

said something I remember and would like to recount. He said: This is not an immigration issue; this is an issue of compassion, humanitarianism. These people were kids when they were brought here. They deserve this chance. So I know this will be included in any immigration reform. I certainly hope we will pass it and pass it soon.

We spoke to the President last night. Senator SCHUMER and I had a conversation with him. Tomorrow he will be making a statement in Nevada about immigration. He is committed to immigration reform. He is committed to fixing this system. He told us what we are setting out to do is generally consistent with what he wants to see done. But he did tell us: Get it done. Do not let this drag out again. Seize the moment and move forward with it.

Well, we have that chance. We have to do it. We have to do it because this Nation of immigrants, this Nation that will still attract immigrants, needs a legal system that works for those who are here and for those who want to come here. We have to make sure we are sensitive to the fact that Americans should receive the first preference for jobs, and that will be included in our bill, but also beyond that jobs that some Americans do not want. In agriculture, for example, and in other areas, we need some people coming in to help. They can be part of this immigration reform as well.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HETKAMP). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll:

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I want to speak on one of the topics of the day. A group of bipartisan Senators has had a press conference today announcing their support for a comprehensive immigration reform piece of legislation. This is a significant step. Perhaps the biggest step was—on the way to immigration reform—the result of the November 6 election. As a matter of fact, it has been chronicled in all of the newspapers that the Hispanic community in every State voted overwhelmingly for the candidate that was perceived to be fair on the immigration issue.

I think that has propelled political motivation to address this issue and to address it fairly. I want to commend that bipartisan group of Senators for doing this. There are a number of key elements that as we get into the specifics of the legislation are going to be important. Notice they want to lay everything on the predicate that there is going to be the essence of a real border security effort done.

It is hard to patrol a border of thousands and thousands of miles like we have, particularly where there is no

geographical barrier and people can merely walk across the border. But it has to be done in the context of overall immigration reform. Another interesting part that has been very thorny in the business community is the fact of verification by employers.

When this Senator was a young congressman and voting on immigration back in the 1980s, as a matter of fact there was supposed to be verification by employers of those they were hiring that they were here in a documented status. Well, that never happened. As a result, you see all of these head fakes in implementing the law about whether somebody was here in a documented status. Then when they were found not to be, everybody was pointing like this: Well, it is the other guy's fault.

There has to be a verification system put in place. Some have suggested electronic verification. That needs to be explored. They are going to have to be a lot of new things being explored in order to make sure, if we are going to have comprehensive immigration reform, those who are being employed here, in fact, are in a documented status. But the big question in the past politically has been, What about the 11 million who are estimated to be in this country working and in an undocumented status?

I think the principles laid out by the group earlier today are very good: They must play by the rules; they must not have a criminal record; they must pay back taxes; They must pay a fine; and then go to the end of the line. Even though they would be allowed a legal status to stay here and to continue working—and that is another one of the elements—they must have a job and demonstrate they have had a job in the past. It would not be fair for all of them to suddenly get at the head of the line when others have been waiting patiently in the legal process to get a green card. Thus, we would not have this economic upheaval as some here have approached this issue in the past year.

We have not heard a lot about this since the election, but previous to that we heard a lot about, for example, sending them all home, self-deportation, deporting all of the illegals. Well, first of all, there would be an economic collapse of part of the economy of this country if we suddenly eliminated all of those workers upon whom the economy certainly is dependent. It, also, in many cases would not be fair.

There is another part of this that needs to be added. This is the fairness question for the children who came here through no fault of their own. They have grown up thinking they are only an American, and then the current law is they have to be deported. Well, this Senator has intervened in a number of cases for children who wanted to go into the military after high school, wanted to go on to college. They were at the point of being deported.

As a matter of fact, we had a Bahamian child who came when he was 6

months old. He only knew he was American. He served two tours in Iraq in the U.S. Army, came back, went into the Navy Reserve, had a top secret clearance and was a photographer for the Navy at Guantanamo prison. When he came back, the authorities put him in jail—a veteran, someone who was still Active-Duty U.S. Navy Reserve.

A U.S. Federal judge of Cuban-American descent made a very harsh statement in Miami toward the prosecutors for them putting a child, now an adult, now a veteran, having served both the Army and the Navy, with a top secret clearance, putting that Bahamian, now adult, in jail.

This is how ridiculous the system has gotten. This Senator had to intervene in this case, and once we raised enough Cain, finally people came to their senses and said: What is the commonsense thing to do?

The commonsense thing now for us to do is all to pass a comprehensive immigration reform law and, hopefully, that is going to occur.

The question is, though, what is going to happen at the other end of the hall, down there in the House of Representatives? Because there are a lot of people in the other party down there who haven't changed their attitude since the election. They still are expressing that they don't want anything but deportation. I think we are just going to have to use common sense and moderation and try to explain why this is the fair thing to do.

As a young Congressman, I favored this comprehensive approach decades ago. I voted for it as a Senator. I will gladly, once they knit together the legislation, be one of the cosponsors of this legislation.

I wish to thank the bipartisan group of Senators who got together, which includes my colleague from Florida, Mr. RUBIO, for their willingness to take the initiative and to start plowing new ground of legislation that ought to be able to be passed this year.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 152, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 152) making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, to improve and streamline disaster assistance.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise to urge my colleagues to immediately pass this urgent supplemental bill without further delay. I remind my colleagues and those who are watching us on global C-SPAN, this is the bill that will pay for disaster relief to help our citizens, both as individuals, businesses, and communities, rebuild their lives after the devastating, horrific impact of Hurricane Sandy. Particularly, it will impact the residents of New York and New Jersey.

My own State was affected also. In my own State, we had two things happen: a hurricane in the old-fashioned definition of that word, where it hit the Eastern Shore; and up in western Maryland, right up in our Appalachian part; we had a blizzard, and it took the National Guard to be able to go into the streets. We had people being rescued on Swift Boats and on snowmobiles. It was something.

At the same time, I think all America watched what was going on up the coast but particularly in New Jersey and New York.

Many other States were also impacted by this storm. Homes and businesses were damaged and destroyed, and they have been waiting for 90 days for help from their government to help them rebuild their lives and rebuild their livelihoods.

I, therefore, tonight ask immediate, urgent action to move this bill. It is not perfect, but it is a very sound bill. The bill that was passed by the Senate in December was a superior bill. The House bill, which is before us, eliminates many important provisions that the Senate passed.

I will go into that, but I urge my colleagues, let's not make the perfect the enemy of the good. We have to get started. We have to help our communities. They have been waiting, waiting, waiting. Governor Cuomo, Governor Christie, Governor O'Malley have all said move it. We need help to move it. We need to.

I say there are things that came back from the House on the Senate-passed bill that I am not too excited about. They reduced the cost-share requirements for Army Corps projects. In other words, the government, the local government, will have to pay more. They reduced funding for fisheries, for flexibility to help our State Department. In a perfect world, I would seek to amend this bill and ask for a conference with the House so we could work out these differences. But even though this House bill is not perfect, it does give critical relief to the people who need it; therefore, passing this bill is my top priority.

This bill totals \$50.5 billion for Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. When combined with the \$9.7 billion of flood insurance we passed earlier this month, along with assistance for Hurricane Sandy related to recovery, this bill meets the current needs of the recovery efforts and should be approved without delay.

Let me take a few minutes to discuss some of the important issues. There is \$16 billion in there for community development block grant funding to restore infrastructure and housing to help people rebuild their lives. There is \$11.5 billion in the FEMA disaster fund for ongoing disaster response. There is \$10 billion for public transportation—particularly crucial in the New York and New Jersey area—and \$5.3 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers to help protect communities along our shorelines, as well as \$500 million for the social services block grants to help meet compelling human needs such as childcare, mental health services, and also for programs that will help with very damaged facilities that meet a compelling need.

As I said, Governors Cuomo and Christie have identified needs totaling billions of dollars more than this legislation provides, and that doesn't even include other States such as my own State of Maryland. The funding in this bill is urgently needed. Every dollar has been examined.

Hurricane Sandy was one of the most destructive storms to have hit the United States. Hundreds of thousands of families have seen their lives turned upside down. They have waited far too long for this legislation to reach the President. I strongly urge the support of this legislation.

This is the very first bill that, as the full chair of the Appropriations Committee, I am moving. I would like to acknowledge the role of the subcommittee chairmen because in that committee, the subcommittees really carry the bulk of the work. Senator LANDRIEU of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security has FEMA in her jurisdiction, and she has done an outstanding job of making sure we meet compelling human need at the same time we get value for our dollar. Senator PATTY MURRAY chairs the subcommittee that funds housing and transportation, again making sure we are rebuilding homes and livelihoods. Senator FEINSTEIN, whose subcommittee oversees the Army Corps of Engineers, which has been doing a heroic job keeping the Mississippi River open, wants to make sure the shorelines of New York and New Jersey and Maryland are open for business as well. I could name all of them, but those three have done an outstanding job.

I particularly wish to acknowledge the help of my colleagues from New York and New Jersey. Senator SCHUMER led the way, particularly when there was this difficult time with Senator Inouye's illness, to move this bill, but Senators GILLIBRAND, MENENDEZ, and LAUTENBERG have really been outstanding.

This is about colleagues, and I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who helped us.

I would now like to yield the floor to Senator LANDRIEU, who has done such a great job through her subcommittee, and ask her to elaborate particularly

on the aspects of the disaster response and recovery.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank my colleague for her extraordinary, robust, and enthusiastic leadership on this important piece of legislation that will send hope and help to the Northeast, to the dozens of counties throughout New York, New Jersey, and even the State of Maryland and other States that are waiting on pins and needles for our action.

It has been too long. We have sent too many different signals out from this Capitol. The people following this debate—the mayors, the county commissioners, the school board members, the citizens, the pastors of churches, the principals of schools—need to hear today a big yes from Congress and a yes from the President that help is on the way.

Believe me, as a Senator from Louisiana, I have unfortunately become an expert on disasters and disaster recovery, and I can tell you from personal experience and testimony the importance of every action we take regarding this recovery so that the private sector—and I want my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to hear this—not taxpayer money but the private sector will have the confidence that the government will be there, and they themselves will begin to invest.

This is a big effort, and we have already delayed this far longer than it should have been because we have been arguing over offsets.

I want to put in the RECORD this statement:

When our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan needed ammunition, equipment, and better protection against roadside bombs, we sent them what they needed as quickly as we could get it there. We didn't make them wait, sitting around bandaging their wounds, while we debated about offsets and how we were going to deal with those explosives. We should respond with the same sense of urgency to our fellow citizens and address emergency needs on U.S. soil.

It has already been 3 months since Hurricane Sandy. If this Lee amendment is adopted, it will be delayed further. I strongly oppose the Lee amendment, and I wish to talk a minute more about why, and then I will turn it over to Senator SCHUMER and others on the floor.

We should not use disasters as an excuse to push ideology, and that is, I am afraid, what the other side is doing. They want to look for any excuse to cut the budget. I want to say again that we have already cut this budget by \$1.5 trillion. And I want to say for the 11th, 12th, 13th time that we are never going to cut our way to a balanced budget. I want my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to hear it. We are not going to cut our way to a balanced budget. It is going to be a combination of revenue increases and cuts, which I am all for. And the last negotiation we did was exactly that. Vice President BIDEN and President

Obama negotiated a combination of revenues and reductions.

All the Lee amendment does is reduce again. He does not offer one new penny to pay for this. He wants to cut it from veterans, he wants to cut it from firefighters, he wants to cut it from police officers. I am not going to join him. It is a wrongheaded approach. If we want to find a way to pay for disasters, I will show up and negotiate with anybody, but it is not going to be just by cutting the defense budget or discretionary budgets. If it is going to be about raising additional revenues and cutting, you will have me. Until then, put me down as a no.

I suggest to all my colleagues today that they vote no on the Lee amendment, if we get to these votes, and yes on the underlying bill.

One more word about the underlying bill because the Senators from the region know it much better than I do. I agree with our chairman, the Senator from Maryland. The Senate bill was far better in some ways. Not only did it have a little more money in it, but it had some important tools for reform. Unfortunately, the House stripped some of those out, and some of them will affect the gulf coast in a negative way.

There were commonsense things, such as a loan modification provision that would have forced FEMA to actually calculate the repayment in a rational way instead of an irrational way, which would have helped some of the parishes in Louisiana. Senator VITTER and I fought very hard for that. We think it is fiscally responsible. We think it is the right thing to do. But the House stripped it. We are still going to vote—I hope he will, and I know I will—for this bill because, again, we can't make perfect the enemy of the good. This is a good bill which the people need. We are not going to get every reform we had sought, but we are going to get the bulk of them.

I thank Republicans and Democrats on the House side—PETER KING, NITA LOWEY—who came together to preserve some of the reforms because it would have been like sending money with dull tools. That is a waste of taxpayer money. We want to send the money and the toolbox with sharp tools that people can use, and that is what we put in this bill. So I am proud to have worked on that part.

There are many other parts. No leader was better than Senator SCHUMER, Senator GILLIBRAND, Senator MENENDEZ, and Senator LAUTENBERG, but I am proud of the part we worked on, preserving the reforms we learned we needed. Now I am happy to be able to give some of that help to the people of the Northeast even though some of our provisions were stripped out.

So again, Madam President, I oppose the Lee amendment that is made in order in the consent agreement. I want to re-state my position that we should not insist on budget offsets as a pre-

requisite for helping disaster victims in this country.

Since 2011, Congress has already approved \$1.5 trillion of spending cuts on discretionary programs over 10 years. We approved cuts in the fiscal year 2011 Continuing Resolution and in the fiscal year 2012 Omnibus spending bill. We established long-term caps on discretionary spending in the Budget Control Act of 2011 and we further reduced those caps in the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012.

For fiscal year 2013 alone, we have cut discretionary spending by over \$109 billion, or over 9 percent.

The Lee amendment would lay on another \$6.3 billion cut in fiscal year 2013, including cuts in defense, veterans programs, homeland security programs, critical infrastructure programs that will generate job growth, cuts in small business programs, and even \$250 million of cuts in the Hurricane Sandy response and rebuilding funding that is now before us. On top of those cuts, the Lee amendment would require cutting another \$44.9 billion by fiscal year 2021.

I urge a “no” vote on the Lee amendment.

I support H.R. 152 and urge Members to oppose the Lee amendment. The bill includes \$50.5 billion of critical and timely assistance following Hurricane Sandy. If approved, Congress will have provided \$60.2 billion to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy rebuild their homes and businesses and to make their communities more resilient from future disasters.

This is no status quo bill. The victims of Hurricane Katrina and Rita learned the hard way that some of our Nation's disaster rebuilding laws are needlessly bureaucratic. Having learned these lessons, the Stafford Act reforms contained in this bill will help ensure that the victims of Hurricane Sandy will not have to repeat this history. The key reforms included in the bill will dramatically improve our Nation's ability to cope with catastrophic events like Hurricane Sandy. In addition to these reforms, this bill contains significant funding to mitigate future losses of life and property.

It has now been more than 3 months since Hurricane Sandy claimed the lives of more than 130 Americans, severely impacting over 340,000 homes and 200,000 businesses, and leaving more than 8.5 million families without power, heat, or running water. The scale of this disaster has created significant housing and transportation challenges, and successful recovery will require a sustained effort at the Federal, State, and local level, from government, private businesses, and voluntary organizations.

By and large, the Federal Government's response to Hurricane Sandy has been robust. Over 525,000 people have registered for temporary housing and other individual assistance, FEMA has provided 14 million meals, over 16 million liters of water, over 1.6 million blankets, and over 100,000 tarps. DOD

delivered over 9.3 million gallons of gasoline to 300 gas stations. Over 470 million gallons of salt water were pumped out of transit and highway tunnels and other structures. At the peak of the response, 17,000 Federal personnel and over 11,000 National Guardsmen were involved: I commend the thousands of first responders, volunteers, and neighbors who have worked tirelessly to help those in need.

Twelve States and the District of Columbia have been declared major disaster areas as a result of Hurricane Sandy, and their citizens will require significant resources to recover.

While FEMA has sufficient funds in the Disaster Relief Fund to make it to March—the current balance is \$3.4 billion—the victims of Hurricane Sandy should not have to wait any longer to know that Congress is committed to rebuilding their communities and helping small businesses come back to life. FEMA has already spent over \$3.3 billion responding to Hurricane Sandy and as we move from the response and recovery phases to the rebuilding phase, there will be significant costs for housing, highways, transit, hospitals, beach restoration and other public infrastructure, and for mitigation efforts to reduce loss of life and damage to property from future disasters, by backing up power supplies, strengthening flood protection infrastructure, retrofitting facilities, and other measures. The bill that is before us contains \$11.5 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund to continue these efforts.

SBA has approved more than \$1.2 billion in loans to more than 16,000 homeowners and small businesses. Funding provided in the supplemental will enable SBA to continue processing and approving loan applications at the pace of over 1,000 new loan closings per week. H.R. 152 contains over \$800 million to continue this assistance.

The Federal funding contained in this bill is necessary, appropriate, and important to helping the victims of Hurricane Sandy recover. But money isn't the only thing our government must provide. Effective tools and smartly designed programs will be equally vital to the northeast region's recovery.

I co-authored these reforms to facilitate a faster, smarter, more strategic, and more cost-effective recovery process. FEMA has estimated they will save hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and reduce construction delays, protracted funding disputes, and bureaucratic waste.

They are the product of dozens of hearings I held over the course of 6 years as chair of the Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery and the Subcommittee on Homeland Security Appropriations, as well as extensive consultation with State and local officials across the country, private and non-profit organizations, engaged in disaster relief, numerous Federal agencies

including FEMA and HUD, and stakeholders throughout the emergency management community.

Many were drawn from legislation I introduced in 2011 with my friend and colleague from the State of Mississippi, Senator COCHRAN, who has endured the same disasters as my own State of Louisiana, and whose contributions to the gulf coast's recovery and the development of this legislation have been tremendous. I am grateful for his partnership in this endeavor.

I would also like to note the considerable contributions of the House of Representatives, which passed FEMA reform legislation last year that included several of these provisions. Following Senate passage of these reforms on December 28 by a vote of 62–32, the House adopted the package by a vote of 403–0 and agreed to include it in the comprehensive Supplemental legislation that is now before us.

I am particularly grateful to Senator COCHRAN, Senator Lieberman, Senator COLLINS, and Congressmen SHUSTER, RAHALL, DENHAM, Congresswoman HOLMES NORTON, Congressman MICA, Congresswomen SLAUGHTER, LOWEY, and Congressmen ALEXANDER, and RICHMOND for their considerable efforts to advance these critical reforms.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act authorizes the majority of FEMA's disaster assistance programs. It was enacted in 1988, amended in 2000 to incorporate several mitigation programs, and revised again in 2006 to address response failures after Hurricane Katrina.

These were important changes, but the law has never been re-visited to address recovery, and our emergency management system remains woefully inadequate in that respect.

Senator COCHRAN and I succeeded in enacting several key reforms in the months and years that followed Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to facilitate a smarter approach to recovery, but those reforms only applied to the 2005 hurricanes.

The State I represent has been battered by disasters during my time in the Senate. We endured Hurricane Katrina and Rita in 2005, Hurricane Gustav and Ike in 2008, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010, historic Mississippi River flooding and Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, and Hurricane Isaac last August. Through the course of these harrowing events, I have witnessed numerous systemic failures, misguided policies, bottlenecks, management gaps, and squandered opportunities in the way we go about facilitating community recovery after a disaster.

As a result of those experiences, I have dedicated a significant amount of my time and energy in the Senate to fixing these problems so the people of the gulf coast and Americans everywhere can rely on Federal programs that are sensibly designed and effectively managed to help families and communities in their time of need.

That time has come for millions in the northeastern United States still reeling from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Sandy. For their sake, we cannot afford to wait any longer for these critical reforms.

Let me highlight these reforms:

Reauthorization of two expired pilot programs from the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act that allow FEMA to repair rental units as a cost-effective temporary housing alternative to trailers and mobile homes and to utilize expedited debris removal procedures. Both programs were determined by FEMA to speed recovery and save taxpayers millions of dollars; allowing a State to draw down a portion of its hazard mitigation funding from FEMA, in order to leverage mitigation opportunities earlier in the reconstruction process. Under the current program, it typically takes 18 to 36 months for funding to become available. By then, most reconstruction is already complete or underway, and numerous mitigation opportunities have been lost; providing grants on the basis of reliable fixed estimates for expedited removal of storm-related debris and reconstruction of damaged facilities and infrastructure. This approach will be faster, cheaper, and more effective for everyone involved. The Public Assistance program as currently designed may be the most dysfunctional program in the entire Federal Government, and it simply will not work for this disaster. Under the current approach, initial damage estimates are often incomplete, projects must be reversioned multiple times, decisions are often not made in writing, frequent staff turnover leads to decision reversals, hundreds of meetings result in incalculable administrative waste, and it takes years for a project to be completed. Individual paper tickets are filled out for each tree limb collected off a roadway, which are measured and photographed by debris contractors, who are in turn followed around by monitoring contractors. A \$1.2 million Youth Study Center in New Orleans that was damaged by Katrina has been the subject of 182 meetings over the course of 8 years. The process is severely broken. FEMA and communities across the gulf coast, who have suffered through this bureaucratic quagmire, are in agreement that there is a better way to clean-up and rebuild. It's up to the Congress to provide that smarter approach; codifying temporary legislative measures that were enacted to facilitate a smarter recovery after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, including third-party arbitration of disputes over project eligibility and cost, eliminating the penalty on alternate projects that stifles smarter rebuilding, and authority to consolidate facilities into a single project so school districts, police, fire, and public works departments can strategically plan reconstruction without having to rebuild everything exactly as it was before. After Rita for example, these reforms

allowed the Iberia Parish School Board in Louisiana to relocate Peebles Elementary School to a new location outside the floodplain without paying a Federal penalty for rebuilding safer and smarter. It also allowed the Orleans Parish School Board to reduce the number of schools in New Orleans by one-third after determining through its Master Plan that dozens were no longer needed; allowing families to use FEMA Individual Assistance funds for disaster-related child care expenses so parents can get back to work and rebuild their home or business sooner; reducing bureaucratic waste by eliminating duplicative agency reviews for the same project and the same set of laws governing environmental, historic preservation, and benefit-cost requirements; helping the environment by incentivizing recycling of debris and allowing locals to keep the proceeds; eliminating a perverse incentive in the law to use high-priced contract labor for emergency work instead of local government employees, such as firefighters and police officers, which will save the Federal Government millions of dollars; correcting a gap in current law that prohibits tribal governments from requesting Federal assistance after a disaster in the same way that States are authorized to do.

This legislation does not eliminate State or local cost-share requirements, establish new grant programs, or provide Stafford Act assistance to private sector entities. Instead, it sharpens the tools in the Federal Government's toolbox so that disaster-affected communities can recover more quickly.

The legislation's potential to reduce future property damage, strengthen local capacity, expedite rebuilding, and eliminate duplication and administrative waste, will save taxpayers a tremendous amount of money on Hurricane Sandy as well as future disasters. It will also save communities in the northeast a tremendous amount of time, paperwork, and unnecessary agony.

I urge my colleagues to support these important reforms and the supplemental appropriations measure now before the Senate.

While I commend the House of Representatives for providing robust funding for Sandy recovery efforts and including important reforms to the Stafford Act, I am disappointed that the House leadership decided to strip out provisions to help disaster-affected communities in other parts of the country.

Some people have referred to those provisions as "pork." I think we should be careful what we refer to as "pork" around here. The Senate's provisions were all disaster-related, and this was a disaster assistance bill. For communities around the country that have been failed by Federal programs that ignore legitimate disaster-related needs, and failed also by a Congress that continues to underfund or zero out Federal disaster accounts, they expect

their representatives in Congress to stand up and fight for them to deliver relief.

The House of Representatives blocked that relief when it stripped out 97 percent of the fisheries assistance money, struck language authorizing the Corps of Engineers to address critical needs along the Mississippi River, and eliminated a provision to correct FEMA's deeply flawed Federal formula for local governments' disaster-related debt relief. It was wrong of the House leadership to turn their backs on the rest of the country by terminating these provisions, and the record should reflect that fact very clearly.

Finally, Madam President, I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her support of this critical legislation and urge a "yea" vote on the bill. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I know there is a lot of passion here on the floor regarding this particular legislation. There is probably not a Member on this floor who has not had some semblance of a disaster in the State and for the people they represent. Sandy clearly rises to one of the top categories of something truly catastrophic, but many of us have experienced tornadoes and destruction and floods and a number of other disasters.

One of the essential functions of government is to address those in immediate need and meet some of those emergency needs. With the cooperation of local and State and Federal authorities stepping up, we have been able to assure the American people that help is on the way, and hopefully help is on the way in an expeditious manner so that it gets to those who need that emergency help quickly.

It is regrettable it has taken this long for some of this money to be appropriated. I personally think we could have expedited this had we gained support for an amendment I offered in December which would have immediately met those emergency needs, yet given the Congress time to work through the process of examining other aspects of the bill that, No. 1, were not related to Sandy and, No. 2, that fell on various Members' wish lists of things they wanted done for their States. Of course, that is their responsibility to do so, but we all know that when we see a train moving out of the station—a bill that is going to be passed and going to become law, there has been a temptation through the years to add unrelated matters in these types of bills knowing it is a train leaving the station and ultimately will be supported. We saw what happened during the fiscal cliff debate. At the last minute, all of these egregious examples of spending that had nothing to do with the issue itself were tacked on to the final bill.

So really what we were trying to talk about here is a process that I believe and I think a number of Members believe is necessary to vet every spending

appropriation that comes before this body to ensure that it meets the essential function of government, to ensure that it is not loaded with extraneous matters, and to ensure that we are careful with taxpayer dollars.

This is not about ideology. This is about some very basic math that shows us that we have a decreasing capacity to address these types of emergencies and other necessary items like education, medical research, transportation to pave roads and rebuild bridges, and any number of discretionary items whose value we can debate. That is shrinking dramatically. So if we don't apply at least some discipline to how we evaluate and examine our spending, we will continue to plunge into debt and to borrow money, which is ultimately unsustainable. If we continue this type of spending without proper oversight, I think we are shirking our duty to the public.

I am not down here to talk against funding for this disaster. I am down here to discuss how we, together, Republicans and Democrats, need to apply some discipline to how we make decisions. It has been a time-honored practice here to load up necessary bills with extraneous matters, and it has been a time-honored practice not to provide the oversight necessary to go back and look at how effectively we have spent the taxpayers' dollars in the past and what kinds of things we can do to ensure we don't make those mistakes in the future.

I think it is also worthwhile to at least examine the possibility of paying for expenditures, particularly when we are borrowing 40 cents of every dollar, when we are careening deeper into debt that the younger generations are not going to be able to pay off without serious adverse consequences. There is a moral issue here about what kind of country we are leaving for the future and what we are turning over to our children.

I think it is worthwhile to at least acknowledge that those of us who raise these kinds of questions should not be labeled or targeted as trying to throw people on the street or not respond to legitimate needs but are simply trying to say that we need some standards here to apply to a situation where our spending is out of control. Every business in America has to do this and has had to do this these past 4 or 5 years in order to survive.

Families have had to do this in order to make sure they could make their mortgage payments, or Dad has lost his job. There has been enforced discipline on the basis of an economy that has been stagnant for about 4 years. In the meantime, the Federal Government keeps plunging into debt.

So if someone brings forward an alternative to at least give us the opportunity to provide effective oversight and to make sure this money does go to emergency needs and doesn't just fulfill a wish list for what some cities would like to do in the future to pre-

vent against future storms—not that we shouldn't be debating that, but it doesn't qualify as the emergency need of getting money to the people who need it now. These are future decisions, and we haven't had time to assess those. We haven't had time to examine those in detail, and we haven't used a process that is in place in the Senate to go through committees and let the committees work through. Is this essential to meeting the emergency needs or can we set this aside and spend a little more time examining it and looking at it to make sure this is how we want to go forward?

We have a habit here of throwing money at things under an emergency category, and then later finding out that, one, it wasn't an emergency where the money went; and, two, it was misspent and not effective. We just simply can't afford to keep doing this.

Once again, I want to state we are not here trying to undermine funding that is needed for Sandy. So I think some of the things the House did are legitimate in terms of saying let's set aside unrelated matters. It doesn't mean we cast them into the dust bin never to be seen again. It simply means let's let those that are not emergency situations be more carefully examined in terms of whether we need that. If someone does come to the floor—as I understand Senator LEE is going to do—and offers a potential offset, let's at least look at that possibility.

The debt clock is ticking, and ticking ever faster, and it is destroying the hopes and dreams of future generations. I think we have a moral responsibility to at least be as conscious and effective with dealing with the taxpayers' dollars in terms of how they are spent, whether it is an emergency supplemental related to a disaster or whether it is just a normal appropriation that comes along every year through our appropriations process.

We haven't exercised that kind of discipline, and our country is going to pay a very serious series of consequences as a result of that. Most importantly, we are denying young people in this country a future that we have enjoyed but we are not going to be able to pass on to others.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank the chair of the Appropriations Committee for the wonderful job she has done. We have worked together as a team, and she has been great. This is her first major bill as chair of the Appropriations Committee, and I think it bodes well for the future, if you will, of the strengthening of that committee on into the year as we do appropriations bills.

I thank my colleague from Alabama, my gym mate, Senator SHELBY, for his help and support. I think he and Senator MIKULSKI will make a great team

as chair and ranking member on the Appropriations Committee.

I thank MARY LANDRIEU and the other subcommittee chairs. They did an amazing job for us, and I thank them. MARY'S assistance and advice, given what she went through several years ago in Louisiana with Katrina, was invaluable to those of us in New York and New Jersey.

Finally, I see Senator GILLIBRAND is here; Senator BLUMENTHAL is in the chair; in addition, Senator MURPHY, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator LAUTENBERG—we have all worked as a team, and I thank them for their efforts.

It has been 91 days since Sandy struck. It has taken far too long, but we are finally one vote away from getting the much needed aid we so desperately depend on in New York and New Jersey. It was 3 months ago that Superstorm Sandy tore up the east coast, obliterating hundreds of thousands of homes in New York. It was 91 days ago that this hurricane, coupled with a cold front, uprooted small businesses that are the lifeblood of middle-class communities on Long Island, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn, and Lower Manhattan.

As you may recall, Sandy's wrath was wide, and it was deep. Nearly 300,000 families had their homes damaged or destroyed by Sandy; 131 people were killed, 60 in New York; 2 million individuals lost power; and our Nation's public transportation system witnessed catastrophic flooding. Despite overwhelming damage from wind and water, snow, and in some neighborhoods even fire, New Yorkers are ready to move forward.

Not one day has passed since Sandy made landfall that I haven't heard from my constituents wondering when Washington will remember them. I heard the words of my good friend from Indiana. I know he is a caring person. But for decades, taxpayers from New York have sent their money when disasters occurred, such as fires on the west coast or floods in the Missouri and Mississippi Valleys, hurricanes in Louisiana or Florida, and other disasters. We have sent our tax dollars—billions of them—and now, all of a sudden, some are suggesting we should change the rules when we are hit by the first major disaster to hit the New York City region in a very long time? That is not fair. That is not right. We have argued against it, and I hope my colleagues will defeat the Lee amendment.

I also say to my colleagues that this is not just about dollars and cents. This is about people who care and are waiting—homeowners who are waiting to rebuild their homes so they can move back into them. This is about small business owners who are hanging on by a thread after building a business for 25 years. We know when the hand of God strikes, it is overwhelming.

Take Rita from Emerald Magic Lawn Care. Her company helps local families, schools, and businesses with lawn care

in the spring and summer, and around the holidays they help with decorations and lights. But Emerald Magic's business was interrupted for many weeks, and the client base dried up. Rita's business will be in huge trouble. It may not survive if she doesn't get a lifeline—and get one now. So this is very important.

Week after week, month after month, New Yorkers have been told this is "a waiting game." That is not an answer we can live with, and neither can they. We can't wait any longer because nothing about this disaster was a game for the family in Breezy Point or in Rockaway or in Long Island or in Queens or Staten Island. It wasn't a game for them or for the more than 265,000 small businesses whose doors are currently shuttered or the hundreds of thousands of homeowners who have severe damage to their homes. Many don't have their homes anymore. They can't wait either.

And they are not the only ones. Our schools and hospitals are still combating Sandy-related repairs. The damage to our roads and transit systems hasn't gone away in 3 months. Our coastline must be rebuilt so we are not naked if, God forbid, another Sandy occurs. New York has waited, but we can't wait any longer.

We know too well that when a major disaster strikes, it is too much for any one State or any one region to tackle. But that is what we have been left to do so far in New York, and I know the same goes for my colleagues in New Jersey. So Senators LAUTENBERG, MENENDEZ, GILLIBRAND, and I are making a plea to our colleagues: Please, we have waited 91 long days. We can't wait any longer. Simply put, we must pass this bill today. Ninety-one days ago, Sandy struck a body blow against New York. Today, finally, we can strike back and give our people the help they need to get back on their feet and rebuild our communities.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise to continue this discussion about Superstorm Sandy.

I start by saying there isn't any doubt whatsoever about the severity of this tragedy or about the human suffering. It is absolutely the case that the needed emergency money should have been there already. There is a real, genuine need, and that need needs to be met. That is part of the reason I voted in favor of spending \$24 billion, which could legitimately prescribe the kind of emergency funding that suffering people needed.

But I am concerned about two things: One is the fact that some people have used the occasion of the misery these people are suffering through to add on all kinds of spending that has absolutely nothing to do with Superstorm Sandy, and none of it is offset. So we have a \$1.1 trillion budget deficit, and we are just adding another \$60 billion right on top of that.

These are the items I would suggest that certainly don't have much to do with Superstorm Sandy: \$15 million for NASA repairs at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida; \$274 million for the Coast Guard acquisitions in the Bahamas and Great Lakes; \$2 million for Smithsonian repairs. Then there is another whole category of items, which is tens of billions of dollars, which is long-term construction projects for the mitigation against future storms and disasters.

Is that an important expenditure by the Federal Government? It probably is. It probably should be a high priority. But is it an emergency? Of course not. It is infrastructure. It is going to be spent over years, maybe decades, as we build seawalls to protect beaches off the coast from future storms which are years away.

Is that an important consideration? I think it is. But when we are running trillion-dollar deficits, I think it has to compete with the other legitimate demands for long-term spending and infrastructure spending and the ways that we are going to protect our country as well. But we have no such process here. And that is part of what is wrong. That is part of what is wrong with this town and why we are in such a mess. It is because this body—and Congress generally—just refuses to make choices.

So I can understand completely all of this money being spent, if that is the determination that every one of these projects that have nothing to do with Sandy still nevertheless need to be funded. But couldn't we offset that by trimming spending elsewhere so that we don't further accelerate this decline? We are heading toward a fiscal crisis. Unfortunately, I guess not—unless we adopt the Lee amendment.

The Lee amendment says let's trim all discretionary spending by one-half of 1 percent over the next 9 years. So can we find half a penny of every dollar that we would otherwise spend so that we would fully fund everything in this bill. Not a dime would get cut from this bill, but we wouldn't add to our deficit and further accelerate this path we are on to a fiscal crisis.

We don't have to wait any longer. We can do this right now. We don't have to cut a dime from this bill; we can fully fund this bill. But at some point we need to start making choices around here. At some point we can't just have everything. That is how you get trillion-dollar deficits. That is how you end up like Greece.

So I would just suggest, let's pass this bill. Let's spend all the money in the Sandy supplemental. But let's offset it with a cut of one-half of 1 percent in discretionary spending over the next 9 years. That is what the Lee amendment does, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership, not only leading the charge for aid that our families in New York so desperately need but, as chair of the Appropriations Committee, making sure this bill is as strong as it possibly can be. I agree with her remarks that the bill would have been better if they left in place what the Senate had written, but I thank the chairwoman for her dedication to helping our families and businesses recover. It has made such a difference.

I also thank Senator LANDRIEU for her experience and expertise in meeting the needs of States devastated by natural disasters. She has had to live through these tragedies before. She knows what it is like to talk to constituents whose loved ones have been lost, whose families and businesses have been destroyed and torn apart, and whose lives are just in the beginning of being rebuilt. I thank her for what she has done.

I thank Senator MENENDEZ, who will be following me with remarks, and Senator LAUTENBERG, and Senator CHUCK SCHUMER for the work he has done on behalf of New Yorkers, being a clarion call for common sense and immediate action and for bringing our colleagues together to meet the needs of so many families who are so much in need.

I rise today to urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support our efforts to finally come to the relief of millions of Americans who are suffering in the wake of Superstorm Sandy. New Yorkers in my home State have had to wait far too long for Congress to act.

Superstorm Sandy was a weather event unlike anything we in New York have ever seen before. It claimed the lives of 60 New Yorkers, left hundreds of thousands with significant damage to their homes and their businesses, their neighborhoods and their families. This body came together just before the New Year to provide the desperately needed aid families require to rebuild their homes, their businesses, and their lives; the aid our small businesses so desperately need to get their businesses up and running, the lifeblood of our communities flowing again, and getting our families back on their feet.

This bill should be neither controversial nor partisan. We have already debated and passed an almost identical package that was passed by the Republican-led House of Representatives. Once again, the American people are watching us to see if we can come together and stand by families in need, just as we have done for every natural disaster in our Nation's history. They are watching once again to see if this body will do the right thing or turn its back on them and not give them the support they need to rebuild.

This was always an emergency spending bill. It is an emergency, it is urgent, and it needs our action now. We

have to seize the opportunity without causing any further delay and we have to show the American people that we can rise on an occasion such as this, when duty calls, to do the right thing. I assure you, there is no one who wants to spend a single cent more than is actually necessary, which is why we took such pains and effort to make sure this bill was transparent, had accountability and the right kind of oversight. We are urging that we fully fund this proposal that was so carefully put together.

Since 1989, Congress has passed 36 emergency appropriations bills for disaster relief without specifically designating any offsets. There is no reason why we should treat this disaster, this emergency, this horror, any differently than we have past disasters.

When disasters do strike, we have always found the good will and the care for one another to do what is right. Protecting people, looking after them, making sure they are safe, allowing businesses to grow is what we should be doing. Our Federal Government's role is to protect the people first. It is our duty as public servants.

I urge my colleagues once again, find that good will, help others, do the right thing.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. President, I wish to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from Maryland, the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, as well as the Senator from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ.

I thank the chairwoman for her leadership in bringing the disaster supplemental appropriations bill to the Senate floor to address the urgent recovery needs of New York, New Jersey, and the rest of the Northeast that was affected by Superstorm Sandy. It is my hope we will pass this bill quickly so that our communities can begin to rebuild.

It is also important that as we rebuild, agencies of the Federal Government work in a collaborative way, across agencies and in concert with our State and local governments. We should not have multiple agencies studying the same problem separately, but rather the Federal Government should be working together to develop the best models for rebuilding our battered coasts as well as planning for the long-term sustainability and resilience of these vulnerable areas.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I agree completely with Senator GILLIBRAND's sense of urgency regarding this vitally needed plan. I also know that my good friend from New York and I agree on the need to recognize and, to the greatest extent possible, to enhance the value of our coastal natural resources to the recovery of our storm-ravaged communities.

It is our understanding—and we request the Chair's clarification—that the language we have before us directs the Army Corps of Engineers to take the integrated, collaborative approach

discussed by the Senator from New York. It is our hope and expectation that the Corps will go well beyond the usual level of coordination in order to take maximum advantage of the expertise and commitment its Federal and non-Federal partners bring to this legislation's explicit goals of flood risk reduction and ecological sustainability.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I appreciate the Senators from New York and New Jersey raising this issue. The language in the bill we currently have before us directs the Army Corps to conduct their study in coordination with other Federal agencies, and State, local and Tribal officials. It is the intent of Congress for the Army Corps of Engineers to adopt a multiagency approach and work in close collaboration with other relevant agencies in studying and planning for the reconstruction of the coastal areas destroyed by Superstorm Sandy. In making its supplemental funding request to Congress, the Administration specifically requested funding for an "inter-agency planning process in conjunction with State, local, and Tribal officials, and to develop plans to address long-standing challenges and ensure the health and prosperity of the areas affected by Sandy . . . for innovative approaches to reduce the future flood risk, in ways that will promote the long-term sustainability of the coastal ecosystem and communities." It is our expectation that the administration would adopt that approach with the funding provided in this legislation.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I thank the chairwoman for making this clarification. It is my hope that as the Army Corps and other agencies work to assess the region's needs post-Sandy, they will work collaboratively to develop the best techniques to rebuild our coasts to reduce flood risks and provide for long-term sustainability of the coastal ecosystem.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Again, I agree with my friend from New York. I would also note that this collaborative study should take into account the particular needs of disadvantaged communities within our States, many of which face unique challenges as they seek to reverse the damages of this storm and to prevent future catastrophes. These communities were among the most damaged by this storm and the Army Corps, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other Federal agencies would be remiss not to carefully consider, and balance, the needs of these underserved residents with the need to rebuild commercial areas and critical infrastructure, including industrial facilities, along our coastline. I would urge all agencies funded in this bill to provide for the special needs of these neighborhoods and the shorelines which they depend on.

GREAT LAKES NAVIGATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, Hurricane Sandy was one of the costliest storms in our Nation's history, resulting in at least 125 deaths, the destruction of tens

of thousands of homes and businesses, electricity losses for millions of people, disruption of fuel supplies, and devastating damage to public infrastructure. When Hurricane Sandy struck land on October 29, hurricane-force winds covered 900 miles, wreaking havoc across a broad stretch of the Eastern seaboard. While the impact of Hurricane Sandy was most severe in New Jersey and New York, the storm impacted 24 States, including Michigan. Across the Great Lakes, gale force winds caused damage to breakwaters and silted in harbors and channels. On Lake Huron, wave heights reached 23 feet, in Lake Michigan the waves peaked at 22 feet, and the storm caused waves of 14 feet in Lake Erie.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The storm was one of the most devastating in our Nation's history, and the assistance that is so needed to address the widespread damage is long past due.

Mr. LEVIN. The supplemental appropriations bill before us today includes \$821 million for necessary expenses related to Hurricane Sandy to dredge Federal navigation channels and repair damage to Corps projects. Great Lakes channels, harbors, breakwaters, and piers were damaged by gale-force winds caused by Hurricane Sandy. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates damage to the Great Lakes System of \$17 million, including in my State of Michigan. This system transports over 160 million tons of commodities and hundreds of thousands of jobs are tied to the system. It is vital that repairs be made promptly. Madam Chairwoman, will these Great Lakes navigational projects damaged by Hurricane Sandy be eligible for some of the \$821 million in funding?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Yes. The funding is for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricane Sandy, and since Great Lakes Federal navigation projects were damaged as a result of that storm, they would indeed be eligible.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator for her assurances.

Mr. President, I will vote in support of the disaster assistance bill to aid the victims of Hurricane Sandy, who number in the millions. Hurricane Sandy covered over 900 miles, took over 125 lives, destroyed homes and businesses, demolished breakwaters, piers, boardwalks, and other infrastructure, and left millions without transportation. This superstorm occurred nearly 3 months ago, and assistance is long past due for the victims who remain homeless and communities trying to rebuild.

Hurricane Sandy left such far-reaching devastation that its destruction reached into the Great Lakes. Gale force winds across the Great Lakes caused damage to breakwaters and silted in harbors and channels. The bill before us provides \$821 million to dredge Federal navigation channels and repair damage to Corps projects impacted by Hurricane Sandy. I entered into a colloquy with Chairwoman

MIKULSKI to ensure that the damage incurred to Great Lakes harbors as a result of Hurricane Sandy would be eligible for that funding. I thank Senator MIKULSKI for clarifying that funding could go to the Great Lakes, and I hope the Corps will prioritize funding for those Great Lakes projects, which are estimated to require about \$17 million in repairs.

We have a responsibility to help our fellow Americans who have lost homes and businesses through no fault of their own, and I hope we will pass this bill and immediately send it to the President for his signature. Hurricane Sandy is estimated to be the second or third most costly disaster in U.S. history. We need to provide the assistance promptly to those affected by Hurricane Sandy.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise in support of efforts to restore to the supplemental appropriations bill \$150 million in disaster funding for officially declared fisheries disasters. The bill that the Senate passed in December, with overwhelming bipartisan support, included this \$150 million in necessary disaster funding to address federally declared fisheries disasters. Unfortunately, the bill before us, passed by the House, did not include this critical funding.

It is important to note that this funding would be used to respond to fishery disasters declared by the Acting Commerce Secretary in 2012 under the authority provided by the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act. This is authorized funding in response to declared disasters.

The funding for declared fisheries disasters is necessary to address the devastating economic consequences of significant projected reductions in the total allowable catch for critical groundfish stocks. In September of last year, the Acting Secretary of Commerce, recognizing the economic difficulty that fishing communities have and will continue to face, declared a Federal fisheries disaster for Maine, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Connecticut for the 2013 fishing year.

Fishing is more than just a profession in New England. Fishing is a way of life and a significant part of Maine's heritage. There are 45 vessels based in Maine that are actively fishing with Federal groundfish permits. Last year, more than 5 million pounds of groundfish, with a dockside value approaching \$5.8 million, were landed in Maine. The projected reductions, which may be as high as 73 percent, could devastate these fishing communities and come despite strict adherence to rigorous management practices by fishermen.

The requested funding would be used to provide economic relief to the region's struggling groundfish industry and to make targeted investments that will allow the fleet to survive and become more sustainable in the years

ahead. These funds could also be productively used to fully cover the costs of at-sea monitoring and to address long-term overcapacity in the fishing industry. This is critical to rebuilding fish stocks and preserving a thriving fishing industry well into the future.

Slow recovery and declining fish stocks continue to have a negative impact on commercial fishing, harming local communities and economies. This Federal disaster assistance is vital to the long-term success and short-term survival of fishing communities throughout the region.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, after so much time has passed due to the delay in consideration by the other body, it is critical that we move ahead to provide needed assistance to communities in the Northeast that were affected by Superstorm Sandy.

I want to commend Chairwoman MIKULSKI, as well as our late colleague, Chairman Inouye, for their leadership in developing a bipartisan bill that would have provided critical assistance to respond to the hurricane and its aftermath, as well as other disasters. Indeed, the bill that passed the Senate last year was a superior product. It is regrettable that bill is not before us again today.

The Senate bill would have delivered a significant amount of relief to communities in New York and New Jersey, while recognizing the substantial challenges faced by the other ten States that received major disaster declarations due to the storm. For example, the Senate bill included \$810 million in water infrastructure grants to address the \$2.8 billion in Sandy-related water infrastructure needs identified by the Environmental Protection Agency, allocating a minimum of 2 percent to each affected State.

In addition, the Senate bill would have required the Department of Housing and Urban Development—HUD—to establish minimum allocations of Community Development Block Grant—CDBG—funds so that every State that was hit by Sandy would receive funding to address its impacts. Finally, the bill included \$150 million to address a series of fisheries disasters that were declared in 2012.

Regrettably, the House, after failing to bring a bill to the floor before the end of the 112th Congress, went in a different direction on these matters. The House bill cuts funding for water infrastructure by \$210 million and limits funding to only two States, setting a dangerous precedent that Congress will provide assistance to some States that are affected by a disaster but not to others. With respect to CDBG funding, the House bill provides no minimum allocation and no assurance that States with significant damages from Sandy will receive the assistance they need. Paradoxically, the bill threatens to dilute assistance for Sandy by making the CDBG funding available for all disasters that occurred in 2011, 2012, and

2013 even though funding had been provided for some of these disasters in earlier appropriations laws. Finally, as fishermen from New York to Maine face dramatic catch reductions, the House bill strips the \$150 million in fisheries disaster funding from the bill.

While it is unfortunate that the House bill makes these changes, the people of the Northeast should not be forced to wait any longer for the help this bill does provide. This includes much needed funds for highway, port and harbor repairs, as well as repairs to national parks and wildlife refuges. Equally important is funding to begin the long-term analysis and work to help prevent this kind of damage from occurring again. Even as I continue to believe we should be able to do more, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, when we debated the Hurricane Sandy Supplemental bill in the Senate prior to Christmas, I was unable to support the spending bill because much of the taxpayer funding in the bill had little or nothing to do with meeting the immediate needs of individuals misplaced by Hurricane Sandy. Unfortunately, not much has changed with the House bill that we will soon vote on. At a time when we face ongoing trillion-dollar deficits and a \$16.4 trillion debt, we cannot justify this type of spending.

While some of the projects included in this bill may hold merit on their own, many of the projects included should go through the normal budget and appropriations process, where Congress has time to vet the need for such spending requests. To drive home this point, the Congressional Budget Office—CBO—analysis of the bill tells us that only 7 percent of the funding in this bill will be spent this year—FY 2013—and roughly 70 percent of the funding will not be spent until FY 2015 and beyond.

After examining this bill, I have found numerous examples of questionable spending:

Millions to replace automobiles owned by the Federal Government, including:

\$1 million for DEA to replace 15 vehicles;

\$230,000 for ATF to replace three vehicles;

\$300,000 for the Secret Service vehicles; and

\$855,000 for ICE vehicles.

The Federal Government currently owns or leases over 660,000 vehicles—surely we can find replacements within our current inventory. Shouldn't we focus on providing relief directly to those still trying to rebuild their lives before replacing a bureaucrat's car?

There is \$16 billion for Community Development Block Grant funds for 47 States and Puerto Rico that can be used for events in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

There is \$2 million to repair damage to the roofs of museums in Washington, D.C., while many in Hurricane Sandy's path still have no permanent roof over their own heads.

The bill includes \$50 million for National Park Service Historic Preservation grants, which was not included in the President's request; \$180 million for the Department of Agriculture's Emergency Watershed Protection program, which helps restore watersheds damaged by wildfires and droughts for areas including Colorado; highway funding for the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; \$15 million for NASA facilities, though NASA itself has called its damage from the hurricane "minimal." On the day after the storm hit, NASA's Wallops Island put out a statement stating that "an initial assessment team surveyed roads and facilities at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility today reporting a number of downed trees but otherwise minimal impact in the wake of Hurricane Sandy."

The bill includes \$111 million for a weather satellite data mitigation gap reserve fund, a controversial program created by President Obama by executive order for ocean zoning planning; \$8.5 million for weather forecasting equipment; \$23 million for the USDA "Forest Restoration Program" for planting trees on private property. This program is actually a Farm Bill subsidy program that's run by a relatively unknown agency called the "Farm Service Administration" which is primarily responsible for managing crop insurance. Under this program, private landowners with about 50 acres of land can apply for up to \$500,000 in free grants for tree planting activities.

The bill also includes \$118 million for taxpayer-supported AMTRAK, \$86 million more than the President's request. While some of the funding will go for repairs, money will also go to increasing passenger capacity to New York and future mitigation efforts. In a 2-page letter from AMTRAK that gives a broad description of how the money will be spent, almost all of it falls under funding for future capital projects. This includes funding for the "Gateway Program."

According to AMTRAK, the Gateway Program, which was started in 2011 and is projected to cost over \$13 billion, is "a comprehensive program of infrastructure improvements to increase track, tunnel, bridge, and station capacity serving New York City that will improve current assets and allow the eventual doubling of passenger trains into Manhattan." I am not here to debate the merits or the need for new tunnels, but this is clearly a capital improvement project—unrelated to Hurricane Sandy.

AMTRAK is up and running so it is not apparent why this funding is deemed "emergency" spending and included in this spending package. Keep in mind, AMTRAK receives roughly \$1 billion in annual funding. Future mitigation projects should be debated in next year's budget process.

The bill includes \$100 million for Head Start; \$1 million for Legal Serv-

ices Corporation; \$3.5 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers—with little clarity on how the money will be spent. More projects are not something the Army Corps can handle. They are currently experiencing a backlog of construction and maintenance projects of approximately \$70 billion. Furthermore, a 2010 report released by the Government Accountability Office noted that carryover funds have increased "due to the large amount of supplemental funding the Corps has received in recent years." Clearly, supplemental spending on the Army Corps has not paid off.

As a nation, we are \$16.4 trillion in debt and dealing with trillion-dollar deficits. We do need to come to the aid of those who lost everything in Hurricane Sandy and are struggling to get their lives back together. Congress, however, cannot continue down this road of irresponsible spending. We must pass a true disaster spending bill that only spends money on disaster recovery and response, not pet projects.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, Hurricane Sandy was the most devastating storm to hit the northeast United States in recorded history. Rebuilding after the storm will be a formidable challenge and this aid bill will go a long way towards meeting that challenge.

When Hurricane Sandy struck the East Coast, it flooded electrical substations and knocked down trees onto power lines, shutting off power for 8.2 million customers, and causing billions of dollars in damage. Over 300,000 homes in New York City and 72,000 homes and businesses in New Jersey were damaged or destroyed. Four New York City hospitals had to shut their doors.

The storm sent floodwater gushing into New York's five boroughs, flooding tunnels and the subway system and making the equipment inoperable. In many hard-hit areas wireless networks suffered widespread outages primarily due to lack of power.

When smart technologies are in place, power outages can be avoided and lives, homes and businesses are protected. As the massive rebuilding effort gets under way, decision makers should rebuild the smart way by ensuring that reconstruction funds maximize the deployment of technologies to improve the resilience of the electric grid, mitigate future power outages and ensure continued operation of facilities critical to public health, safety and welfare. Resilient and reliable power is critical for first responders, communications, health care, transportation, financial systems, homeland security, water and waste-water treatment, emergency food and shelter, and other vital services.

Examples of relevant technologies include smart grid technologies to isolate problems and repair them remotely, such as smart meters, high-tech sensors, grid monitoring and control systems, and remote reconfiguration and redundancy systems;

microgrids, energy storage, distributed and backup generation to power critical facilities and operations; wiring, cabling, submersible and other distribution components and enclosures to prevent outages; and electronic controlled re-closers and similar technologies for power restoration.

The funding provided by the Hurricane Sandy disaster relief appropriations bill should enable these States to wisely make cost-effective investments in these technologies for their long-term infrastructure resiliency. Rebuilding these essential infrastructure systems with technology that is equipped to deal with extreme weather should make recovery from any future storm faster, cheaper, and better.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, several weeks ago, before the end of the 112th Congress, the Senate voted to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy with a supplemental appropriations bill. The \$60.4 billion supplemental emergency bill passed in the Senate by a vote of 62-32. Unfortunately, the House did not pass the bill before the end of the 112th Congress, and we must pass this bill again.

This aid is desperately needed. Hurricane Sandy ranks second only to Hurricane Katrina in terms of damage. Insurers estimate that the damage will make the storm the sixth costliest in the world for their industry.

In New York and New Jersey, more than 651,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, 463,000 businesses were hurt and need assistance. Hundreds of miles of roads and rail were damaged and will need to be repaired. We have a responsibility to help our fellow Americans recover from this disaster. Congress has always stepped up and helped States and communities deal with natural disasters.

Hurricane Sandy is also a time for us to be honest, face facts, and state the obvious: the climate is changing. The weather is getting worse extreme weather events are happening with increased frequency and intensity. It's time for Congress to get serious about addressing the causes and effects of climate change we can no longer afford to ignore this issue.

The vast majority of Americans view the recent extreme weather events as evidence that the problem of global warming is no longer some vague or distant threat. In a recent poll, nearly 4 out of 5 Americans stated that they now think temperatures are rising and that global warming will be a serious problem if nothing is done about it. The existence of manmade climate change is not a debatable issue for the overwhelming majority of scientists more than 98 percent of all working climate scientists believe that human activities have led to climate change.

Over the previous decades, scientists have measured a consistent increase in global temperatures, which has led to rising sea levels, warmer air and, as a result, more extreme weather. The National Climatic Data Center just announced 2012 was the hottest year on

record in the continental United States. Our changing climate means that the storms and heat waves we are seeing will become stronger and more extreme in the future causing greater amounts of damage.

The insurance and defense sectors have looked at this scientific data and are making some changes. They are adjusting their operations to prepare for worse weather and bigger losses. Nationwide, the financial consequences of weather-related disasters and climate change hit a historic new high last year U.S. disasters caused over \$55 billion in damages.

The federal government needs to rethink how we protect federal assets and provide disaster assistance to communities on a more regular basis. And right now, passing this bill for supplemental appropriations for Sandy victims is a great first step. Because in addition to providing aid to help rebuild houses, schools, and business, the bill also includes billions for mitigation programs. Mitigation programs help us rebuild in a way that's smarter than the first time, adding defenses against storms and protecting property by moving it out of flood zones or rebuilding with flood protection features.

These policies make sense. They better prepare us for the next big storm, and they will save a lot of taxpayer money by reducing the damage of the next disaster.

After that, we in the Senate need to face the reality of greenhouse gas emissions and create energy and environmental policies that reduce their destructive impact, including investments in renewable energy and pollution control technologies.

The President challenged all of us in his inaugural address to respond to the threat of climate change, "knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations." We need to answer the President's challenge by passing this bill now and passing climate change legislation soon that will help us leave a sustainable planet to our children and grandchildren.

AMENDMENT NO. 4

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk. I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) proposes an amendment numbered 4.

Mr. LEE. I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To offset the cost of the bill with rescissions and discretionary cap reductions)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a)(1) There is hereby rescinded an amount equal to .49 percent of—

(A) the budget authority provided (or obligation limitation imposed) for fiscal year 2013 for any discretionary account in any fiscal year 2013 appropriation Act;

(B) the budget authority provided in any advance appropriation for fiscal year 2013 for any discretionary account in any prior fiscal year appropriation Act; and

(C) the contract authority provided in fiscal year 2013 for any program that is subject to a limitation contained in any fiscal year 2013 appropriation Act for any discretionary account.

(2) Any rescission made by paragraph (1) shall be applied proportionately—

(A) to each discretionary account and each item of budget authority described in such paragraph; and

(B) within each such account and item, to each program, project, and activity (with programs, projects, and activities as delineated in the appropriation Act or accompanying reports for the relevant fiscal year covering such account or item, or for accounts and items not included in appropriation Acts, as delineated in the most recently submitted President's budget).

(3) In the case of any fiscal year 2013 appropriation Act enacted after the date of enactment of this section, any rescission required by paragraph (1) shall take effect immediately after the enactment of such Act.

(4) Within 30 days after the date of enactment of this subsection (or, if later, 30 days after the enactment of any fiscal year 2013 appropriation Act), the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report specifying the account and amount of each rescission made pursuant to paragraph (1).

(b) The discretionary caps provided in section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as modified by section 251A of such Act, are reduced as follows for the respective fiscal year and the respective category:

(1) for fiscal year 2014—

(A) \$2,704,800,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,497,400,000 in non-security;

(2) for fiscal year 2015—

(A) \$2,773,400,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,548,000,000 in non-security;

(3) for fiscal year 2016—

(A) \$2,827,300,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,597,000,000 in non-security;

(4) fiscal year 2017—

(A) \$2,891,000,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,650,900,000 in non-security;

(5) for fiscal year 2018—

(A) \$2,954,700,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,709,700,000 in non-security;

(6) for fiscal year 2019—

(A) \$3,018,400,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,773,400,000 in non-security;

(7) for fiscal year 2020—

(A) \$3,087,000,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,832,200,000 in non-security; and

(8) for fiscal year 2021—

(A) \$3,155,600,000 in security; and

(B) \$2,891,000,000 in non-security;

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I stand today and urge my colleagues' support for my amendment to this bill. I appreciate the eloquent arguments made by my friend and colleague, the Senator from New York, a moment ago. She is correct to point out that people have suffered as a result of this storm. My heart goes out to them. Anytime my fellow Americans find themselves in a position of need, we want to address that situation very carefully and make sure we do the right thing, make sure people are not overlooked.

As we do that, and especially as we do something such as that in the way we are being asked to do it here, we must also consider how our actions here might have other implications down the road. We have to stop and consider that we are more than \$16 trillion in debt and we are adding to that debt at a rate of more than \$1 trillion every single year. The amount of money we spend in interest on our national debt now stands at a little over \$200 billion a year and is expected to grow significantly in the next few years, such that by the end of this decade—perhaps much sooner—we are likely to be paying close to \$1 trillion a year just to pay the interest on our national debt.

It is because of considerations such as these that we put in place certain spending caps, in connection with the Budget Control Act, in the summer of 2011. It is for this same reason I am asking that we consider capping this, subjecting this same amount, this money we are being asked to spend here, to the same caps. In other words, what I am suggesting is that we find a way to offset our spending for this bill by stretching it out over the next 9 years, capping what we spend. All we have to do to offset what we are being asked to spend here is to cut our discretionary spending by one-half of 1 percent over the next 9 years.

As we look at our economic realities, as we look at the fact it is going to be very difficult in coming years to fund everything we need to do through the Federal Government, this is the approach we have to take with regard to new spending. If we are being asked to spend money, no matter how important the cause, to the tune of more than \$50 billion in one fell swoop, I think we owe it to the good people of the United States of America, the good people who depend on so many things the Federal Government does—things as wide ranging as defense at one end of the spectrum and entitlements at the other end of the spectrum and everything in between—we owe it to them to consider how our actions today might forestall, might complicate, might impair our ability to fund those programs down the road. It is for this reason I think we need to offset this spending. We can do it by cutting only one-half of 1 percent of our discretionary spending over the next 9 years. For that reason I urge each of my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the distinguished chair of the Appropriations Committee for all of her incredible work and help here, as well as that of the staff, in bringing us to this moment. We would not be here without her tremendous work, especially in light of Chairman Inouye's passing. I appreciate the ranking member, someone who understands the challenges, having come from a

Gulf State that saw the consequences of disasters.

There are a couple of important dates here. The first one is 91 days, 91 days since Superstorm Sandy hit the Northeast; 91 days we have been languishing, waiting for our Government to respond to the critical issues, life-and-death situations, of fellow Americans. It is 91 days in which people who largely lost their home, or at least the ability to be back in their home, have been waiting for their government to say: Here is how we are going to help you. It is 91 days in which we now have the biting cold of the winter and the defenselessness of a coastline that cannot be subject to a northeaster that will ultimately have real-life consequences to people's lives, to people's properties, to repetitive loss.

It is 91 days compared to what happened during Hurricane Katrina, where \$60 billion was moved in 11; 91 days in which people have not been able to get their lives back on track, looking to their government—people who are good citizens, pay their taxes, obey the rules, follow the law, and ultimately say: We have been left behind. It is enough.

Another 118 days. That is all we have left to Memorial Day and the beginning of a critically important season for New Jersey's economy, a \$37 billion tourism industry that cannot get back on its feet unless the Federal Government says here is how we are going to help businesses reopen, here is how we are going to help people get back into their homes, here is how we are going to help you rebuild the infrastructure that is not only important to the economy of the State but to the national economy, for which New Jersey and of course New York are such big drivers—well over 10 to 11 percent. We only have 118 days and we have been languishing.

I personally am tired of listening to the voices for patience and delay, suggesting that somehow we as citizens of the United States are second-class citizens waiting for this government to respond to the needs of fellow Americans. That is not what I envision when I think about the United States of America.

Another number: 36 times; 36 times in which we in fact have looked at an emergency in this Nation squarely in the face and said it is an emergency. An emergency is an emergency is an emergency. For over two decades the Congress has looked at this set of disasters and said it is an emergency. But when it comes to the Northeast, somehow it is not an emergency, 91 days later.

Offsets? We didn't have offsets for those over two decades. And when we talk about these offsets we use the words discretionary spending. I think America should know what it means. It means education, it means health care, it means the National Institutes of Health, it means law enforcement, it means a whole host of things we care about in our lives every day, across-

the-board cuts, indiscriminate, without anything about what the consequences are—only when it comes to the Northeast.

I want my colleagues to understand that personally this Senator will judge the future by how we are ultimately responded to. We already feel chagrined but it is what it is. We need to act today. Adoption of this amendment would not only create an across-the-board cut that has consequences to critical things Americans broadly depend on and does it indiscriminately, but also sets us farther back because we would have to go back to the House again, delays and more delays. I cannot look in the face of any American, whether in my State or any State in the country, and say, no, your government has abandoned you, you will have to wait. I cannot look at business owners who are making a life decision about whether what little they have they can reinvest and whether they will get any help from the government to open, hire people, and contribute to our economy. I cannot look in the face of a fellow New Jerseyan and say I still can't tell you what the Government will do to get you back in your home. I suggest to any of my colleagues that you would not want to look in the face of your citizens and have to be in the same position.

The time has come to pass this bill without amendment in an up-or-down vote in what I hope will be the same bipartisan vote that we had when we originally passed the Senate bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we are just moments from voting on both the Lee amendment and on final passage. I rise to oppose the Lee amendment, the amendment of the junior Senator from Utah. His amendment would cut \$6.3 billion from fiscal year 2013. That is \$6 billion that is in addition to the \$3.4 billion we already have as an offset in the bill that is charged against the Corps of Engineers, plus he wants to reduce spending by another \$44 billion over an 8-year period by lowering the discretionary budget caps that were agreed to in the to 2011 Budget Control Act.

Overall, he pays for \$50.5 billion in emergency aid with \$51.2 billion in cuts. That is \$700 million more in cuts than the disaster rate in this bill. I think that is going too far. I think when we cut more than we are going to spend, that is going too far. The \$6.3 billion is an unspecified cut in discretionary programs in the middle of fiscal year 2013. It will cut national defense, it will cut law enforcement, housing assistance, agricultural assistance, and, guess what. The way it is written, it will even cut veterans' benefits, which are ordinarily viewed as mandatory spending.

This \$44.9 billion is a reduction to the caps set by the Budget Control Act of 2011. For my colleagues who don't seem

to remember, we actually did pass a Budget Control Act. It says we in the Appropriations Committee will cut \$1 trillion over the next 9 years. So the cap is already on us on what we could spend, and that is \$100 billion a year. The Lee amendment would add even more to that.

They cannot tell us to pass a budget the way they did in the House bill on the debt limit and then say: Pass the budget. We did pass the Budget Control Act, and now the Lee amendment will shred that agreement. It will just shred it. Every time something comes up—while we are working to pass a budget—are they going to shred it?

I would like to follow what Senator COATS has talked about: Let's get back to regular order. Let's not be kind of doing cuts de jour, cuts on the fly, and who can outcut whom. Senator COATS has many good ideas in his presentation. As an appropriator and a gentleman on my committee, I look forward to working with him.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Will the Senator yield?

Ms. MIKULSKI. If I could just finish my remarks, and I will turn to the gentlelady from Louisiana.

Also, this amendment is terrible in terms of process. If we pass the Lee amendment, not only will it shred the Budget Control Act of 2011—just shred it—it will then send this bill, which meets compelling human need, back to the House. The House has already shrunk this bill. It will further embroil this process, and very likely this bill may die due to some of the extreme elements in the House.

To me, the answer is obvious: Let's defeat the Lee amendment and pass this bill. There are people who are suffering in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Connecticut. Let's acknowledge the validity of the arguments that have been raised by many Members on the other side about how we look at disaster assistance, and I am more than open to it on our committee.

I hope we can defeat the Lee amendment and pass the urgent supplemental that is pending before us even though it already has an additional \$3.4 billion offset, which is essentially a cut of fiscal year 2013—cutting the Army Corps of Engineers—which, by the way, has only \$5 billion. If they are going to cut, learn math and learn how to read the bills and the chart. Math is good. I like math. We are going to follow math.

With that, I ask that we pass the bill. Let's not cut more than is in the bill. Let's do the math and know we are already cutting. Let's do the job the American people want.

This concludes my remarks. But before I yield the floor to the gentlelady from Louisiana, there are two sunshine issues I am going to mention.

First, I see the return of Senator MARK KIRK. I cannot share with my colleagues the pleasure I have in seeing him. He is a member of the Appropriations Committee. We have worked together on many issues. We have dis-

agreed, we have duked it out, and we have had some good times. It is just a pleasure to see him back on the Senate floor and ready to vote.

Also, I note that now joining us as the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee is Senator SHELBY of Alabama. I have worked with the Senator from Alabama over the years. I think we can pledge—though we will differ on policy or matters—there will be more on which we can agree in this Appropriations Committee. There will be an effort for bipartisanship, civility, intellectual rigger, robust debate, and transparency. We look forward to working together and with our colleagues.

With that, I yield for the gentlelady from Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I thank the chairlady. Is it not the opinion of the Senator from Maryland that if the Lee amendment gets on this bill, it will, in fact, kill the Sandy supplemental? Isn't that the Senator's understanding of what will happen if the Lee amendment is adopted?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, the Senator from Louisiana was asking me a question while I was getting a copy of my speech. What was the question?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Is it not the understanding of the Senator from Maryland that if the Lee amendment gets adopted—which I don't believe it will—the bill will be either killed or in serious danger of passing?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I think it will be in very serious danger of passing because the impact of the cuts is significant, severe, even Armageddon, and it would send it back to the House for further negotiation. The House is out this week, and then they kind of come back. I think this bill very likely will die in a conference, and that cannot happen as it will affect the economy and lives of the people in our States.

I know the gentlelady has had a history of looking at how to have a more frugal and sensible government. We funded two wars on a credit card, and that is part of the reason we are in this mess. We have plenty of money to rebuild Iraq, and now we are debating and nickel-and-diming over rebuilding New York, New Jersey, parts of Connecticut, and little, poor rural parts of Maryland.

So, yes, I think it will have a terrible effect.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No time is remaining on the Democratic side. The Republicans have 5 minutes remaining.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 of those 5 minutes?

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank my colleagues.

Let me say that it is my clear view and opinion that if the Lee amendment

is passed, the Sandy supplemental will die. There is strong feeling—led by this Senator from Louisiana, to the Senators who are arguing for that position—that if we want to debate about how to pay for a disaster, I will do that. We will do 50 percent cuts and 50 percent revenue, but they never will offer one penny of new revenues to pay for anything. I am not budging on this point. This amendment, if adopted, will kill this bill.

I will go 50 percent revenue. We will raise \$25 billion, and \$25 billion we will cut, but I am not going to keep cutting the discretionary budget—which, by the way, is not out of control despite what we hear on Fox News. It is mandatory spending that is rising rapidly because the "greatest generation," which gave us the greatest Nation the world has ever heard of, is aging, and they need hospice care, Social Security, and hospitals. If they want to cut them, go right ahead. I am going to be a little more gentle.

No. 2, we can do this together if we want. So just know this argument is not a small argument for the chair of the Homeland Security Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee nor for our colleagues.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the amendment offered by the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE. The yeas and nays have been requested.

Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 35, nays 62, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 3 Leg.]

YEAS—35

Alexander	Enzi	Moran
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Flake	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Chambliss	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Isakson	Scott
Coburn	Johanns	Sessions
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Cornyn	Kirk	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Cruz	McConnell	

NAYS—62

Ayotte	Cochran	Heinrich
Baldwin	Collins	Heitkamp
Baucus	Coons	Hirono
Begich	Donnelly	Inhofe
Bennet	Durbin	Johnson (SD)
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Kaine
Boxer	Franken	Kerry
Brown	Gillibrand	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Graham	Landrieu
Cardin	Hagan	Lautenberg
Carper	Harkin	Leahy
Casey	Hatch	Levin

Manchin	Pryor	Tester
McCain	Reed	Udall (CO)
McCaskill	Reid	Udall (NM)
Menendez	Rockefeller	Warner
Merkley	Schatz	Warren
Mikulski	Schumer	Whitehouse
Murkowski	Shaheen	Wicker
Murphy	Shelby	Wyden
Nelson	Stabenow	

NOT VOTING—3

King	Murray	Sanders
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is rejected.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—62

Alexander	Harkin	Nelson
Baldwin	Heinrich	Pryor
Baucus	Heitkamp	Reed
Begich	Heller	Reid
Bennet	Hirono	Rockefeller
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Sanders
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kerry	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shelby
Carper	Landrieu	Stabenow
Casey	Lautenberg	Tester
Cochran	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Collins	Levin	Udall (NM)
Coons	Manchin	Vitter
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franklin	Mikulski	Wicker
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—36

Ayotte	Enzi	McCain
Barrasso	Fischer	McConnell
Blunt	Flake	Moran
Boozman	Graham	Paul
Burr	Grassley	Portman
Chambliss	Hatch	Risch
Coats	Inhofe	Roberts
Coburn	Isakson	Rubio
Corker	Johanns	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson (WS)	Sessions
Crapo	Kirk	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Toomey

NOT VOTING—2

King	Murray
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill (H.R. 152) is passed.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FISHERIES DISASTER FUNDING

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the bill we just passed out of the Senate, a bill to aid the victims of Superstorm Sandy, is important. It is important when we are faced with a disaster—whether it is a hurricane, whether it is an earthquake, whether it is a drought, whether it is a flood—that we step forward and find those ways that we can help citizens who have faced immeasurable loss. The effort that has gone back and forth between two bodies now, and will, hopefully, move forward, is one which will certainly help to address the needs of those families who lost so much in Superstorm Sandy.

I think we all recognize this was not the only disaster this country faced last year. In my State of Alaska we faced a fish disaster. For those of you who are from States that do not rely on your fisheries as a source of income, a source of jobs or a source of daily sustenance, you might think: Fish disasters; well, that is not really much to talk about. That is not a true disaster.

In my State, when fisheries have declined to the extent we have seen—the loss of the Chinook salmon on the Yukon River, the Kuskokwim River, the Upper Cook Inlet—this has a dramatic impact on our State's economy, a dramatic impact on the livelihoods of so many Alaskans. Whether they be commercial fishermen, sport fishermen, our subsistence-based fisheries, our fisheries communities, those businesses that are dependent on our salmon fisheries, these were all impacted this past year.

As I had gone around the State, basically from about midsummer through the end of the year, everywhere I went, whether I was in an urban center such as Anchorage, Homer, or down in Seward, up in the Matanuska Valley, or out in the rural parts of the State up along the Yukon, out along the Kuskokwim out in the southwest, people were talking about two things: People were talking about our cost of energy because our energy costs remained the highest in the Nation, but they were also talking about fish. Pretty basic stuff: fuel, fish, and food. When we had a disaster this summer, it was an imperative around our State.

We, in September of this past year, had an official declaration from the Secretary of Commerce—actually the Acting Secretary of Commerce, Rebecca Blank—that recognized this fish disaster, and this is a disaster that is statutorily authorized by section 308 of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act and section 31 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

These are designations that are statutorily authorized. These are not earmarks. They are not to be labeled as pork or something special for an area. These are disasters subject to a statutory authorization, a process that has been clearly laid out. They are authorized in law for fish failures that require affirmative action from the Secretary of Commerce. The Secretary has taken that action. Congress then needs to do its part by funding for these disasters.

I mentioned at the outset that some of my colleagues might not appreciate the importance of these fish disasters. But, again, these disasters are no less important than disasters for which we provide for other industries, such as drought disaster or drought assistance for our farmers. I think the Acting Secretary, when she signed these fisheries designations, recognized them for essentially what they are: fish droughts, fish droughts in our rivers and our oceans. She responded to the fisheries disasters not only in my State of Alaska, but she also moved forward with disaster determinations for Rhode Island, for New York, for Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Mississippi. The disaster declaration the Acting Secretary advanced opens the door, then, for the financial assistance from the Federal Government.

You might notice those funds were not included in this disaster relief bill. That does not mean I will back down from attempting to do my best to make sure the disaster that Alaska faced with its fisheries, and that so many of our other States faced with their fisheries, that these needs will not be addressed.

We didn't advance it in this package. It is important that the Sandy provision move forward, and that is why I eventually cast my vote in support of it. I know many of my colleagues—the Senator from Rhode Island is with me tonight. I know the Senator from New Hampshire is very concerned about it. The Senator from Maine is very concerned about it. I think it is fair to say we will continue our efforts to ensure the disasters that our fishermen have faced will be addressed as is statutorily provided in law. We will work to find that funding to make sure that disasters, however they present themselves in this country—whether it is storm, flood, drought, hurricane, or earthquake—are addressed.

I commit to working with my colleagues to continue to find those sources of funding so we address these revenues.