

losing his leg. He was such an exemplary person in my life. So I appreciate Senator DURBIN mentioning him. But to me, he was like this great man Paul Simon. I don't know how many books he ended up writing. I am sure it is 15 or 20. He never went to college. He was a brilliant man. So I thank Senator DURBIN very much. I appreciate it a lot.

HELPING THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE SANDY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am stunned by what didn't happen in the House of Representatives last night. I appreciate that they, with the support of all but a handful of Democrats and just a handful of Republicans, passed something to keep us from going over the fiscal cliff, and that is admirable. NANCY PELOSI deserves such accolades for carrying more than her share of the weight over there in passing this bill. But one of the things they didn't do last night—I wish to read into the RECORD a letter, an e-mail, from a person by the name of Barrie Kolstein, K-O-L-S-T-E-I-N:

Owner of perhaps the oldest and one of the most recognized violinmaking shops in the United States, located in Baldwin, New York.

Shop was severely damaged by recent hurricane Sandy. Owned buildings and occupied them for over 32 years without any problems at all.

This storm compromised my building inside and outside, with facilities within the building backing up, pipe breakage and roof damage, plus the horrid conditions that literally assaulted all the buildings in my immediate area.

Storm decimated my building as well as the neighboring buildings that perhaps was one of the more stable and viable business areas of Baldwin.

My shop has been closed since the storm.

We are doing our best to afford the restoration of the building and repair the numerous fine old pedigree string instruments (violins, violas, cellos and basses) that were so horribly damaged.

We lost machinery, tools, supplies and most of our filed records.

This is a true nightmare, that at the age of 63, I never thought I would be faced with.

There are tens of thousands of people in New York, tens of thousands of people in New Jersey, and other parts of the Northeast who have had their lives turned upside down. I am dismayed and saddened that the House of Representatives walked away last night—didn't even touch this—after we spent so much time here on the floor doing something to help a beleaguered part of our country. I was happy to help with Katrina. I was happy to help with the violent storm that hit Joplin, MO. We all were. We moved in quickly.

It has been months now and these people are still suffering. Governor Cuomo and Governor Christie have done their best with the limited resources that are available when a disaster such as this occurs. This is known in the law as an act of God. No one knew it was coming. No one had

any idea this terrible storm would do the damage it did. It was the perfect storm because we had different elements working against each other to create this terrible situation.

So, I repeat, I am dismayed and saddened the House of Representatives adjourned last night without addressing the pressing needs of these people. There are still hundreds of thousands of people who don't have a place to live, whose homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, as I have indicated from Mr. Kolstein, by this terrible disaster. It is heartbreaking to leave these victims of Sandy stranded and waiting for help.

This storm damaged or destroyed more than 700,000 homes in New York and New Jersey and New England. We have the power to help our countrymen put their lives back together. We did it here in the Senate. We sent it to the House of Representatives, but they walked away, just as they did with postal reform and just as they did with agricultural reform, our farm bill, and just as they have walked away from so many different things this year. They left these people without help. They are gone; they have left; they are not in Washington. I am disappointed we have turned our backs—and I don't include myself in this operation, or anyone in this Senate; we worked on a bipartisan basis to get this done, but I am deeply disappointed the House of Representatives has turned their backs on people who are suffering.

Please understand, everybody, this does not include the leadership of Leader PELOSI or Leader HOYER. They have done their best to gather their troops to help at any time for anything that is needed.

To walk away from these people is not who we should be as Americans. Wintertime is now here. When disaster strikes, be it fire, flood, storm, or earthquake, we in the past haven't paused and we don't delay, but we have here. As Americans, we respond with haste at a national level when American lives are at stake and American communities are shattered. It is no wonder how people feel about Congress: They just left town.

They need to do better over there. We should have a postal reform bill. We should have a farm bill. The farm bill, by the way, saves \$24 billion—not million but billion. DEBBIE STABENOW, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, worked so hard to get this done. We had a bipartisan bill that passed the Senate overwhelmingly. Why did the House of Representatives drop it? Well, they dropped it because the same porkbarrel programs that help people who don't need help in that farm program were taken out of the bill. So now we are on a short-term extension. The benefits these people don't deserve they are still getting.

They need to do better over there. Compromise is hard; we know that. Sometimes compromise doesn't happen when we want it. Compromise some-

times doesn't satisfy either side. But as I have said here and other places, when I practiced law, we had the concept it was a good settlement when both sides walked out unhappy, having reached a settlement, and that is what we did here the night before last. Actually, it was yesterday, because it was well after midnight. It was a piece of legislation we weren't all elated about, but it moved the ball forward.

We have so many more hard decisions to make in the year ahead. So unlike others behind us in this Capitol, I am not going to stoop to name-calling; I just want people to work and do what they need to do. Let the House of Representatives work its will. Let Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives debate. They have an easier time of it because they can set rules on how to debate. They have the Rules Committee where they can set how long they debate and on what subjects, but let the body work its will, which hasn't happened.

It is a sad day when we turn our backs on millions of our fellow Americans during their time of greatest need, and that certainly is what has happened here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know the distinguished majority leader is about to propound a unanimous consent request. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the majority leader is not a person to praise himself, but I will.

I totally agree with the comments he made about how the session has virtually ended.

It is only in recent times that I find myself presiding as often as I have because of other circumstances, and I am glad I was here to open the Senate today to hear the distinguished senior Senator from Illinois speak about the distinguished senior Senator from Nevada. We first met when he was running for the Senate seat at a campaign event in another State. We worked together at that time and became friends, and from that day on we have actually spoken many times with our wives about that meeting in Florida.

I consider it a privilege that I was on the floor today to hear the words of the Senator from Illinois and I join in praising my friend from Nevada. He is a dear and wonderful friend. His wife and my wife are dear wonderful friends. We both married way above ourselves. But I feel privileged to serve every day with the Senator from Nevada.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate very much the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the President pro tempore of the Senate saying those

nice things about me. It is an honor to have gotten to know PAT LEAHY so well. He has broken all records. My record is minimal compared to his in Vermont: the first Democrat elected and he has been in the Senate since 1972, a wonderful Senator and a good friend. I appreciate his words very much.

I will mention, because I have here before, his lovely wife Marcelle is a nurse, and during my wife's travail with a terrible automobile accident and breast cancer—she is doing well and it appears she is beating both of those so far—Marcelle has done a lot of good things for my wife, with her nursing skills, calling and telling her what she is going through is what happens to a lot of people and she is going to be a lot better. I appreciate very much Senator LEAHY, but also his lovely wife Marcelle.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last December President Obama appointed a person by the name of David Medine to serve as the chairman of the bipartisan Privacy and Civil Liberties Board. After 9/11, Congress created this five-member board to make recommendations to protect the civil liberties of all Americans during a time of war.

Mr. Medine is well suited to lead this board. He currently works on financial privacy issues for the Securities and Exchange Commission. Previously, he was a partner in a huge law firm by the name of Wilmer Hale and he worked at the Federal Trade Commission on Internet privacy and financial privacy laws.

Earlier this summer, we worked out an agreement with Senate Republicans to confirm the part-time members of the board, two Republicans and two Democrats. Republicans agreed that Mr. Medine, the Democratic nominee for chairman and the only full-time board member, would be confirmed during the lameduck session. It is my understanding that Republicans have encountered an issue that prevented the Senate from including Mr. Medine in our nominations package. So I will ask unanimous consent on this nomination at this time. I know there will be a Republican objection. Early in the next Congress, I plan to schedule a majority vote on this nomination and I look forward to the cooperation and good faith from Senate Republicans.

I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 721 and 722; that the nominations be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order, and any statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I will object, I would point out that the majority has had this nomination pending since May 17 when it was reported out of the Judiciary Committee on a party-line vote. Not only for myself, but I think for a lot of people on my side of the aisle, this nomination is controversial and should not be moved via unanimous consent in the waning hours of this Congress. If this nomination were as important as the majority now seems to believe it is, this would have warranted debate and negotiations earlier in the session. Instead, the majority now seeks to raise this nomination in order to avoid having to resubmit the nomination for consideration.

I think I have shown a very different willingness to accommodate the majority even on controversial nominations. For example, we agreed to remove William Baer just last week despite the controversy surrounding his nomination, and he was subsequently confirmed. So I am not opposed to discussing controversial nominations, including this one, but they need to be done in a way that allows debate and discussion prior to a vote.

Given the controversial responses to written questions this nominee provided, there is need for debate and discussion on this nomination by the full Senate, not unanimous consent here at the last minute. Therefore, I object to the nomination being considered at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

HURRICANE SANDY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to join in the remarks of the majority leader. What a disappointment to learn that last night the House of Representatives failed to bring up the supplemental appropriations bill, which is to provide relief for the victims of Hurricane Sandy.

The Senate passed this bill not that long ago—just a few days ago. Mr. President, \$60.4 billion in a supplemental appropriations passed here by a vote of 62 to 32—a strong bipartisan vote. It did not include everything the Governors of New York and New Jersey and other States had asked for, but it did provide critical funding to help those who lost their homes and their businesses.

We expected the House to act on this bill. To say this is a no-brainer is to overstate the obvious. We rally as an American family when many of us are in need. I can remember this very well in my own State.

In 2008, Illinois and other Midwestern States had a similar situation. A massive storm was heading our way and flooding from the Mississippi River was inevitable. I visited several towns along the Mississippi back then, in-

cluding Quincy, IL. Then-Senator Obama and I came to Quincy and pitched in—filling sandbags with thousands of other volunteers.

We worked through Father's Day to help mitigate the oncoming flood, but it still came, and there was serious damage. Just like the people in New York and New Jersey, these people did everything they could before and after and during the storm to save their homes, businesses, and the lives of their loved ones. But the magnitude of our 2008 storm was too big for local and State governments to handle.

The magnitude of the flood, just like Hurricane Sandy, required action from Congress and the Federal Government. We passed a supplemental appropriations bill for Illinois and the Midwest in 2008. That aid was essential to helping the victims of that flood in our State.

I have served in Congress for over 20 years, and every time—every time—some section of our Nation has been victimized by a disaster, we have come together as an American family to help those in need. We draw on our national treasure and the efforts of American people across the country to come to the rescue of our neighbors in need.

The time to help New York and New Jersey and other States victimized by Hurricane Sandy is now, but the Republican leadership in the House has abandoned those victims with a decision to let this bill die. In New York and New Jersey more than 651,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, 463,000 businesses were hurt and need assistance. According to the Senators from those States, that either matches or exceeds the magnitude of the disaster of Hurricane Katrina that struck the States on our southern coast on the Gulf of Mexico.

Hundreds of miles of roads and rail were damaged and will need to be repaired. However, the rebuilding is on hold because of a political decision by the Speaker of the House and Republican leadership. I can tell you, I know full well—because Senator SCHUMER is in the leadership, and I have watched as he and Senator GILLIBRAND, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator LAUTENBERG, and others have worked to build a bipartisan coalition in the House to pass this critical measure—all it needed was to be called by the Speaker, and the Speaker refused.

But there is still time. There is time in the 112th Congress for the House to pass the Senate bill. I urgently beg the Speaker of the House of Representatives to put any political concerns aside, and for the sake of these victims and victims of other disasters across America to pass this critically important bill as quickly as possible.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.