

In central New Jersey and Connecticut, in New York, people are hurting. Towns have exhausted their emergency funds and exhausted their borrowing capacity. In other disasters, such as the disaster associated with Katrina or with wildfires or with any number of other natural disasters, this body has acted and aid has been provided quickly.

And yet today, the Speaker is going to allow the 112th Congress to adjourn before passing the much-needed disaster relief package. The Senate acted on this bill. The aid package here was well constructed. It was ready. All we needed was a vote. And the delay is significant. It adds significantly to the hurt. It is not an exaggeration to say that lives are on the line. People are living wherever they can. They don't have the shelter. They don't have the businesses. They don't have their lives. And the Speaker just walks away. That compounds the disaster. The delay compounds the disaster.

It has been said: Well, FEMA has some money already in their account that will last for many weeks. But we're not just talking about FEMA, we're talking about HUD. More than a billion dollars, actually billions of housing aid. The Army Corps of Engineers, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Interior, the Agriculture Department for food and emergency watershed protection, the EPA for safe drinking water—all of this was in this well-constructed package.

Now, it has often been said that the governing principle of the Republican leadership is "you're on your own." That might actually be a conscientious principle if they really believe in their hearts that your Social Security should be privately invested or you should pay for a college without government help. But this, to say you're on your own after a disaster is inconsiderate. It breaks our trust. It violates an understanding, and it hurts people.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this kind of petty partisan posturing is absolutely disgraceful. It's an act of spiteful indifference that will go down in history as a low point in a low era. Shame on this House. This House acted quickly after Katrina, voting over \$60 billion in less than 2 weeks. It acted quickly for Ike and Gustav and the tornadoes in Alabama. We were there for other regions of this country. This country has to be there for the Northeast. Twenty-four States were affected. It has been called the second-worst natural disaster in the history of our country, affecting over 17 million people in the most densely populated area of America.

We cannot turn our backs on this entire region. Every Governor, every

mayor has talked to the Republican leadership. They were assured the money would be there. We cannot rebuild or start to repair without the resources being in place.

The Northeast are donor States. We give far more to the Federal Government in taxes than what comes back to us. Yet when the natural disaster struck our people, we lost lives. We lost businesses, homes, complete devastation of the largest subway system in our country, moving 8 million people a day. Where is the aid and where is the support?

Mr. Speaker, introduce the Senate bill tomorrow. Let's come back into session, vote it on Friday. Let's put the aid in place, the American way of being there to help people. You can't pick and choose that certain areas get disaster relief, but the area that is the most hard-hit in the history of our country does not receive the relief? The disaster aid that has been there for other people? We have been there for you. You need to be there for the Northeast. It is devastated. We need Federal aid. You cannot repair hospitals, subway systems, major infrastructures without the support of the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, do not turn your back on America and a region of America. You need to support in a bipartisan way the aid that is so desperately needed for the most densely populated area of our country after the second-worst storm in the history of our country.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the two-tiered amendment disaster relief bill that we had hoped to bring to the floor to get us to the \$60 billion that is desperately needed to assist families, businesses, and municipalities devastated by Superstorm Sandy. Our appeal—and it's a bipartisan appeal—is that there is still time to bring this vital legislation to the floor for a vote back to the Senate and then down to the President for signature.

Numerous towns in my district, Mr. Speaker, as well as our friends in New York and further north, are still coping with and recovering from the most destructive storm ever in our region—and perhaps the second or third most costly in all of American history.

Today, families lack housing. Businesses are in shambles, and municipalities have been decimated.

In New Jersey, some 346,000 housing units were damaged or destroyed, with 22,000 units rendered absolutely uninhabitable.

□ 1130

An estimated 11,000 housing choice vouchers will be needed to ensure that residents at least have a roof over their heads this winter.

Approximately 100,000 new storm-related unemployment claims have been filed in New Jersey, 100,000, attributable to the storm.

Over 235,000 people in New Jersey have already registered with FEMA for individual assistance.

Seventy-five percent of New Jersey's small businesses were adversely affected, 10 percent of which, or nearly 19,000 businesses, sustained damage of \$250,000 or more, far in excess of the loss to businesses from Katrina. Total business losses are estimated to be a whopping \$8.3 billion.

Furthermore, an estimated 10,000 structures statewide will need to be demolished, and 1,000 sites across New Jersey will require remediation after hazardous materials discharge.

Fifty-one schools sustained serious damage, including six that will not reopen this school year.

Transit, roads, and bridges have been damaged to the tune of \$2.9 billion, which includes 294 damaged railcars and 75 damaged locomotives.

One of the main roads that runs through my district, Route 35, will require an estimated \$120 million to repair.

Power and gas lines are expected to cost roughly \$1 billion, understandably, given that, at the peak, power outages left 2.4 million people in the dark.

Waste and water and sewer will require about \$3 billion to repair and to protect.

Hospitals, assisted living, and other health facilities will have seen over \$150 million worth of storm damage. These facts—and there are many more—underscore the devastation unleashed by Sandy, and it is without precedent.

I would say to my colleagues that no recovery is ever accomplished in a single year, but it's about predictability and the certainty of funds to rebuild and to restore that ensures that the work proceeds immediately, comprehensively, efficaciously, and without interruption.

Mr. Speaker, for days and weeks, like many of my colleagues, after that horrible storm hit, I met with hundreds, even thousands of tenacious women and men who, despite crippling losses, were determined to rebuild.

I'll never forget one resident in Belmar who came up to me the day after Superstorm Sandy, and said, I've lost everything, but at least I'm alive.

We need to now backstop these individuals. We need to ensure that the monies are there, that they flow quickly but prudently to ensure that they can rebuild, and their homes and businesses and community.

You know, Congress assisted those pummeled by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 with \$62 billion in a mere 2 weeks. We are now past 2 months. And we need to be clear: The President didn't send to Sandy Relief package to Congress December 7. There was a loss of several weeks, but we do have a proposal. It's about 25 percent less than what the affected States have said they needed.

New Jersey, New York and the other estimates about \$80 billion. It's down at approximately \$60 billion, so it is less.

And I've seen and gone through the numbers that my State has sent to Congress as well as to the President. They are very well vetted.

Governor Chris Christie used to be a U.S. attorney. Many of the people around him are former prosecutors. Their tough and disciplined. They hate waste, fraud, and abuse, and they're trying to ensure that the money is there in the amounts needed to make a difference in the lives of your constituents.

Finally, let me just say, Mr. Speaker, we need to act now. As my colleague before me said a moment ago, New Jersey especially as well as New York, are contributing States not takers. We get back far less from the Federal Government than we pay in every year. That's a good thing. We have very, very good businesses that really provide employment for our people.

But we've been devastated, and I would hope and urge the Speaker to bring the Sandy Relief bill to the floor as quickly as possible, hopefully today, tomorrow, but as quickly as possible, because the people who have suffered, the victims, deserve no less.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) for 2½ minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, here we are again today in wonder over the decision that we think has been made by the Republican leadership in the House not to bring legislation to the floor that addresses the needs of those affected by Sandy.

Here's the thing: Everyone who heard about this since last night, when so many Members from the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, other delegations came to the floor to speak about this, said, Don't tell me that. Don't tell me that. Don't tell me that, even though everyone has seen very clearly the devastating damage that was caused by Sandy and the need for people to have assistance, the House would not take up the bill.

Don't tell me that, even though the Senate passed a very strong bill addressing the well-documented needs of the people of the affected region, the House is not taking up the bill.

Don't tell me that, although the region, the leadership, the Governor of New York, Governor Cuomo; the Governor of New Jersey, Governor Christie; the Governor of Connecticut, Governor Malloy; the Mayor of New York, Mayor Bloomberg; and others have immediately addressed the needs to the extent possible by them in their areas and have documented the needs very carefully as to what Federal participation was needed, don't tell me that the House of Representatives is going to ignore that.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the need for more civility in politics and in government, and that civility perhaps relates to how we speak to each other and how we curb our enthusiasm about issues we care a great deal about and question, perhaps, motivation of others.

But the real civility that people expect is how this Congress treats them and treats their needs. And never is that tested more clearly than in time of a natural disaster, because that's when people feel the most helpless. That's the time when they see whether the government is there for them or not. That is the time where—they're not going to be made whole, most of these people. Hopefully, what they replace will be a good substitute, and maybe it can open a door to something new for them.

But by and large, it's a long road back. But that first few steps of it, the emergency relief that was provided by the localities and now needs to be compensated for, the next stage of recovery is so essential to the character of a community.

As Mr. TONKO said after the storms last year, it affected the character of the communities in his district, and that was 2011. Here we are at the end of 2012, having some of the same regions hit again by nature with the suddenness and the severity and the power of water and, in some places, fire, and just earth-shattering earth, wind, fire in terms of how it affects people.

So as I said last night, nature pulled the rug out from under people, literally and figuratively, in their communities and in their homes, in their schools and in their workplace, and then are we to say to them, Now Congress is going to pull the rug out from under you in terms of your hopes and expectations of meeting the needs?

Don't tell me that. We can't tell our constituents that. That would not rise to the level of civility for us to turn our backs and ignore their needs. It's just plain wrong.

So I'm hopeful that perhaps those making this decision have not been affected by—almost everywhere, whether we're talking about Katrina or California, with earthquakes, drought, flood, fire, you name it, we get it all. With the Northeast being hit, once, twice, within 2011 and 2012, with Missouri, with Iowa—I visited Iowa and saw the effect of the floods there. It was devastating. It's really hard, unless you see it, to understand the impact that it has.

The most compelling reason is the look in the eyes of people who ask, What are we going to do to help? How can we help them? And what is our answer? We're just too busy. It's not a priority.

That's just not civil.

So let's honor our responsibility, which is, again, the place where people place their trust. They ignore government. They don't like government. They don't want this; they don't want

that. But in times like this, in time of emergency, is really when we prove our worth.

□ 1140

Let's prove our worth and urge the Speaker to bring this legislation to the floor and quickly deal with it while the Senate is still there, it can be sent to the President for his signature, and hope can flow from here, instead of a sense of wonderment, of "Don't tell me that." Let us be able to tell people we feel their pain. We know what they're going through. We can never really know, but we can certainly appreciate their interest in our doing what is right for them.

So, again, I hope and pray. Because we pray for these people. We pray for them all the time. They're in our prayers. Some have lost loved ones. We pray for them. How much prayer would it take for this Congress to find it in their hearts and in their heads to do the right thing? Let's pray that we don't have to tell them that we weren't there for them.

2013: YEAR OF SPENDING CUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last night, House Speaker JOHN BOEHNER released a statement outlining his many objectives for the new year, stating:

Now the focus turns to spending. The American people reelected a Republican majority in the House, and we will use that in 2013 to hold the President accountable for the 'balanced' approach he promised, meaning significant spending cuts and reforms to the entitlement programs that are driving our country deeper and deeper into debt.

Our national debt has grown to an outrageous \$16 trillion. This not only endangers our national security, but senior citizens are threatened with devalued dollars and it also places our children, grandchildren, and future generations at risk of higher taxes with little to no access to the entitlement programs to which they have faithfully contributed. House Republicans understand and are dedicated to resolving our Nation's debt crisis over the next year by reforming our Tax Code, preserving and protecting our entitlement programs, and controlling our spending.

Congratulations to Coach Steve Spurrier, President Harris Pastides and his wonderful wife, Patricia Pastides, and the USC Gamecocks, as well as Coach Dabo Swinney and President Jim Barker and his dedicated wife, Marcia Barker, and the Clemson Tigers for extraordinary Bowl victories.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.