is such a minor matter. I don't think the \$40 billion it took to rebuild the gulf coast is a minor matter, and I don't think any taxpayer in America would think \$40 billion is a minor matter.

This Cantor doctrine must be rejected. I am not the only one who believes this. There are wonderful articles and editorials in papers all across the country. I am going to read some of them today. I am so glad people were working through the weekend and focusing on this debate.

From Colorado, the Denver Post writes:

... and some Members of Congress are so bent on budget cutting—

They are referring to the Republicans, of course—

that they happily seize the opportunity to demand concessions, despite the larger impact on our struggling economy. In this case, it is demanding that money for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide emergency disaster assistance to communities hit by flood, fire, and other manner of natural disasters, be offset by comparable cuts to the Federal budget. Demanding such offsets is unprecedented in terms of emergency relief, and it has again manufactured the prospects of a shutdown. To be clear, we are not supporting a blank check—

And neither am I. I have been an appropriator since I was 23 years old. I am 56. I understand balanced budgets and debt limits and curbing government spending. I have been a part of those efforts. The last time we had a balanced budget, a Democrat was in the White House—Bill Clinton—as the Presiding Officer knows. We understand there is no such thing as a free lunch or a blank check, and we are going to pay for these disasters, but we don't have to pay for them while Grandmother is on the roof. We can figure out how to pay for it later and send help to her now.

The article goes on to say:

... but we think any near-term spending cuts are best dealt with by the super committee as opposed to a symbolic standoff that sends ripple effects beyond Washington.

This is the Brattleboro Vermont Reformer:

Though individuals eligible for Federal disaster aid and State and city governments recouping emergency response costs are still receiving funds, projects dating back as far as Hurricane Katrina are once again waiting for money. How did House majority leader Eric Cantor of Virginia respond? He said: "Change like this is hard."

The paper goes on to say:

However, not as hard as waiting for power lines to get restrung along the Auger Hole Road, wondering when, if ever, you will be able to move back into your waterlogged home or when your road might become passable again. Though Congress has about a week to get everything ironed out, we can expect this argument to go down to the last minute.

I wish we weren't here at the last minute. I wish to remind everyone that the Senate passed—with a bipartisan response to this, which provided the money FEMA needed without the offset—it was passed bipartisanship with 10 Republicans and all the Democrats and sent to the House. They could have passed that bill, and we would all be gone now, with FEMA replenished, set up for the next year, and the jobs program, which is really a private sector effort to create jobs in America, would be untouched and would be moving forward.

This argument started when Representative CANTOR came up with a new tea party agenda, which is for flood victims to let FEMA know what offset can be required before they are rescued.

Other newspapers throughout the country, including Pennsylvania, say:

Much of northeast Pennsylvania needs Federal assistance to recover from flooding, but two of the region's representatives—

In this case, both Republican Representatives—

offered an unacceptable condition.

They go on to say—they list the Members.

They say:

The problem isn't the Senate, which earlier had passed a bill by a positive vote that included 10 Republicans to appropriate more than \$7 billion for FEMA that handles disaster relief. That fund could run dry. The House responded with a bill that would provide \$3.7 billion, but only if two loan programs for energy development projects were rescinded.

Senator HARRY REID, they say, "goes on to offer a compromise with the House." But I guess we are in the time of no compromise and take whatever hostages you can. In this case, the tea party Republicans want to take hostage the Grandma who is on her roof asking for help.

Even the New York newspapers:

Congress shouldn't allow disaster aid for people devastated by Tropical Storm Irene to be stalled by a fight over how much is enough and how to cover the tab.

We are willing to negotiate with the House over how much. We believe our number of \$6.1 billion is not enough for the year, and I think the records will show as we move forward that I am accurate. But given the situation we are in, we don't need to fight over that