

tell them that everything is going to be okay because, as of right now, everything is not okay. In fact, it's far from okay.

I don't often agree with my colleague that just spoke, Mr. NADLER, on a lot of substantive issues, but I have to agree with him today, and that is not an easy thing for me to do because there was a betrayal. There was an error in judgment that is going to cost, I think, the trust of the American people, not from me individually, not necessarily even for the Members here today, but for this body as a whole as we move forward.

I couldn't be more proud to be an American. You know, I used to tease people that I bleed red, white, and blue. Since I was young, I knew I would serve in the military, and I did. And I would have given my life for this country time and time again. And even later on, I put myself in harm's way serving with one of the greatest organizations this country has to offer with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a huge honor. And I really, really felt, when I took my oath as a Member of Congress, that it would be a level of service that would even outweigh my prior service because I was going to be in a position to help my fellow Americans every way that I could and to actually go out and touch my friends, neighbors, even those that didn't support me or had different political ideologies, I was going to be able to use the work ethic that I inherited from my father to make their life a little better. That's why I took this job, to make people's lives a little better, to make life in the United States a little better. And I'm not able to do that today, and I don't understand why.

□ 1020

And I think it's inexcusable that we did not have this vote and bring those that are suffering, those men and women that are looking at their children right now, and they're not sure what to tell them because they've lost their small business, their only source of income.

And why is that important? Well, because the SBA and FEMA and all the government officials that hit the ground when Superstorm Sandy hit explained that if you didn't get money into the hands of these small businesses almost immediately, then most likely they would go under. If you don't start rebuilding right away, people start to become depressed and they lose hope. Let's not even discuss the economic impact.

So to delay this vote, even for another day, is something that will resonate, not only with the people that have been affected and are suffering and have lost everything, but I think it will resonate with the American people for a long time; and I think it will make them wonder what we are here for and what is the role of the Federal Government, what is the role of the Congress, and maybe most importantly, can they trust us.

So it is with a heartfelt apology that I apologize to my constituents, to my fellow New Yorkers in need, those in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. I did all that I could. I will not stop. I will not relent, and I will continue to push for this vote to come as quickly as possible. But there is no rhyme nor reason, and it is inexcusable that it has not come already.

You are in my thoughts and my prayers, and I will be there on the ground as soon as I get back to New York to help as much as I can, knowing that I'm not helping nearly enough because we don't have the funding to do so.

I want to thank my colleagues across the aisle that have been exemplary. It has been an honor to work so closely with you on these efforts. It has been not only bipartisan but bicameral. Governors, mayors all across the aisles have weighed in, and that is something that I will treasure and will continue to do as we move forward, knowing that we should not have to be here today.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for 3 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, last night the Republican leadership reneged on their commitment to vote on aid for the families in the States that were devastated by Superstorm Sandy. We were told it was because Republicans just couldn't stomach any additional votes in this Congress.

I wonder if those same people walked along the beaches of Long Beach and Long Island, Breezy Point and Belle Harbor and Rockaway Beach in GREG MEEKS's district, Staten Island or Seaside Heights in New Jersey; if they could stomach the devastation they would witness, stomach the lives that were lost, stomach the homes that have been destroyed or the families that have been displaced, stomach the businesses that are closed and, in many places, have been lost.

In the weeks after the storm, my Republican colleagues told us—not all, by the way, and I want to point out that Mr. GRIMM and Mr. KING, Mr. DOLD and others were very, very helpful—but the leadership, I'm talking about, told us they were with us and that they would support us.

But I guess those were only words, because last night we learned the truth. And thanks to their actions, there's no additional Federal assistance to help hardworking people rebuild and restart their lives.

Now, I'm not a cynic, but I do wonder, what if we told the Republicans that a few millionaires' and billionaires' lives were destroyed by the storm, whether they'd want to help all the families hurting because of Sandy?

And I wonder, what if Republicans were promised that by providing aid to families in need that, in turn, they would get a tax break? Would these in-

centives have changed their mind? Would it have prompted action? Because it truly does appear their only priority is helping those that have the most.

Republicans in Congress brought this House to a new low last night.

The banner over the Speaker's chair says "In God We Trust." God alone cannot help these families rebuild but, unfortunately, the American people cannot trust the Republican Congress to help either. The only thing my Republican colleagues did this week was to serve up false hope to the people who have been devastated by the storm, false promises, false guarantees that we'd be there to help them in their time of need.

Many of you know that my cousin, John Moran—I don't speak about John often—was killed on 9/11. He came from the Rockaway community. There was a monument on the beach, 118th Street. There were, I would say, dozens of monuments, as Congressman MEEKS knows, along the Rockaway Peninsula. They were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy.

It didn't stop my family and his neighbors from going out and sifting through the feet of sand to find that memorial. It was that precious to them. They didn't wait for the Federal Government to come help pull them up by their bootstraps. They did it themselves. They continue to do it.

There are humble people, proud people throughout this entire region who have been affected by this. They will recover but, sad to say, no thanks to the 112th Congress.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR CERTAINTY

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, and I know we've talked a lot and have heard from my colleagues about Sandy, and I certainly want to talk about that.

I want to talk about last night we were able to avoid the fiscal cliff. The American public, at least the constituents that I talk to on a regular basis, are looking for certainty. They're looking for us to find common ground. They're looking for us to be able to move the country forward.

I'm a small business owner, Mr. Speaker. I meet a budget and a payroll. I employ 100 people. For me, that's 100 families. It's a role and responsibility that I take very seriously.

And while I do believe that the Federal Government should play as little a role as possible in the lives of Americans, they do need to play a role. They need to be able to provide those things that Americans cannot provide for themselves, whether that be infrastructure, whether that be a common defense, justice. These are some of the things that I think we do share a lot of common ground with.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I spent some time in Long Island, New York, recently and also in New Jersey. The devastation that Sandy has caused that region is nothing short of remarkable.

And while I do believe that we have a spending problem that has been going on, frankly, in this House, on both sides of the aisle for a long time, there are those times when we need to come together as an American people and say we have Americans out there that cannot provide for themselves, that have been devastated, that need a helping hand.

And do I think that they will repay that? I do.

We have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to come together as Americans, Republicans and Democrats together, to try to help provide need.

My colleague, JOE CROWLEY, was just up here talking about devastation that happened on the beaches. MICHAEL GRIMM, and I'm sure most of the New York and New Jersey delegations which will follow up here, and those from Connecticut, will talk about devastation that was happening in their communities.

I do believe that we have a role to play, and I do believe that action needs to happen and happen quickly.

Now, there are many on my side of the aisle that believe that we shouldn't be spending a nickel more than we have to. And while I agree that we need to tighten spending, and that this body needs to treat spending and those dollars as if they were their own, we can't needlessly ask taxpayers to provide more resources only to have them squandered.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, these dollars will not be squandered. I believe that they are desperately needed. At a time when many Americans have lost hope, there is that opportunity for us to stand united together to provide that hope for the American public. It may be New York and New Jersey and Connecticut and Pennsylvania today, but it may be a different part of the country tomorrow.

Now, as we look forward, Mr. Speaker, as the 112th Congress comes to a close, we have a heck of a lot more work to be done as a country.

□ 1030

I, for one, hope that we can talk about reining in the out-of-control spending. But then, again, it's not going to happen with one party or the other. It's going to have to be about bipartisanship. And I do hope that we can bring pieces of legislation on this floor, like Simpson-Bowles, in that framework, that talk about revenue increases, whether that be through reforming the Tax Code and talking about where we can rein in spending, how we can reform things to make sure we have a social safety net, which is so vital. And I do believe that we need to have that social safety net. We need to strengthen that social safety net so that it's there for future generations.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, as we look at health care, we have to start thinking outside of the box. And certainly, I have enjoyed working with ROB ANDREWS on the American Center for the Cures, an idea that we need to be looking at how do we solve and cure some of these diseases that we spend hundreds of billions of dollars on treating each and every year, whether it be diabetes, Alzheimer's, or Parkinson's. If we came up with a cure for these types of diseases, think about where we'd be then, and where we can put those additional resources into the very vital areas that our government needs to fund.

So I am optimistic, Mr. Speaker, that our best days are ahead. But I also know that people are fed up with the idea of this partisanship. And I fear that we're going further partisan; that we're anchoring to the extremes as opposed to coming to the center. My hope is that this body can focus more on what we agree on as opposed to what we disagree on. That's what the American public's looking for. That's what I hope this Congress can accomplish in the 113th, and beyond.

I want to take this last moment to thank so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their friendship, for their support, and I certainly look forward to continuing the friendship in future years.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) for 2½ minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republican do-nothing leadership has an opportunity to do something—something very important—today to help the more than 17 million Americans who were devastated by Hurricane Sandy, one of the worst storms in U.S. history, more than 9 weeks ago. The Senate has sent us a good bill. We are ready to act. We have the bipartisan votes to pass it. And yet the House Republican leadership has said there will be no votes today, the last day to pass this legislation without delay before we have to start all over again in the new session of Congress tomorrow.

Let me be very clear. Republican leadership has turned their backs on New Yorkers. They have turned their backs on those suffering without homes and businesses struggling just to get by. They have no valid reason for this delay—only the dysfunction with which they lead this body.

This record storm resulted in the deaths of over 100 Americans. The coasts of New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut have been devastated. Other surrounding States have sustained significant damage. In 2005, this body came together and passed a Federal disaster assistance bill to help the gulf recover from Hurricane Katrina 2 weeks after the storm. Congress acted to assist those who suffered damage in

Hurricane Gustav and Ike within 1 month.

The Governors of our States, Democrat and Republican, have assessed over \$82 billion in damages. The Senate bill would have provided \$60.4 billion—not everything that was requested, but a detailed, thoughtful disaster assistance plan to help these communities rebuild. More than 9 weeks since the storm hit, House Republican leadership is doing nothing, after giving us nearly virtual assurance just yesterday that we would consider this assistance bill today.

When a disaster hits on American soil, we as a Congress have the responsibility and tradition of working together, Democrat and Republican, to help communities rebuild. Our citizens are counting on us to help them recover from the storm and mitigate future disasters. I respectfully urge House leadership to reconsider their decision. Support the victims of Hurricane Sandy. Put politics aside. Do the right thing. People are waiting. People need this assistance. Let's bring the bill to a vote today.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DOLD). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of New York. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the outset, let me thank you for your service during your time in Congress, and thank you for your remarks here this morning.

I think it's important to set the record straight. Last night, many of us came to the floor and rightly said that the conduct of the Republican leadership was disgraceful, it was indefensible, and it was immoral. But I think it's important to lay out the facts as to how we reached this situation so we're not put in a position of name-calling or somehow we're angry or feelings are hurt. This goes far beyond any of that.

The fact is, as Congresswoman LOWEY said, within 10 days after Katrina, \$60 billion was appropriated. That number ended up going well over \$100 billion. It's now 9 weeks and nothing has been appropriated by this Congress for the people of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Long Island, which I represent.

The fact is that over the last 5, 6, 7 weeks we did everything that the Republican leadership asked us to do. Governor Cuomo came down. I was at the meeting. He met with the Speaker. Governor Christie came down. He met with the Speaker. Governor Bloomberg came down. He met with the majority leader. We were asked to submit detailed documentation. Governor Christie, Governor Cuomo, and Mayor Bloomberg all submitted absolute documentation. When we asked if anything else is required, they said, No, you've given us all we need.

When the bill came from the Senate, we were told there was some pork in