

that this is not about people in Congress; this is about constituents whose lives were ruined. We need to do the right thing, and we need to do it now.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, last night when I came to the floor for the first time since I've been in this body, my heart was hurting. I understand politics, but this should not be about politics. This should be about leadership.

The first thing I want to do is to say to the Speaker, Come walk with me, Mr. Speaker. Come walk with me. Let's walk the beaches of the Rockaway Peninsula. You will see a peninsula where every soul, no matter whether you were rich or whether you were poor, no matter whether you were black or whether you were white, every individual, no matter what your religious belief was, every individual was affected by this storm, everyone.

Come walk with me, Mr. Speaker, as STENY HOYER did, and talk to the people, look into their eyes, understand their needs. Come walk with me, Mr. Speaker. Maybe then you can have the leadership that is necessary to get this bill passed today. Come walk with me, Mr. Speaker.

If you can't walk with me, Mr. Speaker, for any reason, then go walk with MICHAEL GRIMM. If it is a partisan issue for you—because it's not for me—go walk with MICHAEL GRIMM on Staten Island, Mr. Speaker. You will see the same pain that the people in the Rockaways have. It's the same pain because they're the same people. They are the American people. This is the United States of America, and this is the people's House.

We make jokes all the time about the Senate. The Senate stood up and passed the bill. This is the people's House, Mr. Speaker. We are supposed to do the right thing for the American people. I'm proud of being on the Foreign Affairs Committee, going all over the world and talking about what we've got to do and how we help folks, how we help other individuals all over this world.

We have Americans, Mr. Speaker, who are crying out for help, who are saying they don't know where their tomorrow is. We have Americans, Mr. Speaker, who are worried to this day right now that we may have another northeaster tomorrow. And with the sand gone and the dunes now down, we'll have another disaster. They're asking me as their Member, Will our government help us? Where are you?

Mr. Speaker, we need leadership. Come walk with me, Mr. Speaker. Come walk with me, and see the American people that are suffering.

LET'S FIGHT TOGETHER FOR A BETTER AMERICA

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your service and your friendship to our country.

I've been watching the media, Mr. Speaker, and hearing a lot of distortion of what happened in the House Chamber yesterday.

Let's recall that on December 31 at midnight, taxes went up for every taxpayer massively, the fiscal cliff. By the end of the evening, the House came together, working with the Senate, and reduced taxes for 99 percent of American taxpayers. We kept taxes lower for dividend income, capital gains. We maintained a higher child tax credit. We helped keep the marriage penalty from hurting families. We did all this in a permanent way. This is a big win. We have a lot of work to do, but that was a big win.

The President also promised that he would work with us to have further cuts in spending. We should hold him to that promise on both sides of the aisle. We have several serious issues to come in this 113th Congress. We have to deal with the debt ceiling, spending cuts, implementation and regulations in the health care law, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government.

It's easy for people to look at any piece of legislation—I actually challenge people to find some piece of legislation here that was perfect. Any major bill has flaws. Even a rose has thorns, as they say. Let's understand that we will see success when we work together, not when we continue to snipe at each other's heels.

The challenges before us will only be dealt with by the courage we find within us to find the common ground between us and fight together for a better America.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, we're here this morning for the fellow citizens who didn't put up a Christmas tree or light a menorah or celebrate their holiday at home this year because they have no home. We're here for the boardwalk merchants who are not going to be starting their businesses up again this Memorial Day along the boardwalk because there's no business, and there's no boardwalk. We're here because a lot of people's lives are devastated.

It's important to understand what we are and are not asking for. We are not asking that every Member of this Chamber follow our lead and vote "yes" in favor of the bill the Senate

has already passed. We are simply asking that every Member of this Chamber have the opportunity to vote on that bill.

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President Kennedy said governing is choosing. We are prepared to choose an investment in the recovery of our neighbors and our country. We respect those who would make a different choice, but we cannot abide by those who would say they would make the choice of doing nothing at all, letting the clock run out on this Congress, which means that we'd have to start all over again. The people I talked about for whom we are here this morning, they need to start all over again. They need to get back to their homes, back to their businesses, back to their lives; and as we delay, we delay that possibility for them.

Every Member has the right to exercise his or her own conscience on any piece of legislation. No Member has the right to deprive the rest of us of the same opportunity for our constituents. We should meet today. We should vote today. We should move forward today.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. REED. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to join my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I come from a district in New York that was not impacted by Hurricane Sandy, but I come to this floor today to express my frustration and my disappointment in the decision that was made to not bring up the Hurricane Sandy supplemental aid for the people of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut—our fellow citizens, Americans, who have suffered devastating impacts.

Now, I understand what some of the dynamics of this bill are about. I understand that the Senate has put forth a bill that many on my side of the aisle have expressed concern about—pork-type of activity that the Senate continues to engage in with fisheries and Smithsonian funding and things like that that don't really have much to do with Hurricane Sandy. But that's a separate issue that could have been addressed and should be addressed by this body in cleaning up that bill and in getting the aid, getting the resources to the people who are suffering today.

That was the intended plan, that we were going to let the will of the House speak—clean up the bill that the Senate had produced but, most importantly, do what is right for our fellow citizens because there is not a better purpose of the Federal Government, which is for the Federal Government to stand with our citizens when they are suffering the most, especially when they are suffering from a natural disaster such as Hurricane Sandy.

I join with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in, again, asking

for our leadership to change the decision that was made to let the clock run out on this Congress and deal with this issue tomorrow. We don't have the luxury of waiting until tomorrow. These people are suffering today.

I talked to my colleagues of the districts that were impacted by this devastating storm, and I have heard the horror stories, and I've heard the stories of suffering of the many millions of people who were impacted in New Jersey and New York outside of my district. I think it is right and it is just and it is proper for us to hear the stories of those individuals and to make sure that we stand with them and take this bill up now rather than kick it to the next Congress. God knows when we will actually get to it in that congressional session.

So I join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Let us do what is right, Mr. Speaker. Bring this bill to the floor, and get on with the business of attending to our fellow citizens as Americans.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to wish you the best. I'm glad there's one more Democrat, but I'm not glad that you're leaving. You're a gentleman.

Look, I don't think that this is time for a pedantic debate. As we say in Jersey, it is time calmly, coolly to take the gloves off. This is the time. There is precedent here. I would suggest to the Governors that they should bring us to court. It's fitting.

Not only did we pass the money for Katrina in a very short period of time—part of it was by a voice vote. Can you imagine? Part of it was by a voice vote within a few days after that disaster. Mr. CANTOR voted for Katrina aid; Mr. BOEHNER did; Mr. RYAN did; Mr. MCCARTHY did, as did nearly every Member of the Congress from the New Jersey and New York regions. In fact, New Jersey and the other States that were hit by Sandy are some of the biggest donor States, that is, we send a lot of taxes to the Federal Government. Now we need our colleagues to step up to the plate.

As everyone knows, Sandy caused significant damage. In Bergen County, north Jersey—my district—first responders had to evacuate entire towns when the Hackensack River rose over a berm. The Moonachie Police Department will soon be housing trailers and be reimbursed. So let them come to north Jersey. Let them come to Connecticut at the shore of Jersey. Let them come to Long Island and Staten Island and Pennsylvania and Maryland. Let them come. Let them see. The mayor of Little Ferry is just one of the many people in that community whose house was decimated by the high water.

Look, we are, unfortunately, dealing with a schizophrenic leadership on the other side. Let's call it for what it is. Let's not mince words. State and local finances, which are already stretched too thin, allow for the limited or no ability of an area to rebuild alone. Because of the storm, the result will be one of depressed tax collections. We've been working with the Members of the House Ways and Means Committee to draft legislation modeled on tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, good luck to you. God bless your family.

God bless all of you for coming here this morning. We thought we'd have a shortened week, but our work is still ahead of us. This is the time to stop debating and take the gloves off—Jersey style.

IN HONOR OF STATE POLICE TROOPER PHILIP BATTEL

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

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a different subject, one that I think we can all be pleased about. I rise in honor of Virginia State Police Trooper Philip Battel, a devoted public servant.

In the early hours of Friday, December 28, 2012, Trooper Battel saved three lives from a burning home. Trooper Battel was actually assisting the Saltville Police and Smyth County deputies in the search for a stolen car, which had been involved in an earlier police chase, when he noticed an orange hue off in the distance. He decided to investigate.

When Trooper Battel reached the area in question, much to his surprise he saw a home completely engulfed in flames. He banged on the door, but there was no answer. He made the selfless decision to enter the burning home and investigate. He began yelling and making noise. His activity in the house awoke the three residents, who had no idea that their home was burning down around them. His actions led to their ultimate escape from the home and from the fire. They're all in good health. Their lives were saved, and the lives of two of their pets were saved.

Trooper Battel's heroic actions and service to the community are to be commended. I am honored to pay tribute to him. Please join me in thanking Trooper Battel for all that he has done for the people of southwest Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, it has been my experience in working with the State police over many decades that they always respond in fine fashion and that they rise to the occasion. Trooper Battel is just another example in a long history of the good work and heroism of the Virginia State police.

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HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from

Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) for 2½ minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Writing at the time of Katrina, Harvard Professor Michael Ignatieff called the Constitution "a contract of citizenship" that promises, first and foremost, protection. That government will help "citizens to protect their families and possessions from forces beyond their control."

He writes:

In America, a citizen has a claim of right on the resources of his or her government when they simply cannot help themselves.

When disasters strike, they test whether the contract is respected in a citizen's hour of need. When the levees broke, the contract of American citizenship failed. Mr. Speaker, the levees broke. They broke in Connecticut, in New York, and New Jersey. Government is about helping families recover and rebuild from major disasters like Superstorm Sandy.

In a shocking display of neglect, this House majority decided not to allow a vote on disaster aid funds so desperately needed to recover and repair from this storm. Hurricane Sandy was one of the most severe storms to hit Connecticut in our State's history. All across our region, families' houses were destroyed and lives were upended.

And whether it has been a fire in the West, a tornado in the Midwest, a hurricane in the gulf coast, or a storm in the Northeast, this body acted. We didn't say no. It was a resounding "yes" to help because it is the central responsibility of this institution to act on behalf of the American people.

And yet here we are 2 months since Sandy destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, took 100 lives across this Nation. This House majority said "no" on a vote for disaster assistance to help millions of people get back on their feet again. The Republican leadership has broken that contract of citizenship. They have said "no" to my constituents in Stratford, in Milford, in New Haven, East Haven, West Haven, Branford, North Branford and Guilford. They said "no" to the rest of the towns in Connecticut and in New York and New Jersey. They broke the contract of citizenship. They said: You are on your own.

My friends, our people cannot be on their own. We have a central responsibility to act on behalf of the American people when they are overwhelmed in circumstances that they had no control over. Let us act. Let us act today to restore that faith and confidence in the American government.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. HOLT. Well, you've heard it. Our constituents' lives were devastated by the Sandy disaster. It has now been about 9 weeks since Hurricane Sandy brought the winds and the tidal surges.