

issue of great national importance: immigration reform. I clearly recognize what a contentious issue this is, pitting two fundamental American values—rule of law and compassion—against each other, but I would suggest that making this effort is crucial to America's future.

We need a sustained commitment to afford opportunity for all Americans, at least for young people, young people who, through no fault of their own, are now in limbo due to their undocumented status; young people who have been educated in our school systems; young people who are willing to achieve further academic excellence, who are willing to serve in our military and risk their lives. Can we not at least say that, if somebody is willing to die for America, the least we can do is give them a chance at life in America? I hope in the 113th Congress the answer to that question will be "yes."

So, Mr. Speaker, I end my remarks where I began, expressing my deep sense of gratitude for the honor and privilege granted me to serve in the 112th Congress. I have been blessed with a superb staff of dedicated professionals: my previous chief of staff, Steve Vermillion, may he rest in peace; my current Chief of Staff, Javi Correo; and my entire D.C. office staff. My district director, Alina Garcia, and my entire district office staff have all served this Congress, the people of Florida's 25th Congressional District, and our Nation with honor and distinction. My friends, supporters, and constituents have blessed me with their confidence.

And finally, my gratitude to my family, and particularly my mom, Daisy, who is a saint, whom I love dearly, and who has sacrificed everything so that I have the opportunity to serve and achieve the American Dream. Only in America can a child of a political refugee, a kid born on the wrong side of the tracks, grow up and be elected to serve in the United States House of Representatives. America is indeed the greatest country mankind has ever known.

May God bless you, Speaker, and my colleagues. May God bless the United States House of Representatives. May God bless the United States of America.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in solidarity with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle against the House Republican leadership's outrageous decision to refuse emergency assistance for our States to recover from the strongest storm to ravage our region in generations.

It's simply unconscionable that this Chamber would walk away from a region desperate for assistance in its greatest hour of need. We cannot ac-

cept this shockingly callous indifference of the leadership to the human suffering that our constituents and their fellow citizens continue to endure.

The leadership's decision stands in stark contrast to the immediate decisions to provide relief in the wake of every disaster that has befallen this Nation over the past many years. It comes in stark contrast to our Nation's call to provide well over \$100 billion to Louisiana and the Gulf States following that tragedy, the first \$62 billion of which was on its way to the Gulf States within 2 weeks of the storm.

More than 2 months after our region was struck, our constituents are still waiting for help. Our States are overextended and our constituents have reached the limits of their tolerance. They deserve more than the Federal Government's refusal to help, particularly after the Senate's strong bipartisan approval of the aid we need.

Our leadership has decided to pass up an important investment against future losses. Many of our districts remain exposed to future damage. My own district, for example, experienced two relatively routine storms in late December, but, nonetheless, those storms compounded the massive erosion along the south shore of Long Island. We simply cannot afford any further breaches, flooding, overwashing, or storm damage without incurring significant losses to our infrastructure and to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, let me close with this:

What do I say when I go home to my constituents in Mastic Beach, a working class community on Moriches Bay with a little over 5,000 homes, about a thousand of which sustained damage, a great many of which are unrepairable? Do I tell them that the Republican leadership of the House considers it entirely appropriate for their tax dollars to be used for recovery and repair in New Orleans, in Tuscaloosa, in Joplin, or anywhere else in this country where a natural disaster has occurred? Or do I tell them that when it's in their hour of need, the Republican leadership has decided to simply walk away? That's precisely the message that the Republican leadership is sending to my constituents.

They deserve better. The residents of all of the States that were ravaged by this storm deserve better. We must bring this bill to a vote immediately.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIVERA). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as the 112th Congress ends with a whimper, not a bang, not so much finished as worn out, I was prepared to come to the floor this morning and talk about some of the unfinished business that we kicked down the road with a pro-

posal last night: a serious deficit reduction, the debt ceiling, tax reform. One thing I didn't expect to be confronted with is what you have been hearing from my colleagues today, that we do not have the time to address the disaster relief for Hurricane Sandy, which everybody thought was a given.

□ 1050

This is the crew that came to town shouting "read the bill," that they were going to have 72 hours' regular order to move in a fashion. They gave us 154 pages, 24,000 words nobody had read, but we at least thought we would be dealing today with this emergency assistance.

I am stunned, frankly, that we find ourselves in this situation, but we have 24 hours left. How hard would it be to take up a bill that was already overwhelmingly passed by the Senate? How hard could it be, based on the bipartisan expression last night of support for a bill that almost everybody hated and had reservations about but would come together for something they thought was important for the country?

Remember when rebuilding and renewing America was a bipartisan objective? Maybe we could take a little bit of that spirit of bipartisanship and cooperation last night and rise to the occasion in the next 24 hours to do something for the people who deserve our help and support. If not, then it ought to be the first order of business of the new Congress, and we ought not to go home this week until this matter is addressed.

THE POWER OF UNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my wife, Elizabeth, who is here in the gallery, for her constant support during my service in the United States Congress and to thank the people of Ohio's 10th Congressional District for their constant support, as well as the great congressional staff both at the district and at the D.C. level. I also, before I make further remarks, want to express my support for my colleagues from New York and New Jersey in their tireless efforts on behalf of their constituents who have suffered so grievously from Hurricane Sandy.

We must unite for the people, and that's really the idea of the United States. It's the unity of States, but it's even deeper than that. It's expressive of the unity of people that it's all for one and one for all. Our Nation's first motto, "E Pluribus Unum," out of many we are one, stresses the power of unity. The idea of human unity is implicit in this Nation.

In my visits across America, I discovered that there is an underlying unity which binds us as Americans and which calls us forward to a higher purpose. I

have also come to understand that our politics divide people. The politics of polarization and hyper-partisanship has become obviously quite destructive, nearly incapacitating our government. Yet at such a time, the hunger for unity is the greatest, but the ideological differences between us widen.

We need a new politics in America which unites people, which sets aside partisan differences for the greater good of the country, and which strives to reconnect with the greatness of the Nation and the goodness of the American people. But what would that politics look like? The rhetoric would change to one of mutual respect. The questioning of motives would end. The poison system of "pay to play" would be transformed by public financing, and our government would be rededicated to addressing the practical aspirations of the American people for jobs, for health care for all, for education for all, for retirement security for all, and for environmental security.

We need a new politics which creates jobs and celebrates the dignity of work. Our government must raise the status of working people and protect their rights. Our government must stress wealth creation over taxation, investment over debt, health over illness, peace over war, and liberty over surveillance.

We have the capacity of choosing and choosing again as we are involved in the most creative endeavor of human achievement actualizing the highest principles upon which this country was founded and infusing those principles into self-government. Unity. One Nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

A new America is waiting to emerge. Let us call it forward with the same sense of wonder and expectation that the Founders first evoked: the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to refrain from referring to occupants of the gallery.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. I was just asking my friend, JOE CROWLEY, is there a legislative possibility that we could bring this to the floor. I think everybody has enough compassion for the Speaker after what he's been through with his own party trying to get some bills to the floor to understand that anything, even something this enormous, could have fallen between the cracks. What a great opportunity to say let's try to put these pieces together.

In any event, nobody has said it's impossible to do it; and if it's just a question of pride in terms of party unity, I can't think of anything at this time that would be better served than to

have all of America especially thank the Speaker for reconsidering trying to help the lives of tens of thousands of American people.

Once again, I don't know what my chances are going to be getting into Heaven, but the absence of listening to the compassionate support of the religious community is deafening to me. I know their strong position about same-sex marriage and about women controlling their bodies and all of those things. And I say, if you write the book, you have the rules, do what you have to do.

But, my God, when it comes to caring for people, not New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, not just the United States, but all over the world, can't there be some people that have compassion to know that this is what God expects us to do? That's why we say, in God we trust, because we're supposed to take care of fiscal calamities, which we fail, but the compassion is not in the parties, it's in the people. And these people could be your neighbors today and someone else's neighbor tomorrow.

And this great United States, what a great insurance policy to have, to have friends from different communities, different backgrounds to know, as we say in the hood, we got your back. That's what it's all about. People all over the world, when they have a problem, no matter what the political differences are, know that America will have enough compassion to put aside those differences and to send out our men, our women and our firefighters over there, to do what, to help.

How do we possibly explain to our kids and grandkids that when it came to Americans, when it came to people who fight and die for this country, that we not only didn't help, but worse than that, we turned our back on them?

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. I did not think it was going to be necessary. But the Superstorm Sandy relief bill, I've heard a lot of people talking about it. This isn't about us as Members of Congress. This is about our constituents. Do you have any idea what it's like when someone else's life is ripped from their hands, lives are lost, all personal property is lost, businesses are lost, and the hope of the Federal Government coming in is what is keeping them alive and motivated, and now with no explanation, the rug is pulled out from all of us, but most of all our constituents?

This is a disaster on top of a disaster. We, all of us, I think I speak for all of us, when Katrina hit, 10 days later, \$60 billion, \$100 billion altogether. Now we have to hear from people in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Alabama, and,

yes, some people from California and the Midwest when they have a disaster and we were there for them that the rules are going to change for us and it is now not an emergency and the Federal Government doesn't have a role in this?

□ 1100

It's absurd, absolutely absurd. We demand nothing less than we have given the rest of the country. An emergency and disaster means emergency and disaster, and that's what we had. Go back and look at the videos. Go back and see how people were devastated. The people of the Northeast had something we have never seen before, and we're expecting the Federal Government to play their role and be there. That's the minimum that's expected.

We worked hard to put together a package in a bipartisan way. People are crying out for bipartisan action. We had this, Republicans and Democrats, shoulder to shoulder, working together, forming a package, giving a little bit here, giving a little bit there, working our other Members, building the votes, promising, anticipating that we would have today the finishing part of this.

I'm convinced we had the votes. I'm convinced we would have moved this forward. And for us in New Jersey, every day that is lost is a bigger disaster. This isn't about people getting a sun tan. This is about jobs and the economy, a \$40 billion tourism business that relies on the summer season. Who is going to come and vacation in a community that doesn't have a beach and whose town is devastated that normally comes there? The answer is nobody. So the bigger disaster is going to come in a couple of months from now, and the money into the pipeline is what we needed now. We needed it 5 minutes ago. We needed it 2 weeks ago. We don't need it a month from now. We need the Federal Government to step up so people's lives can be put back together.

We're all hit hard enough with the recession. On top of that, now we have to deal with the anxiety and the failure of Congress to act, to provide what is normally provided. Why all of the sudden are New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, why are we the first States that have to answer to some new rules or some new formula that is going to come out about how we do these things? I don't ever remember a question with Katrina, that that \$60 billion was too big a number. I remember that they were showing how people's lives were devastated. Why are our constituents any less important than the constituents of the past who had devastation? All of this is real, and we need to find a way to move forward.

So, yes, there is anger and frustration. That is all rolled into this. We're going to stay united. We're going to work together. We're going to find a way to move this forward. But we need to make this absolutely crystal clear