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No. 173

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIVERA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 2, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID RIVERA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 3 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, it was to my profound disappointment that I learned last night that the House would adjourn the 112th Congress without providing assistance to the victims of Superstorm Sandy.

I am joined today, Mr. Speaker, by many of my colleagues from the jurisdictions whose people received the most damaging blow. Though my district did not sustain the extreme damage that those in New York, New Jer-

sey and Connecticut did, the President declared several Maryland counties eligible for Federal assistance from this storm, but it was minor, and my citizens are not in dire circumstances; but the citizens of some from whom we will hear today are in that condition.

Those counties joined hundreds in the 1,000-mile diameter of this storm—the largest geographically in the history of the Atlantic hurricanes. Now, at best, the Speaker has said that Sandy's victims will need to wait until the next Congress to receive assistance—Wait, they say, to millions who are in pain and in distress. We should not be waiting. We should be voting this very morning, which I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I expect to happen from my discussions with the majority leader.

As I said last night, I went with Congressman GREG MEEKS to Breezy Point and the Rockaways in New York, and what I saw there in Sandy's aftermath defied description and demanded action. To those who say that FEMA has not yet disbursed all the funds it has to assist families and businesses, I would tell them that they deeply underestimate the damage in these areas and the wide range of assistance required to alleviate the pain and suffering. At Jacob Riis Park, I saw the mountains of debris that the Corps of Engineers had begun to remove from neighborhoods. That debris represents people's lives, homes, and businesses.

With this legislation, we would have provided up to \$1.6 billion to the Corps to continue removing debris so that families could begin rebuilding. Would we have had to borrow that money? Yes. Just as if the furnace went out and the temperature were at zero, you would immediately replace the furnace to keep the families safe and borrow the money to do so; and, yes, we would have had to repay it, and we would.

This bill would have allocated \$6 million in emergency aid for food banks to

make sure that people in the richest country on the face of the Earth have some sustenance for them and their children. I saw an area of Breezy Point where more than 100 homes were devastated by fire when an electric transformer malfunctioned. The many firefighters who lived in that neighborhood could not get additional help from surrounding boroughs due to the severe flooding. They battled mightily and they saved many lives, but there is little left—indeed, none—of their homes.

I saw local businesses, Mr. Speaker, which had been there for years, completely destroyed, waiting for the \$620 million in SBA assistance this bill would have provided. We talked a lot about not imposing burdens on small business by additional taxes. These small businesses are out of business without our help. We walk away today from nearly \$4 billion in assistance to help reconstruct Rockaway Beach and other places, which is critical to the area's economic recovery and important to prevent further storm damage.

Finally, there is also the toll on transit and infrastructure, including inundated subway and traffic tunnels that were referred to last night. This bill would have provided up to \$10.9 billion for transit and \$2.2 billion for highways to help make sure that the area is not just cleared of water but repaired. If small businesses are going to be able to operate, it will be because consumers and customers can get to them and get to the schools and get to the hospitals and get to their families.

Waiting to act until later this month when Members were here and ready to vote last night is not the right choice. No Member of this House could travel to the Northeast, see the damage, and tell anyone in those areas to wait—wait for us to act, wait for us to help, wait for us to come to your aid. We cannot and we should not wait. We must not walk away.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. Speaker, I urge the Speaker of this House to reconsider and to act immediately. Now is the time to act.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in disbelief that a Hurricane Sandy disaster relief bill has failed to come to the floor in the current Congress.

It has been over two months since Super Storm Sandy devastated my home state of New Jersey, and Congress has failed to act. After Hurricane Katrina Congress acted and passed a supplemental spending bill within 10 days.

My district was ground zero for Sandy and suffered horrific damage.

I can personally attest to the devastation as I toured many of the coastal towns in the days after the storm, and I can honestly say that some areas look like they had just been bombed.

Governor Christie, after careful examination, estimates the damage to New Jersey alone to be \$36.9 billion.

I fully support the Governor's request. New Jersey will need every last dime in order to rebuild successfully.

My constituents and I are extremely disappointed that in our time of need this Congress has failed to act.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my absolute shock that the House Republican leadership has adjourned the 112th Congress without addressing the needs of the victims of Superstorm Sandy.

Like most Members whose constituents were affected by Sandy, we expected, and were all but assured, that there would be consideration of a supplemental appropriations bill before this House adjourned. It is utterly unacceptable to leave millions of Americans across the most densely populated part of the nation, including my Long Island district, on the hook for the unexpected costs of a natural disaster.

The House Republican leadership had plenty of time to act—let's review the timeline. In November, Governors from affected states acted to give preliminary assessments of the damage caused to their cities and towns. In early December, the President submitted to Speaker BOEHNER a detailed supplemental package. By the end of December, the Senate passed a bipartisan supplemental providing sixty billion dollars in federal resources to Sandy victims. And yesterday, House Republican leadership chose to give Members an extra day of vacation rather than take up the Senate-passed bill or, at the very least, even attempt to address the needs of millions because of this natural disaster. All the House leadership did was tell storm victims to wait until the next Congress. Excuse me for being cynical, but I don't have much faith that this House leadership can keep its word and deliver for the people in a timely manner. Midnight hour deals on fiscal cliffs, pending dysfunction with the debt ceiling situation in two months—I just don't believe it.

Ladies and gentlemen, this represents an unprecedented action in the Congress. Never before has the United States Congress turned its back on its citizens after a natural disaster. Members of this Congress whose constituents were affected by Sandy have time and time again supported supplemental appropriations bills for other areas of the country affected by natural disaster. We were there with funding after Katrina, and we were there after the

floods in the Midwest. Now we need to be there for millions in the Northeast. How come when it is our constituents' unfortunate circumstance to be in need of similar funding we are told to wait?

It's shameful.

I am pleased that both my Republican and Democratic colleagues have expressed their shock and disappointment in House leadership for not allowing a vote on a Sandy aid package. I will not rest until I can deliver this funding to my constituents on Long Island and to the millions who live throughout the Northeast. The Senate passed a good bill, a bipartisan bill, a bill that includes much needed mitigation funding as well. Nine weeks is already far too long for folks to wait to be helped by our federal government after a disaster of this magnitude. FEMA alone cannot provide all the necessary funding until this House acts. The Small Business Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, other vital federal agencies and our state and local governments NEED the additional resources to help stem the hurt Sandy caused.

I am ashamed of the actions of this House Republican leadership and I remain committed to getting Long Islanders and those across the Northeast the federal assistance they deserve.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, we've had a very good session of the 112th Congress, and we got through it last night. I think all of us, regardless of how we voted, feel a certain relief that we can move on in this country and start to tackle the huge deficit we have.

This is going to be my last speech on the floor. I had the opportunity yesterday to deliver a speech that deals with what I felt were some of the problems in this country with regard to the deficit.

I quoted a lot from Thomas Jefferson, who aptly realized how troublesome and serious the amount of borrowing by this Congress and past Congresses could be to this country. He, of course, inherited a similar situation when he became President, and how he solved it, I felt, was important to put in the RECORD—his acute sense of urgency and how he went about solving the deficit he inherited. So I talked about that last night in my speech on the floor.

The second thing I talked about was this whole idea of Keynesian economics and that the problem we have is continuing to stimulate the economy with either QE1, QE2, QE3, and so on with this quantitative easing that Chairman Bernanke is doing and how that is ultimately hurting this country.

I also thought I would speak briefly today on some of the accomplishments that I have had over my 24 years. Some of these are very important, I think, for my district and, of course, I think, for the country.

The first one I'll mention is the Cross Florida Barge Canal. This was 86,000

acres that were tied up at the Federal Government. President Nixon wanted to do the Cross Florida Barge Canal. Ultimately, he decided against it, so this amount of land was tied up in the Federal Register. With the help of Charlie Bennett, a Congressman from Jacksonville at that time, I sponsored a bill to retake that 86,000 acres and move it back to Florida, where it was originally located. So we de-authorized the Cross Florida Barge Canal, and President Bush signed into law my bill on November 29, 1990.

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The second major piece of legislation I am very proud of is the Telecommunications Act of 1996. I was a conferee with the Senate. I had many amendments involved with that, particularly with the broadcast side. It provided competition, reduced regulation, and it started this whole innovation in our telecommunication industry. And it was a great honor for me to serve and to be contributing to that great bill which created all of the new jobs in this country.

The third one was the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, which was signed by President Clinton on March 10, 2000. This bill was to provide extended care services for our veterans, to make improvements in health care programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs. I was chairman of the Health Subcommittee at the time, and I was able to advance this bill, and I am very proud that President Bill Clinton signed it.

The fourth bill was the Cardiac Arrest Survival Act. President Clinton signed it on February 13, 2000. It prevents as many as 50,000 unnecessary deaths each year in the United States by using what are called AEDs, which are automated external defibrillators. It allowed people to be trained to save lives, and so this act was very important. I'm glad that it was signed as my bill.

The fifth one I am very proud of that President Bush signed is dealing with asthma conditions. Self-administration of medications was prevented in schools because they had no drugs allowed, and some of the children had asthma and they needed EpiPin or they needed some albuterol, and if it wasn't available they could go into asthma attack. This bill allowed nurses in schools to provide this type of treatment.

The sixth one is the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. It was signed by President George Bush on October 26, 2005. It basically provided civil liability action protection for companies that were manufacturing, distributing, or importing firearms or ammunition, for damages that were caused. Cities and States were suing these manufacturers, putting them out of business. They were nuisance suits, and I'm glad that President Bush signed it.

The last one I'm very happy to talk about is a bill that President Clinton