

total Federal debt from \$10.6 trillion to over \$17 trillion. One has to wonder what then-Senator Obama would have to say about President Obama.

He has continually called for raising the debt ceiling during his Presidency without implementing any of the necessary reforms needed to get our Federal spending under control.

My focus has always been on working with anyone who is willing to find a real, long-term solution to Washington's spending addiction. This resolution shows the House is ready to start talking across party lines about how to fix our debt problems now, not at the next deadline.

Late last year, CNN reported that "the United States spends about 71 cents of every Federal tax dollar it collects on what is called the Big 4—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and interest on the debt."

If nothing is done, in just 13 years the Big 4 could eat up every penny of tax revenue collected by the Federal Government, leaving nothing to pay for the discretionary spending that we like. That includes spending on defense, veterans benefits, education, roads, national parks, museums, medical research, food safety and air traffic control, to name a few.

CNN further said that "by 2040, more than half of all Federal tax revenue would be eaten up by interest payments on the debt alone."

In 2006, then-Senator Obama said those "interest payments are a significant tax on all Americans, a debt tax that Washington doesn't want to talk about."

But let's be clear: House Republicans in Congress, and the voters who put us here, are the only reason—the only reason—anyone in August of 2011 talked about the debt problem and reached a debt deal. Otherwise, the President would have simply had the debt ceiling raised, and there would have been nothing done structurally.

And we are the only reason why we talk about it now. Otherwise, it would be a clean debt ceiling increase with no strings attached.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important resolution and getting our excessive spending under control.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time, and I will speak very briefly because the message here is so clear, that those who vote for this bill are saying they are willing to use the threat of default once again, and we shouldn't be doing this.

I don't think the Nation believed that this government and its programs would be shut down; but it turned out, because of the way the Republicans handled it, this government was shut down, and programs were very much undercut that were needed by the people of this country.

We came within a flicker of default. The consequences of playing with that were very, very substantial.

So now, once again, the Republicans bring up a bill, and whatever the reason is, are giving people a chance, once again, to say that playing with default is a legitimate method of operation. You shouldn't do this.

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

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would just like to reiterate five key points:

One, our current national debt exceeds \$17 trillion, an amount that is greater than our annual GDP, the size of our economy.

Two, while I and so many others in my party agree with many of my colleagues across the aisle that risking default is irresponsible, it is just as irresponsible to ignore why our debt is so darn high and what it means for the future of our country.

Three, we can and must work across partisan lines to avoid default in conjunction with a debt ceiling vote or a default related to a continued failure to address the largest drivers of our debt; and we must begin that work now, not at the last minute, or the next self-imposed fiscal deadline.

Four, those who have served here for decades have known for decades that our population was growing older, that health care costs were rising, and that our long-term fiscal trajectory was unsustainable; but nothing has happened.

Five, this recognition that Washington continually misses opportunities to put our country on a path to fiscal health ought to be something on which we can all agree.

I urge all my colleagues who want to see our country address our long-term challenges before it is too late to vote "yes" on this resolution of disapproval.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the statute, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

HONORING THE LIFE OF OAIL ANDREW "BUM" PHILLIPS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, in about 2 hours today, in Houston, at the Lakewood Church, we in Houston will honor the famed, the humble, and the especially loved Oail Andrew "Bum" Phillips, our favorite coach, Coach Bum Phillips of the Houston Oilers, our friend, my friend.

We lost Coach Phillips October 18, 2013, at his home, his ranch in Texas. I offer to his wife, his son and daughters and grandchildren and great-grandchildren my deepest sympathy.

But I know, as he is honored this evening, there will be a celebration of his life; for Bum Phillips was the kind of character-building leader that led young men into the most winningest franchise of the then-Houston Oilers. He did it because he had a championship spirit, and he had the ability to add quips to anything that you would ask him.

When asked one time about Earl Campbell, he said, "What kind of class is Earl Campbell in? He may not be in a class all by himself, but it doesn't take long to call the roll."

When asked about the Dallas Cowboys as America's team, Bum said, "The Dallas Cowboys may be America's team, but the Houston Oilers are Texas' team."

Tonight I know there will be many who will celebrate his life and the service he gave.

I want to thank Mike Barber for organizing this great effort. I will miss being there, but Bum, I want to thank you. Coach Bum Phillips, I want to thank you for the joy you brought to Houston, the excitement of the team, the spirit of winning and losing, the fairness and the balance that you added to those young men that were under your tutelage.

You went on to coach the New Orleans Saints, but you will always be special in our hearts, and I hope this body will offer a moment of silence for our dear friend, the Nation's friend, Texas' friend, Coach Bum Phillips.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing this tribute on the floor to this great American, Coach Bum Phillips.

COMMEMORATING THE 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SUPERSTORM SANDY

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, on this evening of October 29, we commemorate the 1-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, which devastated the east coast. Many are still recovering from that tragic storm, and it certainly was a major force to be reckoned with.

That force of nature was, at one point, nearly 1,000 miles wide over the ocean front, and when it landed in southern Jersey, it was nearly 900

miles wide. It impacted so many States; 24 States, in number, felt the impact of that superstorm.

It was devastation to property; it was devastation to lives: 162 people in the United States lost their lives. And the fact that the storm surged to some record proportions reminds us of the impact of climate change.

□ 1830

Now as a member of the New York delegation in this House, my area received some mild impact from that superstorm. But ironically, the year before, Hurricanes Irene and Lee impacted the upstate region of New York and, again, devastated our area with loss of life, certainly of valuable farm land that was eroded, and damage to communities, businesses, and farms across the upstate region.

These are issues that are brought to mind this evening as we commemorate that 1-year anniversary, as many continue to struggle to recover from the ravages of Mother Nature.

The cost of climate inaction is severe. Climate change is an issue of science. It is certainly an issue of public health. And most definitely, it is an issue of economics, economic vitality.

Earlier, the Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition, which is a growing number—56, to be exact—of Democrats in the House looking to bring about significant policy reforms that speak to the environmental and energy needs of this Nation, began to provide a laser-sharp focus on the cost of climate change to our economy.

In 2011 and 2012, there were some 25 extreme weather events that caused at least \$1 billion each or more in damages. Total estimated economic damages were approaching \$200 billion, and the cost to taxpayers, some \$136 billion. The cost to individual taxpayers totaled \$1.61 billion. So we know that there is a tremendous impact here that has been realized by the lack of a focus on climate change and global warming.

As we continue to look at recovery—even from Irene and Lee in the upstate New York portion—as we look at the impact, the damage that came with Superstorm Sandy, as we look at the damage recently to Colorado, and if we look at the other extreme—not rainfall and flooding, but certainly drought and looking at the wildfires that have consumed some States in our country, there is definitely economic consequence that comes with climate change.

In my territory, in my area that is part of the 20th Congressional District, it becomes very apparent that we need to do more than just replace. If data compiled are telling us that extreme rainfall has been part of the last decade or two, then wise, effective government will not merely replace but reevaluate how to reconfigure, for instance, a bridge that may cross, traverse one of the creeks. I know that that is the case in many locations.

Looking at electric utilities, looking at what withstood the pressures of the

storm; combined heat and power systems that we will talk about during this hour that apparently withstood greater pressure than some of the traditional systems, so we go forward with not just merely replacement, but we go forward with a renewal, a revision of how to take that area that was affected and make it work again. That is sound government. That is effective government.

Tonight we are joined by several colleagues. We are joined by Representative RUSH HOLT from the State of New Jersey, and we are joined by Representative SCOTT PETERS from the State of California. We may be visited by other colleagues this evening. We are going to talk about impacts they have seen perhaps in their region and talk about the science and economics related to climate change.

I believe we, through SEEC, through the Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition, have brought about the discussion, have developed the dialogue, have encouraged moving forward, if you will, on this very important dynamic, understanding it full well so that we can move into prevention because the question asked here by a growing number of colleagues is, how long can we afford to go without a plan of action before we understand that the cost of replacement or renewal or transformation is going to drain the taxpayers, is going to drain the individuals and families impacted, the businesses impacted? No one wins in that scenario.

So, Representative RUSH HOLT, if you would like to share some thoughts this evening as we begin our hour, we welcome you.

Mr. HOLT. I thank my friend from New York (Mr. TONKO) for arranging this discussion.

It is well worth recognizing the anniversary of this devastating storm because it might be said this was a storm like we have never seen before. That may be true, but I don't think it is correct to say this is a storm such as we will never see again.

A year ago, Hurricane Sandy devastated New Jersey and much of the east coast. The storm may have faded from the headlines, but New Jerseyans haven't forgotten. It is felt in a very personal and painful way by thousands and thousands of New Jerseyans still today.

These New Jerseyans are not alone. I mean that in two senses. First, we can hear from some who are representative of the millions. But also, when we hear from the younger New Jerseyans who are affected, we understand that they represent the future that will be affected by climate change. Quite simply, superstorms like Sandy are the new normal, and we had better get used to it, even if climate change skeptics claim otherwise.

I think response to Sandy means, of course, tending to the human needs of those who have been victims of the storm, but it also means making sig-

nificant investments in power engineering and transportation engineering and rail engineering and wireless engineering and shoreline engineering and river flood control engineering and residential planning, and taking steps to deal with the root cause of what we see.

We may not be able to stop hurricanes in their tracks. In fact, we certainly can't. But we can make sure that our infrastructure and our environment and our communities are more resilient when they strike, and if we work hard as a Nation and as humanity, we may be able to stem the climate change that will result in more and more powerful superstorms.

I know some in Washington are skeptical of the role of the Federal Government in fighting climate change, but as Sandy's \$83 billion pricetag should make clear, society, our economy, yes, and our government will bear the costs of climate change one way or another. If we make the investments today, as the debts are coming due, we would do far better than to wait to pick up the pieces after other superstorms hit.

I will be happy, as we go along, to talk about some specific New Jerseyans who were affected. I will be happy to talk about some of the science that suggests where we are as a world. Mostly, I just want to make the point that this is the new normal that we should be prepared for.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you very much, Representative HOLT. Certainly your State, my home State suffered economic consequences to the nth degree. It is a stark reminder that the cost of inaction here is painfully borne by taxpayers into the future also.

So I am proud of the SEEC organization, the coalition raising the consciousness of the House as to the importance of this issue.

We are joined by Representative SCOTT PETERS from California. Representative PETERS has worked in the environmental arena and has contributed greatly in that regard. We are proud to have you join us this evening, Representative.

Mr. PETERS of California. Thank you very much, Mr. TONKO. I appreciate the chance to speak with you on this special occasion.

I am the climate task force chair of the House Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition, SEEC, and I rise to recognize the 1-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and to recognize those who have lost their lives as well as those continuing to rebuild from the destruction.

I might mention, for the benefit of Mr. HOLT, that I am a graduate of Westfield High. I spent my high school years in New Jersey. I still have sisters in Chatham and New Providence and nieces and nephews. I visited regularly Long Beach Island, Ship Bottom, and Beach Haven for family vacations. So I know well a lot of those areas and how

hard they have been hit both from a personal and an economic standpoint.

I want to speak a little bit too about San Diego, though, as it has been my home for 25 years. My constituents in San Diego have experienced and know the long rebuilding and recovery process after disaster strikes, and we have a little bit of a different effect from climate change and global warming.

October marks the 10-year anniversary—and I think the anniversary was a few days ago—of the beginning of the Cedar Fire, the largest wildfire in California history. As a San Diego City Council member at the time, I remember firsthand the destructive impact of this fire on people's lives. It destroyed hundreds of homes, personal belongings and memories, and the recovery costs were in the billions of dollars.

The Cedar Fire burned through 273,246 acres of San Diego County, destroyed 2,232 homes, and took 15 lives. It burned through 95 acres of the Cuyamaca State Park and blazed through 98 percent of its mature conifer trees. To date, little of the forest has grown back from the bare mineral soil left behind by the wildfire.

The community faced similar damage in 2007 during the Witch Creek Fire, and parts of the city of San Diego were also scarred at that time.

Wildfires aren't new to California, but the damages from these fires are rising. This will sound familiar when we think about the warmest years on record all being recent. In California, 12 of the 20 most damaging wildfires occurred in the last 10 years. This has huge implications for California's tourism and farming industries. For example, take the Rim Fire this summer that pushed into parts of the Yosemite National Park and devastated local tourism.

After the Cedar Fire, San Diego, the county and the city, are undoubtedly more prepared and ready to respond to a large wildfire. We have better communication equipment, better communication among agencies, and better fire equipment in general. More importantly, we have worked to minimize further damage through better planning. As Thom Porter, the chief of the San Diego Fire Authority said, "It's not about stopping a fire from occurring but preventing the amount of damage it causes."

Today San Diego has new planning guidelines and building codes and 100-foot brush clearance requirements around homes. Before 2003, it was just 30 feet. We found that we could decrease risk and save homes and lives.

Resiliency starts at the local level because they know the conditions and the situations on the ground. They are the people who can talk to the neighbors about what they have to do to be ready. We have to make our communities more resilient to wildfires, hurricanes, and other extreme weather.

In the last 5 years, wildfires have cost taxpayers more than \$1.6 billion a year. Last year, 9.2 million acres were

burned by wildfires, which is an area bigger than the States of Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined.

In June, I introduced the bipartisan STRONG Act so the Federal Government could give tools for planning and resiliency to State and local actors. I think one of the first things we noticed as freshmen here, one of the first votes we were asked to take, was \$60 billion for Sandy relief, which was the appropriate vote to take. We have spent \$136 billion on relief in the last 2 years off the budget.

Every dollar we spend now on disaster preparedness and resiliency, we can avoid at least \$4 in future losses and FEMA expenses. We can bounce back faster with less economic damage. Each day that a community is disrupted by extreme weather, we lose economic output. So we need to be doing more to support our local communities with emergency management communication, public health, and energy reliability in the event of an extreme weather event, whether it is a wildfire or something like Superstorm Sandy.

Swiss Re, a major reinsurer, recently ranked the top 10 metro areas in North and Central America that face the highest value of working days lost from natural perils. Nine of them were in the United States.

On this occasion, I commit with my colleagues to better protect my district from the devastation caused by extreme weather by working to rebuild stronger and smarter with a mind for the future.

Again, thank you very much for inviting me. I would be happy to discuss some of these items.

□ 1845

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative PETERS.

We are also joined by Representative DENNY HECK from Washington State, who is a freshman but has brought a very strong voice of advocacy for the environment to this Chamber. We are proud to have him join us this evening and raise again the dialogue that is so essential about climate change, global warming, and the economic impact that every region across this country is experiencing.

So, welcome, Representative HECK, and thank you for being such an outstanding advocate.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Thank you, sir. Thank you for the privilege to be able to add my voice to this also.

As a member of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, I stand here today as well to recognize the 1-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and remember all those whose lives were lost and all those left behind who are in the process of continuing to rebuild their lives from that destruction—not just in the months ahead but, undoubtedly, in the years ahead. Our Nation must—it can, it will, and it should—stand with those

families and businesses as they undertake that task all along the Atlantic coast as they seek to recover.

I actually come from about as far away from that in the continental United States as possible. I am from Washington State, and so the district that I have the honor to represent was not directly affected by Superstorm Sandy. However, my district has begun to feel the very real effects of climate change.

Science has shown that climate change is driving an ongoing decrease in seawater pH. Scientists refer to that as "ocean acidification."

You might ask, How does that happen? Truthfully, with all due respect to my colleague from New Jersey, you don't have to be a "Jeopardy!" champion to get this. In fact, you only need be exposed to a junior high- or senior high-level biology or chemistry course.

It only stands to reason that as more and more carbon is emitted into the atmosphere, not all of it goes into the atmosphere, but, in fact, a goodly portion of it is absorbed by what covers approximately three-fourths of our little globe's surface, namely the ocean. And that carbon being absorbed into the ocean does, in fact, affect the pH level.

So ocean acidification, in turn, affects marine life in a lot of different ways; but the effect that I am the most familiar with is the damage that it causes to shellfish, including the shellfish grown at farms in my districts, specifically in Mason County. Indeed, I am proud to tell that you the largest shellfish farm in America, Taylor Shellfish Farms, is located, along with many others, in the 10th Congressional District of Washington State.

The acidity in the water—the direct result of carbon emitted into atmosphere absorbed by the ocean—makes it difficult for the shellfish to grow and harden their shells. Frankly, it decreases survival rates. It makes it harder to raise shellfish.

More than 3,200 people in our State—a lot of them in my district—are employed directly or indirectly in the shellfish industry and by growers. The estimated total economic contribution is well over a quarter-billion dollars. But that entire industry is threatened by ocean acidification resulting from climate change. It is totally threatened by this.

I have said here on this floor and elsewhere many times that a healthy economy is completely dependent and requires a healthy environment. The effect of climate change on Washington State's shellfish industry is but one of the clearest examples of that fact.

Washington State has a climate change adaptation strategy that we are working on with our regional neighbors—and, I might add, with some degree of progress. But without the involvement at the Federal level and with the Federal Government, our plan isn't going to be successful. The reason: this is a global problem that will require global action; and global action

is only going to occur if the United States leads, which it has so often in the past.

And so, sir, on this occasion, the 1-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, I also commit to better protecting the district I represent, our Nation, and the planet from the devastating effects of climate change. We have been waiting long enough. The science is in, and it is time to act.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative HECK.

We have also been joined by yet another freshman of the House, from the State of Pennsylvania, another strong friend of the environment and a person who has spent much of his career defending the environment. Representative MATT CARTWRIGHT joins us this evening.

Welcome. Thank you for participating with the SEEC coalition.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. It is my pleasure, my dear friend and colleague from New York.

It is almost hard to believe, I would say, that we are noting the 1-year anniversary of the terrible storm we called Hurricane Sandy striking our Nation's shores. It seems like no more than 6 or 7 months ago that that all happened.

Maybe one of the reasons is that it was so horrific, so damaging, so devastating, that the harm continues. There are still families searching for a place to live. There are Americans still digging out from this problem, trying to salvage the situation for themselves and their families. And so it is almost hard to believe that it was a full year ago that this happened.

This is a country that suffered so much in loss because of Hurricane Sandy, with \$245 billion in business losses and \$50 billion in property damage.

I come from Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania, so far as it is from the seacoast, still had 1.2 million residents lose electricity during that event. In my own district, up in the hills of the 17th District of Pennsylvania, we still lost power for 53,000 residents.

Indeed, I am so sorry to say that we had several lives lost in my district due to Hurricane Sandy; people who perished because of falling tree limbs and because of hypothermia due to exposure. We had somebody we lost because of exposure to carbon monoxide because of generator fumes that were emitted during the blackout.

We had tens of thousands of homes and businesses damaged in my district because of Hurricane Sandy. So don't think we didn't notice it either and don't think we didn't pay attention to the suffering of all of the other Americans because of Hurricane Sandy.

There is no denying that there is climate change. There is just no denying it. We can argue all day about what is causing it and what to do about it, but there is no denying that it is happening and that it is resulting in more and more frequent weather events like this and more and more severe weather

events like this. There is no denying that these things are happening, and there is no denying the damage and harm that comes to our Nation as a result.

In 2011 and 2012, there were 25 severe weather events that caused a billion dollars or more in damage each; 25 of them were in a 2-year span. The total price tag for that was \$188 billion in property damage to our Nation. And the taxpayers had to pick up \$136 billion of those losses because that is what we do in emergency relief and in flood insurance and in crop insurance. These weather events cost taxpayers money.

We have something in the legislature called the GAO. The GAO used to stand for the General Accounting Office. In 2004, we changed the name to the General Accountability Office, better to reflect the mission of that office—accountability and the proper husbanding of the assets and resources of the Federal Government. And they keep track of these things.

Every year, they come up with something that they call the GAO High Risk Report. The GAO High Risk Report is a compilation of all the risks and assets and finances we have in this Nation as part of our government. It is a list of the things that threaten the assets of the Federal Government. For the first time, earlier this year, the GAO High Risk Report included climate change as a reason for risk to the American Government's assets.

This is not just about security. It is not just about infrastructure. It is not just about damage to agriculture. It is not just about risk to the health and well-being of all Americans. It is also about financial losses to the American Federal Government, because, after all, we are an insurance company.

We are a government that insures against flood. We are a government that insures against crop damage. We do that. That is something that we have thought about and something that makes sense for our Nation. But we end up in the position of an insurance company, and we end up paying the price tag when these storms happen. The GAO recognizes that and recognizes that climate change is a major driver in the risks to the American finances as a result of these programs that we do.

As a result of all of that, in a few months, I will be introducing a comprehensive climate adaptation bill. Because, again, we can argue until the cows come home about what causes climate change and what the effects of it are, but one thing that can't be denied and that the GAO doesn't even deny is that this costs American taxpayers money, and the best way to handle that is to plan for it. And so, with the support of the White House, I will be introducing a comprehensive climate adaptation bill later this year. It should be out in a few months.

And so, on this, the 1-year anniversary of the horrible tragedy that was

Hurricane Sandy, we remember the devastation and we remember the losses. We remember the loss of life. We remember the communities that are continuing to struggle with the damage that was caused by that storm. And I say it is time for us also to plan for the future to minimize these losses that will continue to happen as the planet climate continues to change.

Mr. TONKO. The Representative talks about the growing acknowledgment by agencies and various elements of government, and I can tell you also a personal experience of watching the constituents in our area understand more starkly and painfully the impact of global warming in the aftermath of Irene and Lee.

Representative PETERS has long promoted the awareness concept—wanting people to understand the awareness of global warming and climate change.

Your thoughts on that.

Mr. PETERS of California. Just to follow on.

I think what Mr. CARTWRIGHT said is exactly right. We don't know that our house is going to burn down, yet we buy fire insurance because we know that there is a risk of it.

I often hear in this building, unfortunately, a lot of professed doubts about climate change; but even though I disagree with it, I think the science is pretty clear. If you doubt it, that doesn't mean it is not going to happen and you don't prepare for it and you don't plan for it and you don't make the investments to be more resilient, which is what the STRONG Act is about.

So I completely agree. In the face of doubt, that doubt should not equal inaction. The fact that we have the strong evidence that this is happening, that we have had these off-budget expenses, is every reason in the world we need here to plan.

I would say to folks listening at home that they need to get in touch with people in this body to let them know that.

One thing I would just add briefly about what we did in San Diego. I was chair of a volunteer climate initiative which was part of the San Diego Foundation's effort to do civic engagement. What we tried to do was, through philanthropy, provide good support for decisionmaking locally around climate, because a lot of leadership, as you know, Mr. TONKO, is happening at the local level.

We provided research on science. We did a study of what the major climate effects in San Diego would be, which are more intense wildfires, water supply threats, and sea level rise—no surprise to anyone here. And we were able to give that information to our elected officials so that they knew what we had to plan with locally.

We also did a public opinion survey just to let them know what people thought. It turned out that people in San Diego wanted to be leaders on climate action. First of all, they wanted

to be leaders in the State. They also didn't want the jobs associated with the industrial opportunities to be going to China or Texas. So we were able to arm our elected officials with that information and made them a lot bolder about taking the actions that we needed to take.

I bet the people in this body would benefit from the same kind of information and wouldn't be surprised that America is behind us in taking action, particularly on getting ready and being resilient and being prepared to save money down the road.

□ 1900

No one likes spending \$134 billion off-budget. I certainly didn't, and I know my colleagues don't. There is no need to do that. We can be prepared.

Again, thank you very much for scheduling this at this hour.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you very much, Representative PETERS.

The gentleman makes mention of awareness and of the many visuals out there that strike awareness even a coast away.

Representative HOLT, I just noticed recently in the news the reopening of the boardwalk—of the very famous, traditional boardwalk in your home State—as you continue to recover from the damages of Superstorm Sandy. The awareness is an amazing piece of the action here, and something as visible and understandable as that boardwalk brings it home for many people far removed from New Jersey.

Mr. HOLT. Some of the repair has taken place, but the recovery takes a very long time.

Today, three New Jerseyans came to visit me.

One, Eric, from Jersey City, had been ready to open his bakery with his wife when Sandy hit. The bakery was flooded by 6 feet of water, and a lot of equipment was damaged. It delayed until fairly recently the opening of that bakery, and of course there was the loss of income to that family.

Norma, from Seaside Park, was displaced by severe flooding, nearly 4 feet. We can talk about the depth of the storm surge or about the record low barometric pressure or what the wind speed was, but we mustn't lose sight of the people who were affected here. Norma had space in her home that was flooded, and so she lost the rental income for that space. She is still cleaning up. Incidentally, she is a science supervisor at a local school, and is now talking personally about climate change and extreme weather.

April, from Jersey City, is a single mother of a child with asthma, who was uprooted because of the flooding from Sandy. She is now dealing with mold issues in her child's school as a result of the flooding, and she has gotten involved in helping low-income families recover from Sandy.

I want to make this point about who is hurt the most.

Researchers at Rutgers University in New Jersey looked at families who are

employed but who are struggling. These would be asset-limited people, people who are barely earning a living. This makes up, really, about a third of New Jerseyans. They have no cushion. Yet about a third of New Jerseyans incurred more than half of the residential damage—the cost—and are obtaining only slightly more than a quarter of the resources that are available for rebuilding. So low-income families, who tend to have less safe, less resilient housing, are the ones who suffer the most damage. Many who work hourly jobs are less able to deal with the loss of wages that occur from these disasters. Many of them were underinsured, and about 90 percent did not have flood insurance. So it is only a fraction of the people in New Jersey, but it is a very large fraction of the people, who suffered the really severe damage.

As bad as this is in America, the effects of climate change are even worse in developing countries around the world. Developing nations are more vulnerable to crop failure. Tropical diseases are very sensitive to climate change. Malaria and dengue fever and diarrheal disease are more prevalent now because of climate change, and developing nations are less able to afford the damage that results.

I got in some trouble earlier this year—I was challenged earlier this year—when I said we have got to deal with climate change or millions will die. In fact, I looked it up. The World Health Organization estimates that climate change is already causing 140,000 deaths per year—more than would have occurred without the climate change—primarily in developing countries. So it doesn't take very many years before, indeed, millions are dying. That is something of the human cost of what we are talking about.

Mr. TONKO. In every measurement that we make, there is a huge impact that climate change calculates to the negative. You talked about the impact worldwide. It is the sightings of a perfect storm, with less available land as it erodes with these floodings and with a growing population worldwide. That is the formation of a perfect storm.

But when we look closer to home, in these United States, you and I are part of the delegations that represent coastal States. The coastal erosion and the erosion of valuable farmland in my district are realities, and it is measurable already. The forewarnings are out there to take action to prevent further erosion. When you think of that impact, it comes in several dimensions, perhaps agricultural in nature as it is a major sector of our economy in this country, or in tourism. One of the bits of erosion that I saw—one of the impacts that came—was with tourism infrastructure, with very valuable historic sites that were nearly ruined and that are along the beds of creeks and rivers that are tourism destinations but that now are shut for business as they get repaired. Some of these ele-

ments are extremely delicate, and part of our fabric as a Nation is to be able to share our sense of history with either other people of the United States or with visitors who travel to this land, so there are impacts that come.

I would also talk about the infrastructure impacts on the energy side. We witnessed situations in which some fared better than others, and I was proud of our SEEC organization. Now, you and I are longtime charter members of SEEC, and I am proud of the fact that we called upon the Sandy Rebuilding Task Force to help communities rebuild stronger and smarter by having the task force issue guidance for combined heat and power, CHP systems. Those systems fared well in areas ravaged by these superstorms.

CHP, as many know, is an innovative sort of concept, an energy-efficient method for generating electricity and harnessing heat, the thermal energy that accompanies that. In CHP systems, heat that normally is wasted—allowed to escape—is captured and recovered as useful energy, and that allows us to require and to, perhaps, promote this integrated concept approach far more efficient than conventional power generation would be. Conventional methods have a typical combined efficiency of 45 percent, while CHP can operate as high as 80 percent. This technology is not only efficient; it also has demonstrated resiliency to extreme weather events. I can cite South Oaks Hospital on Long Island, which is a hospital facility that includes an acute psychiatric hospital, a nursing home and an assisted living center. During the storm and its aftermath, the hospital maintained full power through the use of its 1.3 megawatt CHP system.

Again, lessons, hopefully, will be learned. So, as we go to replace, we also have to transition some of our thinking and make certain that we are building systems that will be able to endure these storms into the future. Certainly amongst our priorities has got to be this all-out effort to combat global warming, climate change, to make certain that we do all of our preventative measures. Then when we rebuild, we do it in a way that is efficient so that sound government, smart government, is the tool that is reached to rather than awkwardly replacing in a sort of rush order to get us back into a working progressive outcome, but where we haven't addressed some of the dynamics of the ravages of weather, which is teaching us several lessons as we go through these many storms.

So you are absolutely right. The people are the most impacted here. We have to keep them front and center in our thinking, but all of these services that either provide jobs for people or provide economic opportunities, economic growth, or that meet their public safety needs or their energy needs or their household needs or their business needs have got to be brought into this calculus that is adjusting concepts

based on the theory of climate change, and where we, again, underscore the importance of prevention.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that all of our colleagues understand that when my friend from New York talks in detail about new energy systems that he is talking about human welfare, that he is talking about addressing the human cost that we were speaking of earlier. In other words, it is not just a matter of providing energy for people to power our economy and provide comfortable daily lives; it is also a matter of doing it in a way that avoids this enormous human cost from climate change. The way we produce and use energy is the greatest insult to our planet. It is changing our very climate, and we must address that. The sooner we address it, the more effective we will be at addressing it, and the more of these costs we can avoid.

It is unmistakable, unequivocal, that global warming has taken place and is taking place. Just in the past month, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change came out with its fifth very carefully prepared report. It says that global temperatures are likely to rise from a third of a degree to 4½ degrees, roughly, Celsius, and that sea levels will rise. It is certain that the upper ocean has already warmed over the last three decades. It is certain that the upper ocean has already absorbed carbon dioxide, making it more acidic, as we heard from our friends earlier.

Most of the aspects of climate change will continue for centuries with the result in a cost in lives and dollars if the CO₂ emissions are not brought under control. In fact, some of these costs will be incurred now even if we bring CO₂ emissions under control because of the damage already done, but it is important to emphasize that it comes down to the human cost. That is what we mustn't forget in all of the charts and graphs and scientific discussions of the causes and effects of climate change.

Mr. TONKO. I think it is very important for us to recognize, too, that here this evening you and several of our colleagues and I have shared thoughts about painful consequences in our given regions, or we have talked about not only flooding but drought situations and wildfires. We have talked about the economic impact of climate change with these associated storms. We have talked about the recovery efforts. We have talked about Superstorm Sandy on this 1-year commemoration date, still finding its neighborhoods, its communities, its people, its businesses, its farming communities still struggling to recover. We have talked about all of this, and now I think we need to close, in the remaining minutes we have in this hour, and talk about a plan of action.

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Now, SEEC, the Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition, has a

growing number of representatives—56 strong as we speak. Individuals are talking about the consciousness, raising the consciousness, talking about awareness out there in the community. But there is also a requirement for legislative action. Absent that, we move to an executive order, and some have expressed concern about that.

Leaving no other option available, the Chief Executive, the President, has moved to resolve some of these concerns through organizations and agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency. So I think there needs to be this dialogue here and in the United States Senate, working with the President, with the White House, and the administration to develop a sound package of legislation that allows us to go forward.

It is apparent after the number of stories heard here just this evening and the personal anecdotes that you shared, Representative HOLT, about people from New Jersey and the pain that they endured. That should motivate us to move forward with a plan of action, understanding that the cost of inaction is very, very heavy. Many have placed threshold dates out there. They are not that far into the future—2017, 2020 some say at the latest.

It is our stewardship that is called upon. We inherited this environment, this Earth, from ancestors who preceded us. Now it is our challenge, I believe, to hand that to next generations unborn in even better working order with the growth worldwide of population, with the industrialization of many Third World nations, the reach to automobiles being put on the highways around the world, the development of power supplies around the world, causing this huge growth of challenge in terms of carbon emission and eventually methane that will destroy antibodies out there.

So the challenge is before us. I think we need to go forward with a very focused effort of policy development that can be done in the very near future here in the House.

Avoiding that, walking away from it, denying it ought to be revisited by those who have suffered heavily from the damages of these storms. Certainly as we focus on Superstorm Sandy this evening, on that one storm here, it has brought to mind many, many situations where people are still suffering—blocks destroyed by fires in Superstorm Sandy that destroyed neighborhoods.

We have a challenge before us, Representative HOLT.

Mr. HOLT. The work of the Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition here in Congress is to see that we can move into the future in a sustainable way.

It is completely appropriate that we talk about both energy and environment in this same—really with the same breath. Because as I said, the way we produce and use energy is the greatest insult to our planet. But it is pos-

sible to produce and use energy that will power our economy and provide a good quality of life for 10 billion people in the world if we are smart and if we get to work now. We can do it in a way that doesn't ruin the world and condemn all of these billions of people to the kinds of superstorms, the kinds of effects of climate change and spreading diseases and so forth that will result if climate change runs amuck.

New Jerseyans need no further reminder that climate change is real. Evidently, some of our colleagues here do need that reminder. This year, one year after Hurricane Sandy, we are here to tell our friends, to tell our colleagues this is for real, this is serious, and we should get to work. The work of the Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition is dedicated to that work.

I thank my colleague, Mr. TONKO of New York, for his work to propel the SEEC coalition.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative HOLT.

I will close by just focusing in on this graphic, which showed the enormity, the immense breadth and depth of this Superstorm Sandy.

Many didn't relate that storm to a huge tide coming in. For any of us who have jumped into the ocean, we know the power of a tide. But to have the highest storm surge ever measured recorded at Kings Point, New York, the highest ever recorded at 14.38 feet, tells a story. The fact that the water level at Battery Park in Lower Manhattan reached 9.1 feet above the average high tide line. Think of it—1 inch, 2 inches, a foot of water additional that comes into a flood zone calculates that much more damage.

Here, what we had with the situation were records beyond 9 feet, approaching 10 feet, a storm surge of 14.38 feet. We are talking monumental damage. We are talking about a force that swept away lives, a force that sparked fires in neighborhoods, a force that wiped out businesses and found neighborhoods still vacant, a silence that has befallen these given communities because of the ravages of Mother Nature that can be prevented if we put our minds and hearts and efforts into that concept of being better stewards of the environment.

This is a place where a plan of action can take hold. In these Halls of government, leadership is called upon. A moral compass points in the direction of us being sounder friends of the environment and protectionists when it comes to getting things done so as to avoid the high scale of economic destruction that has gripped our communities.

I still see it in the aftermath of Irene and Lee in the 20th Congressional District of New York. Damage done in 2011 is still causing hardship in 2013, impacted by all sorts of weather events that are atypical of our region—tropic storms, hurricanes, tornados—that wiped through the area and required all

sorts of volunteerism to enter in, and certainly dollars that were shared from private sector sources and from FEMA at the Federal level and various other programs at the Federal Government. It will be an exhausting situation that will continue to drain the taxpayers as we move forward if we don't take action.

On this very solemn day of commemoration, as we call to mind all of the destruction that came into 24 States a year ago this evening, should be all the call to action that is required of us. Since then, it has been followed by devastation in Colorado, wildfires in the Southwest, and predictions that more and more damage will be part and parcel to a future that is allowed to go forward without the soundness of stewardship of the environment that ought to be a high priority in this House, in the United States Senate, and certainly across this Nation.

Sound leadership begins with the acknowledgement that there is a challenge out there and that the challenge is then met with accurate and detailed and information exchange that builds a dialogue that creates a package of response that indicates that we are a compassionate, caring, loving people in this Nation that through the Halls of this House can provide hope for this environment and hope to families who have suffered the consequences and hope to generations unborn as we pass to them a stronger sense of stewardship of this Earth.

It has been our pleasure in this hour to have shared many of our ideas, many of our concerns, many of the anecdotal bits that personalize a given situation for far too many, and we are thankful for the opportunity.

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

TRIBUTE TO OUR MILITARY VETERANS

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

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, tonight we are here 2 weeks before Veterans Day to take some time to pay tribute to so many of our outstanding veterans and for the great things that they have done. Arthur Ashe, a world-class tennis player, a hero to many, was once asked about heroism. He said:

True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.

This describes our veterans so well—serving others at whatever cost.

Tonight, we give credit where credit is due. In honor of Veterans Day, we willingly say thank you, thank you to the 1 percent. Only 1 percent of Americans have worn the uniform. Over that time, they have produced exceptional results on behalf of freedom time and time again.

Army Chaplain Father Tim Vakoc was hit by an IED in Mosul, Iraq, in May of 2004. He suffered severe head wounds from the explosion and from shrapnel. He came home, but over time he succumbed to these wounds. The troops often asked Father Vakoc, Why did you go out so often with us when you could have stayed back on the base where it was safer? But, no, you came out with us into the fight, into the combat. He was quoted as saying:

The safest place for me to be is in the center of God's will; and if that is in the line of fire, then that is where I will be.

As I served as a surgeon in Iraq, it was part of my job to talk to troops whose comrade just was being taken back to the operating room, to talk to them before and after surgery when they were wounded. There are things you never forget from that.

I will never forget going into a room full of marines to tell them about the condition of their buddy before we operated, and sitting in that room hunched over was a marine praying his rosary. I will never forget how I felt when I went back an hour later to have to tell them that he didn't make it. They fight for their country, but they die for each other.

Tonight, we are honored to have several Members here, Members that very served, to tell their stories, to tell their stories about a hero that they have served with, to let America know about these great people, and to pay respect to our veterans.

At this time, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas, Lieutenant Colonel TIM GRIFFIN, who is a colonel in the United States Army Reserve JAG Corps. He served in Iraq in 2006. He had been assigned to the Southeast Medical Area Readiness Support Group as a command judge advocate. When he went to Iraq, he was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman, and I thank the gentleman for his service.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk first here about a fellow Screaming Eagle, a fellow member of the 101st Airborne Division, who was wounded in action, Sergeant Carl Moore, III, from Bigelow, Arkansas, in the Second Congressional District, my district.

Sergeant Moore in early June of this year was wounded while on patrol in Afghanistan. A bullet struck him under his arm, puncturing one of his lungs and grazing his spine.

I pray for Carl's speedy recovery so he can get back to enjoying the things that he loves. My thoughts go out to his parents, Carl and Teresa of Conway, Arkansas, also in my district, and his wife, Heather, and their 4-year-old daughter, Addison.

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This is just one example of the type of service that we should all be thankful for, and tonight I want to thank Sergeant Carl Moore for his service and for his sacrifice, and for his family's sacrifice.

When I think about all the vets who have impacted my life personally, it is a list that is too long to read, and they have impacted me in so many ways.

I often think of my grandfather who served in World War I in France in 1918. I never met my grandfather on my mother's side. He died in 1966, just 2 years before I was born, but he was in the Army. He processed through Camp Pike in Little Rock, Arkansas, where I did a lot of Reserve duty. I often thought of him when I was there. I went to basic at Fort Lee in Virginia, and come to find out, that is where he went. He went to Fort Lee before he went to France in 1918, and I thank him for his service.

I also want to mention one of our famous vets in closing, one of our most famous vets from the Second Congressional District of Arkansas, and that is Nick Bacon. We recently were able to name a post office after Nick Bacon. He is a Medal of Honor winner. He passed away recently. He was born in Caraway, Arkansas, in 1945. He enlisted in 1963 at age 17. The story goes that he was too young to enlist, so he just sort of fudged a little bit on the age. He was stationed in Germany for awhile, did a tour in Vietnam. He was wounded three times during his first tour in Vietnam when the helicopter he rode in collided with another, and all were killed but Bacon and one other. So he volunteered for a second tour in Vietnam because that wasn't enough. I want to read this little paragraph that talks about what happened that led to him being awarded the Medal of Honor.

On August 16, 1968, while leading a squad in Bravo Company's 1st Platoon, in an operation, Bacon and his unit came under fire from an enemy position. He personally destroyed the position with hand grenades, but the platoon leader was wounded on open ground. Bacon assumed command, led the platoon in destroying still more enemy emplacements. The 3rd Platoon lost its leader, and Bacon took command of that platoon as well and led both platoons against the remaining enemy positions. During the evacuation of the wounded, Bacon climbed the side of a nearby tank to gain vantage point and direct fire into enemy positions, despite being exposed to enemy fire himself. He was personally credited with killing at least four enemy soldiers and destroying an anti-tank gun. For his actions in this battle, Bacon received the Medal of Honor, formally presented to him by President Richard Nixon during a 1969 White House ceremony.

He earned multiple awards within the military for various accomplishments. In addition to the Medal of Honor, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with two Valor devices, and two Purple Hearts.

Then he went back to Arkansas and years later served as the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and was reappointed by Governor Mike