

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.

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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.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

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

Mr. TONKO. Just yesterday, Americans celebrated New Year's Day. They ushered in 2013. As we rang in the new year, the usual message of hope that accompanies the new year—any new year—rang hollow for millions of Americans because of actions taken at the close of that New Year's Day here late last night. People were met with the devastating news that we were not going to take up a measure that would respond to Superstorm Sandy.

And so I rise today to ask the leadership of this House, the people's House, to respond accordingly to the needs of people. I make this request not through some political calculus but rather through the lens of caring and concern and compassion, which ought to be the hallmark of this great institution. We ought not forget that the role that we play here calls upon our moral responsibility to engage our actions and our compassion and empathy for the people we represent or perhaps do not represent directly. Because we, I believe, need to relate to that measurement of compassion to family, friends, neighbors and yes, at times, total strangers.

I make this request sensitized by a situation in my district, the 21st Congressional District at the time, in upstate New York, just about a year-plus before the devastation of Sandy. The torturous treatment of Mother Nature through Irene and Lee on that congressional district, my congressional district, stole lives, wiped away livestock, flooded homes, tore away the hopes and dreams of individuals, and found people abandoned, having lost everything for which they ever worked. And I witnessed how people responded to that tragedy. They picked up and mustered the strength. But they required government to be their partner at that very dark moment in their lives. Having witnessed that pain, having visited communities and having talked with the people, shared tears with the people, I understand that now this situation, in a much more densely populated area of our State, and in neighboring States, requires our assistance, immediate assistance, to respond with compassion.

Mr. Speaker, and leadership of this House, I implore you to respond with compassion and empathy and bring us to the floor to acknowledge and support the funding for Superstorm Sandy.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 1 minute.

Mr. COURTNEY. When Hurricane Sandy struck on October 29 in eastern Connecticut's Long Island Sound with 90-mile-per-hour winds and high tide, it

created a path of destruction never seen before. Homes were wiped out, utility infrastructure was wiped out, transportation infrastructure was wiped out. But what was so inspiring about it was that the first responders acted—police, fire, Coast Guard, the Governor of Connecticut, local and municipal officials. They acted. In the weeks since then, the Senate has acted. President Obama declared an emergency on October 30. The Department of Homeland Security acted. The only place that hasn't acted is the House of Representatives, where last night, in the dark of the night, the Speaker announced that he was abandoning the people of northeastern America and allowing the Hurricane Sandy relief bill to die.

That is unacceptable. The people who acted—the first responders, the caregivers, the local officials—they deserve better. The local officials, the Members of Congress for the Northeast, in a bipartisan way, deserve better. The Speaker must reverse his decision. It is time to act today.

PASS THE SAFER ACT TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 1 minute.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 1985, 13-year-old Lavinia Masters went to sleep in her bedroom, which should be the safest place on Earth for children. But a few hours later, she was woken up by an outlaw who sexually assaulted her and put a knife to her throat. She went to the hospital. DNA evidence was taken from her. She did everything she was supposed to do. But that evidence sat, untested, on a dusty crime lab shelf for 20 years while the perpetrator ran loose somewhere in Texas. When the kit was finally tested, police discovered that Kevin Turner had committed this crime. Justice could not occur for Lavinia because the statute of limitations had run.

Mr. Speaker, Lavinia is not alone. There are 400,000 untested rape kits with DNA evidence in the United States. That's why I have introduced, along with Congresswoman MALONEY of New York, the SAFER Act. And we can pass it today by unanimous consent. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation. New Yorker, Texan, Democrat, and Republicans, speaking different languages, it doesn't get much more bipartisan than that. This act would allow funds to be used to test untested sexual assault kits for DNA evidence so justice can be done for victims.

And that's just the way it is.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) for 1 minute.

Mr. HIMES. I remember two things of that horrible night that Sandy hit my community in Fairfield County, Connecticut. Of course, I remember the

devastation and the damage that we have so detailed this morning in this Chamber. But I remember something else: the response of the people who stood up and said, I will help. The firefighters of Old Greenwich, the Red Cross in Bridgeport, the churches that opened to serve soup and to keep people warm, schools that were opened to address the fact that people didn't have homes.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about Lieutenant Russ Neary of the Easton Fire Department, who left his wife and two daughters behind that night to go serve the people of Easton. I attended his funeral several days later because he was killed that night doing what is best about all of us, which is that we stand up and we say we will help in times of crisis.

Every charitable instinct, every dignified thing, everything that is noble about what those people did that night is denied by the decision of the Republican leadership to not bring up Sandy today and to leave desperate and vulnerable people hanging.

Mr. Speaker, reverse your decision now, and let's do the right thing by our people.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) for 1 minute.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. I rise today to express my feelings of anger, frustration, and disbelief that the Republican leadership has failed to fulfill this promise on emergency supplemental disaster aid for the victims of Superstorm Sandy. Even though we were able to put our political differences aside to prevent an economic disaster, I am stunned and saddened that this compromise came at the expense of much-needed relief. Like my colleagues from the Northeast, I feel betrayed. There were 305,000 housing units destroyed and 265,000 businesses affected. I'm a proud native of Brooklyn, New York, and it pains me to see the travesties that have affected my hometown.

I'm in disbelief at the callousness with which this matter has been dispensed with. It is truly an embarrassment and a sad day that the House of Representatives has become a body so entangled in political one-upmanship that it is unable to come to the aid of Americans whose lives have suddenly been destroyed and turned upside down. This funding would have not only rebuilt the community's infrastructure but begun the healing process so sorely needed.

Mr. Speaker, we need your leadership today. Please bring this matter to the floor for a vote.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Debate may not continue past 11:50 a.m.