

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

□ 1930

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

#### SUGAR BOWL CHAMPS!

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 2013 Sugar Bowl Champion, University of Louisville Cardinals. From Muhammad Ali's opening toss, this game was destined for greatness. The Cards followed the Champ's lead by shocking the world. They became the first team in a decade to score a touchdown in the first 15 seconds of both halves en route to the biggest upset in BCS history.

Against a team averaging one turnover and holding every opponent below 30 points, the Cards forced three turnovers and reached the 30-point mark a mere 8 seconds into the second half. Facing a defense that had never allowed a touchdown pass of 15 yards or more, Cards quarterback Teddy Bridgewater completed two.

This team proves what U of L Athletic Director Tom Jurich has said for years: "If you doubt Charlie Strong—on field or off—you're in for a surprise."

Coach Strong dedicated the game ball to the fans, who were 30,000 strong in New Orleans. It was a fitting tribute, and I think it's safe to say Card Nation is still on a Sugar Bowl high.

This was a great triumph for the University of Louisville and a victory for our whole community. So for the city, the University of Louisville, and this outstanding Cardinal football team, I'm proud to honor the 2013 Sugar Bowl Champion Louisville Cardinals. How sweet it is!

I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Coming from a University of Kentucky football and basketball fan, to my friend from Louisville and the Cardinals, congratulations. Fantastic for the State of Kentucky.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank my colleague very much. I appreciate that.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS CONGRATULATES THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to join in congratulating the University of Louisville on their success.

The University of Louisville has long been a rival of the University of Memphis. But this past year or so, the Louisville basketball coach, Rick Pitino, was good enough to champion the University of Memphis' getting into the Big East Conference. It was support we needed and support we appreciate. The conference isn't quite the same as it was when he did that, but it was a good thing to do.

We have a great rivalry, and I think we need to support our rivals and thank Coach Pitino for his helping the University of Memphis get into an additional conference, and we hope that the rivalry between the University of Louisville and the University of Memphis continues for many more years to come.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO UNITED STATES GROUP OF NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRIDENSTINE). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 1928a, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Member on the part of the House to the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

Mr. TURNER, Ohio, Chairman.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 3003, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe:

Mr. SMITH, New Jersey, Co-Chairman.

#### THE DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials on the topic in this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor and privilege to stand here today in what I hope to have as the first of many Special Orders that the Republican freshman class does together.

Today, we want to highlight the importance of the upcoming debt ceiling

debate and the need to get serious about addressing the out-of-control spending and borrowing that is jeopardizing the American Dream for our children and grandchildren.

I'm honored to represent Indiana's Sixth Congressional District, a 19-county area of east central and southeastern Indiana that was formerly represented by now-Governor Mike Pence. My constituents work hard, play by the rules and deserve what they've earned. They should be able to keep a little more of their paychecks for things like college tuition, family vacations or to retire just a little earlier. But Washington is standing in their way.

The fundamental question that this Congress needs to answer is whether Washington should take more than it already does from these hardworking, taxpaying Americans. The answer, of course, is no. Washington doesn't tax too little; it spends too much.

One would hope that since the last Congress raised taxes to avoid falling off the fiscal cliff, everyone's attention now would turn to our biggest fiscal problem, the out-of-control spending—now 24 percent of our gross domestic product—and the explosive growth of entitlements and interest on the debt that are adding to our more-than-\$16-trillion national debt and pushing us up against the debt ceiling. But, remarkably, President Obama is now calling for even more taxes, more spending and more borrowing in return for any future spending controls. He said yesterday that we can't finish the job of deficit reduction through spending cuts alone.

Simply put, the President got his tax increases in the last Congress, and it's time for this Congress to tackle Washington's spending binge.

I'd like to recognize the gentlelady from Indiana.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, my message today is simple: On too many big items, Congress has been kicking the can down the road for years. It's time to supply real leadership on the most pressing challenges we face. This is the only way we can restore trust in Congress.

We are fast approaching a dead end. The Social Security Trust Fund will be bankrupt in 20 years. Medicare and Medicaid are not on a sustainable path. It is wrong for us to make promises to the American people we know we cannot keep. We must address the drivers of our debt—Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security—not because these programs don't have merits, and certainly not because the seniors currently benefiting from them don't deserve what they've been promised, but because real leadership isn't about making the easy choice, it's about making the right choice.

Social Security and Medicare alone account for 36 percent of our Federal

spending, and both are going to keep growing because of our aging population. My friends on the other side of the aisle will talk about cutting waste, fraud, and abuse. And while I agree we must do that, we can't tell the American people that cutting and eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse alone is enough to tackle the \$16 trillion debt. That's not leadership.

History shows us that unless we make the hard decision to implement changes that equal real savings now, it will not happen. We cannot afford to make changes in 7, 8 or 9 years. We don't have the luxury of more time.

We're in a position to clearly see three obvious opportunities to make real, sustainable changes. First, we know we are approaching the debt ceiling. Second, sequestration will go into effect in 2 months, and third, funding for the government will expire March 27. These are opportunities to make real changes in spending.

I'm excited to be representing Indiana's Fifth District, and I'm ready to get to work. There is no reason we need to wait until the eleventh hour to start talking about the tough decisions we must make for the future of our country. It is time we commit to saving these important programs for those who need them and getting our economic house in order for the future generations of my children and my grandchildren and our country's children and grandchildren. Let's be the Congress in this 113th Congress that chose to tackle real problems rather than handing them down to our children. Let's embrace right-minded solutions that can set us on a path toward a better and much more sustainable future.

□ 1940

Mr. MESSER. My thanks to the distinguished gentlelady from Carmel.

I now recognize the distinguished gentlelady from South Bend. My condolences on the national championship game, but we welcome you here today.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I will remind my distinguished colleague from Indiana that Notre Dame was undefeated this year. It was a very successful season, and we'll just put that on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply humbled to represent the people of Indiana's Second Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. Today I speak for the first time before this Chamber and on their behalf.

To the hardworking Hoosier families in north central Indiana, thank you for sending me to Washington. I'm eager to work with my colleagues here to make raising a family and sending a child to college just a little bit easier.

To the small business owners in South Bend to Plymouth, please know that each day I will work tirelessly to strengthen the economy so you can employ those who want to work within our community.

To the senior citizens between La Porte and Peru, you can count on my support to restore the American Dream and ensure that America's best days are not behind her in the past, who absolutely want to put our future and our future generations on a solid concrete path.

Mr. Speaker, I want to let the people of Indiana know that in the coming weeks they'll hear many assertions in the debate over whether Congress should increase the debt ceiling. The people of Indiana deserve to hear the truth. The entire Nation deserves to hear the truth:

The truth is that, even as I speak, our national debt is spiraling out of control toward \$16.5 trillion;

The truth is that the United States has not run one, not two, not three, but four consecutive trillion dollar budget deficits;

The truth is that this Federal Government is borrowing an unthinkable 46 cents for every dollar it spends, while throwing our children under the weight of the bill;

The truth is that the share of the national debt for every family in Indiana is a staggering \$143,190. For every Hoosier, it's \$52,737;

The truth, Mr. Speaker, is that it's time for us to stop spending money we simply do not have.

Admiral Mike Mullen, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has warned us. He said, "the single biggest threat to our national security is our debt."

In order to get our debt under control, we first must completely take care of our spending. As families in Indiana's Second District and all across the Nation, we have to prioritize spending, we have to create budgets and live within our means; so should this Congress of the United States.

Each day that we delay getting our fiscal house in order, we threaten the safety and well-being of those we love and care about the most. We threaten the opportunity and promise of future generations by limiting the resources we have to invest in infrastructure and education. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the truth is that it's time for us to stop spending money we simply do not have.

As big as our national debt may be, Americans have always been able to come together and solve big problems. I thank the good people of Indiana for electing me to listen to their needs and bring good Hoosier common sense to Washington. I look forward to working together in this Congress on their behalf and to tackling our most serious issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, the clock is ticking. Let's get to work.

Mr. MESSER. I say with great pride to my honorable colleague that we do it better in Indiana.

I worked with then-State Representative WALORSKI and Governor Daniels as a member of Indiana's General Assembly to help pass Indiana's balanced

budget. We turned a \$600 million deficit into a \$300 million surplus in 1 year without a tax increase. There was no silver bullet. Our State's leader simply followed a principle most families already understand, that one shouldn't spend money they don't have.

It wasn't always easy, but 8 years later, we have fewer State government employees than any time since the early 1970s, yet our State is providing better services in leaner ways throughout government. As Governor Daniels has often famously said:

Most will be surprised by how much government they don't miss.

I now yield to the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina for your comments today.

Mr. PITTENGER. I thank my good friend from Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, in previous generations, serving as a Member of Congress was considered an honorable profession. Congressmen were held in high esteem and examples of true leadership. They were honored in books like "Profiles in Courage." Sadly, we seem to have lost our way. Last week, Public Policy Polling found that only 9 percent of Americans approve of the job that Congress is doing. In my opinion, the reason no one approves of the job we're doing is that we're not doing our job.

Our Nation is in peril. We are threatened, not by a foreign tyrant, but by our own reckless spending. Just today, the Fitch Ratings agency warned that our AAA credit rating is at risk. We are on the verge of squandering everything that we have received from previous generations. Sadly, we are more likely to leave the next generation with crushing debt than we are to pass along the America we love.

My fellow Representatives, may I make a suggestion? Starting with the 113th Congress, the buck stops here. For too many years, Congress and the President have received an A in addition, but they seem to have always flunked subtraction. We must commit to bringing spending in line with revenue, to setting priorities and learning to say "no." If we are to be the Congress which takes to say "no." If we are to be the Congress which takes substantive action on deficit reduction, we must start with entitlements. It's the topic everyone is afraid to address, but weren't we elected to show true leadership?

Today the Fitch Ratings agency warned that our Nation's AAA credit rating is at risk if an increase in the debt ceiling doesn't also include a credible plan for deficit reduction. The Government Accountability Office has reported that government spending is on an unsustainable long-term fiscal path, with entitlements the primary culprit. The Congressional Budget Office reports that, left unchecked, the Federal entitlement programs will soon swamp the entire budget. Will entitlement reform be messy? Yes. Is it necessary? Yes. In fact, it's the only way to bring a lasting solution to our Nation's fiscal problems.

Any plan to reform entitlements must protect the benefits promised to the current generation. But as we look to the future, we need serious reforms that will reduce spending while preserving these important safety nets for future generations.

In 2006, then-Senator Obama said:

The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure.

Yet, under President Obama, we've seen record-setting deficit spending and trillions added to our national debt. The leadership failure lies with the President and others in Congress who have been unable to say "no."

Our objective is not arbitrary. Tax revenues are expected to remain right at the historical average of around 18 percent of the GDP. We know how much money we'll make. Now we need to sit down at the kitchen table with a calculator and figure out how to live within our means.

Mr. MESSER. I thank the honorable gentleman. I thank you for your comments.

I would like to recognize next my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I thank my friend from Indiana.

It's good to be here, and it's good to get started on what we've been sent here to do. I think that's the great thing about us coming together tonight and sharing, from a freshman perspective, our first few days in which we've been thrown into a Congress that really, I don't believe, any have experienced before. There have been tough challenges, but I think this is going to be an interesting time for us all. I appreciate us getting together tonight as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, I come from the great Georgia Ninth. The northeast Georgia district is full of mountain values and common sense. When we look at the district, as I traveled around for almost 18 months, what I kept hearing from people all along is that they wanted their life to look ahead to something of a brighter future. I think right now, from an economic perspective, when we look at what's going on, that is what they are most concerned about. They're looking at what they have at the national level and they're looking at our debt, they're looking at our economic and our budget issues and they're saying, How is this effective? How is this going to be better for my kids and my grandkids?

I thought to myself as I was traveling around and I began—when I ran, I told my constituents, I run for three reasons, and they were Jordan, Copelan, and Cameron. They're my three children. I told them that they represent not only my three kids and their future, but they represented the kids and the grandkids of the district and the nieces and nephews of those that everybody in my district lived with and cared for, because it is their future that we're dealing with here. It's their future.

□ 1950

When we talk about the economics and when we talk about the problem we're in, this is the area in which we have got to work as a Congress. We cannot shirk the duty. We cannot pass it along. They expect us to act, and they expect us to act in a way in which, as we look forward, actually makes a difference in their lives.

President Obama recently told our Speaker that he doesn't believe we have a debt problem. We're \$16 trillion in the hole, and our out-of-touch Commander in Chief doesn't think we have a serious problem on our hands. As my friend from North Carolina just stated—I want to go with the entire quote, and this is what was said:

The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. "Leadership" means the buck stops here. Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better. I, therefore, intend to oppose the effort to increase America's debt limit.

As we look at this issue, it really amazes me because I want to focus not on this debt issue but on basically what it says here. It says:

America has a debt problem, and it's a failure of leadership.

If it were a failure of leadership back in 2006, it must be a catastrophic nightmare at this point because all we've done is increase it. We've got to do better. We're borrowing almost half of every dollar we spend. If we don't provide serious measures to take care of it, we will leave our country in an absolute debacle for our kids and grandchildren, and that's simply not a price I'm willing to pay.

Our President just recently talked about not only a debt problem but that he doesn't believe we have a spending problem. I thought to myself that we don't have a spending problem; yet one of our colleagues, Representative LANKFORD, stated just the other day that in 2012 we'll have the third highest revenue year ever in the Federal Government, and yet we're still discussing the fact that we don't have a spending problem.

I'm sorry, Mr. President, this is not leadership. This is failure. We cannot continue to give the President and those on the other side of the aisle a blank check. Any discussion of raising the debt ceiling must also include an examination of serious reforms that need to be made to entitlement and discretionary spending.

On January 2, 2013, President Obama stated that we cannot continue to cut our way to prosperity.

Mr. President, on the contrary, we cannot tax and spend our way to prosperity either.

I think tonight we're starting what, I hope, will become a regular occurrence for this freshman class, my friend from Indiana. As we look at it, it's what I believe we have to do, and I believe it's

about telling our story and about telling why conservative principles matter and how conservative principles, when we explain how we can get debt off their backs and spending under control, mean freedom for their kids to have a better future so that they can go to college and so that they can start that new business and employ other people. I believe America's greatest gift was found in the free enterprise system, and that's what we can encourage by getting our own fiscal house in order here tonight.

This is the time for us to come together, and I'm so pleased to stand with you and with the other freshmen here tonight. We're here to work, and we're here to make some hard choices and to realize this is all in America's best interests. I appreciate your letting me be a part of this tonight.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to next recognize the distinguished gentleman from Utah (Mr. STEWART).

Mr. STEWART. It is an honor to be here tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen, I rise in defense of the American people. I believe that we are at a tipping point in our history. I really believe that we are at one of those inflection points at which we will decide our future, at which we will decide who we are as a people, at which we will decide the America that we leave to our children in a way that hasn't been decided before. This is a generational moment. This time is that important. At its heart, I think the debate comes down to this:

Will we reclaim the moral and fiscal discipline that created the American Dream? Will we reclaim the moral and the fiscal discipline that created the world's first and the world's greatest middle class? Will we reclaim the moral and fiscal discipline that made us, as Abraham Lincoln described us, the last best hope on Earth?

That is the essence of our challenge. That is the great and defining argument of our day.

In this debate, I'd like to remind all of us of a few critical facts. One of them is that this Nation, a Nation that is bankrupt, cannot provide for the security of its people. A Nation that is bankrupt cannot provide for the needy or for the poor among us. A Nation that is bankrupt cannot provide for the future of their children.

Yes, during these challenging times, it will require a commitment to fairness, and it will require a commitment to compassion. It always has. There has always been compassion in this Nation. That defines much of who we are—allowing the safety net to continue for those who truly need it. But where is the compassion in allowing a program, like my parents depended on in the final years of their lives, to continue down a pathway towards bankruptcy? Where is the compassion in

creating so much uncertainty that our own children no longer have faith in their futures or in the social and safety net that has been there for previous generations? If you believe in compassion and fairness, then help us fix these problems. Help us to save them. Help us to provide so that we can pass them on to future generations.

Since the last election, this administration has talked about one thing and one thing only, and that is taxes. We have had that fight, and he has won. He got his tax increase, and that will raise between \$60 billion and \$70 billion, but the last deficit was \$1.1 trillion.

Mr. President, what about the other trillion dollars now? What do we do now? We have a 6 percent solution. It's a great start if you like raising taxes, but it doesn't address the problems at all.

My father was an Air Force pilot. He was a pilot during World War II, and I had the great honor of serving for 14 years as an Air Force pilot as well. If there was one thing I learned from my father and those brave men and women with whom I served, it was courage, always to have courage. That is what we need now. That is the only thing that can save us.

Mr. President and Members of this body, let us have the courage to do the right thing even if that thing proves to be hard. Our debt is unsustainable. We talk about saving our Nation for our children. We don't have that long. Let us take the steps to restore financial sanity in this Congress in this day.

Mr. MESSER. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Utah. I appreciate his remarks.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MESSER. I next would like to recognize the distinguished gentleman and my good friend from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS).

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your leadership and what you're doing.

My name is ROGER WILLIAMS. I have been a small business owner for 41 years. I represent Congressional District 25 in Texas, a great district. I have been meeting payrolls and creating jobs for 41 years and have been fighting government regulations for that period of time. I must tell you that, at a time when our national debt is over \$16 trillion—more than \$52,000 for each American—we must restore fiscal sanity in Washington. We do this by cutting spending, shrinking the deficit, and balancing the budget. As a businessman, when you're not selling your product, you don't raise taxes and you don't raise prices. You cut spending. That's where the money is. That's where the cash flow is, and that's what we've got to get to.

Our Nation's economic future is at stake. The Federal Government currently borrows more than 40 cents of every dollar it spends. I think we all

agree it's time to get our fiscal house in order. Across this great Nation, the families have stretched their hard-earned dollars in order to make it through this struggling economy. The Federal Government must do the same and must do it now. We are facing a crisis because Washington just simply spends too much and wastes too much.

As I said, families all across this country are not looking to spend more money. They're looking to cut expenses and to meet the problems we all face today. The American people, I believe, do not support raising the debt. I ran on lower taxes, less government, to cut the spending. That's what my district wants. We don't need to raise the debt ceiling without cutting spending at the same time. That's what it's about. We need to create a net worth in America. I'm looking forward to the debate. We need to bring business principles back to Washington, D.C. May God bless America.

□ 2000

Mr. MESSER. I thank the distinguished gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I would next like to recognize my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, thank you for granting me the floor today. It is truly an honor and privilege to be a Member of the House of Representatives, the people's House. We have all been sent here to serve the people, and I look forward to representing the freedom-loving, hard-working people of Michigan.

More than two centuries ago, Members of the first Congress were summoned to uphold and defend the Constitution. Because of the Constitution, America became a shining symbol of freedom and prosperity to the world. Today, we must ensure that America retains that luster.

Everyone arrives here from different walks of life. Some are lawyers, some are business leaders, and yes, well, at least one of us is a reindeer rancher.

I recognize we all have different viewpoints, and I understand that I have joined Congress during a contentious time. I do think, however, there is one thing on which we should all agree: The job of a Member of Congress is to protect the rights of the people, not take them away.

The national debt is approaching \$17 trillion. The decisions we make in this Chamber not only affect us today, they resonate throughout future generations. The massive national debt we are accruing will leave to our children a weaker Nation than the one we inherited from our parents. Those yet to be born do not have a voice today, they don't have representation, but we must remember what we do here resonates for generations to come.

Our moment to preserve our great Nation has arrived. Our country is at a crossroads. We must stand together and get over our disagreements. We must strive valiantly and dare greatly,

applying the principles that made our country so exceptional to solve the problems that the people of this great Nation sent us here to fix.

Mr. MESSER. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your time and help tonight as another distinguished Member of the freshman class. I hope we will have opportunities on other nights for you to be able to participate in these Special Orders.

As several have alluded to, our idea is just to be a part of the public debate. Everyone in this room tonight, everybody watching, has grown up in an America where you've known one very simple fact: that no matter what your current station in life, no matter where you came from, if you worked hard and stayed focused in this great country, you would have an opportunity to build a life for yourself; you would have an opportunity to live the American Dream.

And for the first time in my life, as I traveled through the Sixth District of Indiana and talked to people all across this country, people are doubting whether that will be true for the next generation, whether the next generation of young people and Americans will have the same kinds of opportunities that we all had growing up.

I think it is not an exaggeration to say that the upcoming debate in the next 2 months is really about the question of what are we willing to do to save our country, and this underlying question: Does Washington have enough? How much more must they take from the hardworking, taxpaying Americans who are trying to put their life together every day? I and my colleagues who spoke earlier today believe Washington has enough. We don't need to give her more.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### REBUILDING AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good, it is very, very good that the new 113th Congress acted today to reach out in sympathy, compassion, and with real support to the people who were so severely impacted by Superstorm Sandy.

One of our colleagues, just a moment ago, spoke about this Nation being at a crossroad. And indeed, we cross paths many, many times and there are many different crossroads. The people of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and other parts of this great Nation here on the east coast came to a crossroads. That crossroads was 97 days ago when Superstorm Sandy came ashore and whacked and destroyed, pummeled and, indeed, killed Americans.