

Galena is a village of fewer than 500 people located in the interior of Alaska. At least 300 of these residents had to be evacuated to keep them from danger. Others moved to buildings on higher ground to keep safe from the rising water.

We are grateful to be able to say no deaths or serious injuries have been reported. It is a miracle when you look at the photos of the damage. As I said, this photo, the aerial photo of Galena, shows the extent of the damage. As mentioned, this was a severe flood. It came on very fast, and we had to try to deal with this very quickly because the power of the Yukon, when it is moving, is fast and furious. These ice jams move fast once they break. It is the worst flooding they have seen in 70 years.

When this happens in very remote communities such as Galena, they don't have communications, river-monitoring technology, and transportation infrastructure to react quickly. Let me remind people that you cannot drive out of this community. You have to fly out of this community. So when the river is breaking, it is all hands on deck for everybody.

We are thankful for the response by the Tanana Chiefs Conference, which safely evacuated many residents. The American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and many volunteers provided invaluable help. I am proud of the community for coming together to support each other and evacuating the elders and those most in need first. Alaskans are the type of people who are always willing to lend a hand to their neighbor.

This flood hit the community hard. Nearly every structure in Galena and the surrounding 25-mile-wide valley basin was under water. You can see here in this photo how that water moved and flooded out the whole area. The ice jam on the Yukon causing this flooding isn't gone yet. Villages down river from Galena, such as St. Mary's or Holy Cross, remain on alert and are bracing for their possible evacuation.

Once again I remind folks, you cannot drive out of these communities, you have to fly out or take the river. The people who live along the Yukon River respect it as a resource but know that living along the banks can also bring dangerous conditions which we must prepare for.

Although the waters in Galena are subsiding, we know the real work is just beginning. This community must rebuild stronger, more prepared for future disasters. And they must do so within the short summer construction season, an added complication for Alaska. Again, our spring is here now, summer will soon be here, and within 3½ months winter will be back.

As chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Management, I take this flooding event very seriously. I have been in touch with local leaders, State disaster response agencies, and FEMA. I will re-

main engaged throughout the cleanup and rebuilding process.

I am working with the State on this emergency, and I will make sure we have all the resources possible as Galena repairs and rebuilds. The emergency response priorities right now are restoring essential services and getting people back in their homes. I am pleased Alaska's Governor Parnell declared a State disaster for Galena last week, and I urge the President to act quickly to declare a Federal disaster to free up vital resources to help our State and its people recover.

Responding to natural disasters in Alaska is very different than in the lower 48. We have very unique challenges. It is important to have some perspective on the size and scope of Alaska. Alaska's land is two-and-a-half times the size of the State of Texas. Our road system is smaller than that of Rhode Island, and 82 percent of Alaskan communities are only accessible by air. Flying from Galena to Fairbanks, or back and forth, is equivalent to flying from Washington, DC, to New York. Actually, it is a little longer. It is an amazing distance when you have to go from place to place.

I remind folks, as you can see the great Yukon, in order to bring supplies and necessities in, it is an hour-long flight from the Fairbanks region. This makes the traditional lower 48 disaster response unrealistic for Alaska. In most communities we don't have the road system to truck in critical supplies. We frequently rely on skilled bush pilots and boat captains to bring relief to communities in need. Our pilots are often forced to land on gravel runways or river sandbars and our barge captains must navigate dangerous waters to access rural villages.

Most residents of the lower 48 couldn't even begin to imagine these experiences. This disaster in Galena is a stark reminder of why we must continue to invest in the aviation and maritime lifelines Alaskans rely on for survival.

Another issue unique to my State is the absence of broadband access in rural areas. When I say that, most people say: What is the big deal? Everyone is hooked up. Not in Alaska. This is something most people would consider critical infrastructure in order to respond to disasters.

Increased broadband deployment throughout rural Alaska would help communities such as Galena by providing vital information, such as telehealth access to help injured residents, up-to-date information on changing weather conditions, better communication between responders and the disaster response center, and information on incident response teams and cleanup strategies.

I might relate a personal example here. When I called the individual in charge of the situation on the ground, we were waiting for another radio call-in—let me repeat that: a radio call-in—to get an update from someone on the

site because the technology doesn't exist at the level necessary to monitor a disaster of this magnitude.

This disaster is a reminder of the inequities that still exist in serving rural America. I will continue to look for ways to work with my Senate colleagues to act to provide rural communities with better broadband access, not only for emergency disasters, such as we are having here, but also for basic communication.

All these factors mean Alaskans must work and respond differently when disasters occur in our State. As our State emergency response chief often tells me, "You can't do 'big city' response in most of Alaska." FEMA rules don't always work for rural Alaska. One key concern is making sure FEMA programs for individual assistance are fully employed and complement State assistance.

I am hopeful that between the Federal, State, local, and tribal governments we can get some much-needed assistance to the residents of Galena who are living through this nightmare. I know how strong the people of Galena are, and we know they will continue to stick together through this trying time. But they couldn't do it without the ongoing support of the National Guard and the Alaska Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management Office. We will all continue to work with them as we help the residents of Galena get back on their feet.

Looking forward, as chairman of the Emergency Management Subcommittee, I will be holding listening sessions in Alaska to discuss preparedness and mitigation solutions to natural disasters. Because it is not just the interior that faces serious threats from natural disasters, we must also consider North Slope communities that are often confronting changes from the warming Arctic. It is important for us to tackle these issues head on, to create public-private partnerships, strong communication lines, and disaster response plans so our communities are protected and our residents are safe.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I just flew in from Chicago. Early this morning, I was given the news that I had lost a great friend and one of my dearest colleagues; Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey passed away.

Most of us saw FRANK a few weeks ago. He was here on the floor of the

Senate. He had to come down; it was one of those moments where his vote was crucial. We knew he was struggling, but we also knew he would be here. He said he would, and he was. He sat right over here in a wheelchair, with that trademark FRANK LAUTENBERG smile. I don't think I have ever run into a person in my life as happy as FRANK LAUTENBERG. He was a great joke-teller. The best thing about FRANK's joke—even if he was telling it for the 254th time—is he would start laughing before the end of the joke and pretty soon the whole room was laughing.

You always wanted to be out for dinner with FRANK and Bonnie because you knew there was going to be a good time. You would hear a lot of jokes you had heard before, but you encouraged him to tell them. He had so many stories to tell.

Here he was, a member of the “greatest generation,” having served in World War II, and served here in the Senate. Two different approaches. He retired once and came back, and served here to the age of 89.

He astonished us all when he came here on the floor of the Senate, that he was wheeled in in a wheelchair to vote on some important amendments related to gun safety and gun control. FRANK, if he were alive, would not have missed those votes; it meant so much to him. It was an issue that he led on, he was respected for. When it came to closing the loopholes where convicted felons and people who had no business owning guns were buying them anyway, FRANK LAUTENBERG led the effort to stop the proliferation of guns and the distribution of them to people who would misuse them. It was a cause he felt passionately about, and one he cast many tough votes on as he served in the Senate.

His return that day for those votes was an act of courage in a long life that was filled with courage, starting with his service in the U.S. Army in World War II, and continuing throughout his life—physical courage, political courage, and moral courage.

When FRANK LAUTENBERG spoke to some law students at Rutgers University about 10 years ago, he said he had considered briefly studying law himself after he had served in the Army in World War II but decided he was too old to start law school. He told the law students: It was too late; I missed my opportunity.

FRANK LAUTENBERG may not have earned a law degree, but make no mistake, FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey left an important mark on the laws of America.

Here is how I first came to know him. In 1986, I was a Congressman from Springfield, IL, and had been here 4 years. I had never met FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey, who was a Senator at the time. I got this crazy notion to introduce a bill to ban smoking on airplanes. I didn't have a chance, not a chance. The entire leadership of the

House of Representatives opposed me—all the Democratic leaders of my party and all the Republican leaders too. Yet I put the amendment on a transportation appropriations bill, and through some good luck and breaks it made it through the Rules Committee. That wasn't supposed to happen.

It turned out that when the chairman of the Rules Committee—Claude Pepper of Florida—was a Senator years before, he had been instrumental in starting the National Cancer Institute. As a southerner, he didn't talk much about tobacco—nobody did from the South in those days—but in his heart he knew tobacco smoking was killing people. He let me get that amendment to the floor, which shocked everybody. I remember the day—and this goes back 27 years—I was in the House of Representatives, brand new, calling this amendment to ban smoking on flights of 2 hours or less. That is how we started. I looked up in the gallery, and the gallery was filled with flight attendants in their uniforms from all different airlines. They were victims too of second-hand smoke.

We called that measure for a vote, and it passed. It shocked everybody. It turned out the House of Representatives was the biggest frequent flier club in America. They were sick and tired of sitting on airplanes and breathing in somebody else's secondhand smoke.

Well, there were a few moments of jubilation and celebration. Then somebody said, Well, what are you going to do in the Senate? I thought, Oh, my goodness; that is an important part of this. So I decided to call the chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee—a fellow named FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey. I didn't know him, but I said to him, FRANK, I would like to ask you a favor. Would you consider offering this bill as an amendment to the Senate transportation appropriations bill. He said, I will get back to you. And he did—in a hurry. He said, I am on board. Let's do it together.

It was the best phone call I ever made. And for the people of this country and those who fly on airplanes, that team of LAUTENBERG and DURBIN managed to pass a bill, signed into law, which did much more than we ever dreamed of. We thought this little idea of taking smoking off airplanes would make flight a little more comfortable and safer from a health point of view. What neither FRANK nor I realized at the time was it was a tipping point. Americans looked around and said, If we are going to take smoking off airplanes, why stop there? Trains, buses, offices, hospitals, restaurants—look across the board at what has happened in America. Neither FRANK nor I saw this coming, but it worked. It has changed this country. It has changed the Senate, the House—it has changed this country. I wouldn't be standing here today telling you the story were it not for FRANK LAUTENBERG. He was the very best partner I ever could have

had. The day came when I was elected to the Senate. He and I used to go around and tell the story from time to time, reminiscing about that battle back in 1986.

FRANK told us he was once a two-pack-a-day cigarette smoker himself, but when it came to this bill, he knew the right thing to do. I was lucky to have him by my side. I couldn't have done it without him.

He was the driving force behind a lot of other laws that were important to America: setting the national drinking age at 21; setting the national blood level definition of 0.08 for drunk driving. These laws on smoking and drunk driving have saved millions of lives thanks to the leadership of FRANK LAUTENBERG.

He was the last remaining World War II veteran in the Senate. A few weeks ago we lost Danny Inouye, who used to sit right here. He, of course, served in World War II as well.

FRANK passed away early this morning in New York. He is survived by his wife Bonnie Englehardt Lautenberg. What an extraordinarily good person she is. I left a message for her on her voicemail and said, Standing by FRANK's side made a big difference in his life, in the years they were together. They were a great partnership. In addition, he is survived by 6 children and 13 grandchildren.

He was a leader on environmental protection, transportation, and protecting public health. He authored the law that prevented domestic abusers from possessing guns. It wasn't easy to do. It looks pretty obvious, doesn't it? It turned out police organizations were opposing him, because some policemen had been accused of domestic abuse and they couldn't carry a gun under the Lautenberg amendment. FRANK stood his ground.

He cowrote the new GI bill for the 21st century. A man who was a beneficiary of the original GI bill in World War II teamed up with Jim Webb of the State of Virginia, and the two of them put together a GI bill that our men and women who serve richly deserve.

He authored the toxic right to know law. It was another great law he and I cosponsored. It came down to the question of the chemicals that are put in fabric in our furniture—which, sadly, leach out and get into the environment of our homes, many times affecting small children. FRANK was quick to be the leader on that issue. Even though his State of New Jersey is one with a lot of chemical manufacturers and producers, he led in this effort to protect families and children.

He wrote the law to create the Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park. After he cast his 9,000th vote in December of 2011, Senator HARRY REID proclaimed on the Senate floor, “FRANK LAUTENBERG has been one of the most productive Senators in the history of this country.”

It was February 15 that FRANK announced he wasn't going to seek another term in the Senate. At the time

of his announcement in his hometown of Paterson, he set out an agenda for the remaining 2 years of what he wanted to get done before he left the Senate: reforming the U.S. chemical safety laws, improving gun safety, and providing Federal resources for New Jersey to rebuild from Superstorm Sandy.

We owe it to FRANK and his memory to make sure those things are done. I know that BOB MENENDEZ, his friend and close colleague from New Jersey, will pick up that gauntlet and proceed to carry on in FRANK's name.

He used to say with some pride that he was a success in business—and he was—and that he understood the mind of businessmen. But he never ever lost touch with the common man and the people who counted on him in New Jersey and around the United States.

The Senate is going to miss FRANK LAUTENBERG. I am going to miss a great pal. I am going to miss one of the best dinner companions you could ever dream of here in Washington, DC. We are going to join together on Wednesday up in New York for a memorial service. I am sure it is going to be widely attended, because FRANK did a lot of good for a lot of people over the course of his years in public service. I am going to miss him.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I was going to speak on a different subject, but I will speak further about our dear colleague Senator LAUTENBERG. I look at the flowers on his desk—it seems in the years I have been here I have seen too many colleagues' flowers there. Of course, every day FRANK LAUTENBERG was here, I had the privilege of serving with him, a dear friend. I missed him when he left the Senate and was overjoyed when he came back to the Senate. He was a man who cared about his country, cared about the Senate, cared about the people.

He was a man who came from humble beginnings and became extremely wealthy. He spent a lot of time giving that wealth away. He was the last combat veteran—in fact, the last veteran from World War II serving in this body. Those of us who got to know him and spent time hearing of those horrendous times in Europe during World War II are better for it. We realized a person who had served the country during that time did more than any of the rest of us.

I will speak further about my friend FRANK LAUTENBERG. I know Marcelle and I extend our love to Bonnie and his children, his family.

I ask consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, before the Senate went into recess, I was disappointed with the statements made to the Senate that misstated the history of Judge Srinivasan's confirmation process. The Senator who said the chairman of the Judiciary Committee made "no effort, no effort" to have a hearing on Judge Srinivasan until late last year was misinformed, and in stating what he did, he misinformed the Senate.

We made efforts in the fall before the election to schedule such a hearing, and I renewed our push to have a hearing on the nomination before the end of the session. I was accommodating Republican objections by not scheduling a hearing before the end of last year.

These erroneous RECORD statements—these erroneous statements to the rest of the Senate—have me wondering whether I should be so accommodating to Republican scheduling demands if they then forget their demands in their efforts to avoid responsibility and to blame others. In other words, they request a delay and then say, well, of course it is somebody else's fault that we had the delay.

Judge Srinivasan was nominated June 11, 2012, during a summer when Senate Republicans were in the process of constricting the confirmation process and intent on their misapplication of the so-called Thurmond rule to stall judicial nominees before the Presidential election. It was only in May, 2012, that the Senate completed action on the 19 nominees held over on the Senate Executive Calendar in 2011. Republicans were in the process of filibustering a nominee to the Ninth Circuit from Arizona. Interestingly enough, the person they were filibustering had been recommended by Jon Kyl of Arizona, the deputy Republican leader, of course a Republican Senator. Republicans were dragging out confirmations of judicial nominees who had been nominated in the fall of 2011 and the early months of 2012. They even filibustered a Tenth Circuit nominee from Oklahoma who had been supported by the two Republican Senators from Oklahoma in what was the first filibuster of a circuit court nominee reported with bipartisan support by the Judiciary Committee. Throw out all the precedents, throw out all the rule books, throw out everything Democrats and Republicans have done in the past—it is going to be our way or the highway. Even when the President of the United States, in trying to reach out, nominates a judge supported by the two Republican Senators of that State, a judge reported out by a bipartisan vote by the Senate Judiciary Committee, they say: Oh, what the heck, President Obama nominated him, let's filibuster him. This is wrong. It is

a pity. It is beneath the United States Senate.

They filibustered a First Circuit nominee from Maine who was supported by the two Republican Senators from Maine. In addition, Republicans had filibustered the earlier nomination of Caitlin Halligan to the DC Circuit. Anybody who needs to refresh their recollections of those months should reread my statements on judicial nominations from June 6, June 11, June 12, June 18, June 26, July 10, July 16, July 23, July 30, August 2, September 10, September 20, November 30, December 3, December 6, December 11, December 13, and December 17. Unlike the recent misstatements made to the Senate, the facts are in those statements of mine.

By July 19, 2012, I had determined that the paperwork on the Srinivasan nomination was complete and the nominee could be included in a hearing. It has been my practice as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, in an effort to be fair, to do something that was not always done by others, to give the minority notice and allow consultation before scheduling a nomination for a hearing. At that time, the next July hearing had been discussed as one devoted to the nominee to head the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice, a nomination that itself had been delayed and to which there was Republican opposition. During the August recess, my staff asked Senator GRASSLEY's about holding a hearing on the Srinivasan nomination in September. They raised objections and concerns about proceeding with the DC Circuit nomination at that time but agreed to proceed with four district nominees and a Court of International Trade nominee.

In November 2012, after the American people had solidly reelected President Obama, we raised the need for the hearing on the DC Circuit nomination anew. Republicans objected, again, in spite of the precedent of holding a hearing on one of President Bush's DC Circuit nominees during a similar lameduck session.

Instead, they said: No, no, no. It is all right to do it for a Republican President but not for this Democratic President, Barack Obama. We can't do it for him. I know you allowed it for President George W. Bush, but after all, he is different. He was a Republican President. We cannot do it for this Democratic President. Instead they wanted to proceed only with district court nominees during the lameduck. Republicans insisted the Srinivasan hearing be put off until the next Congress and the new year. In deference to the Republican minority, I held off. They agreed that he would be included in the first nominations hearing of the 113th Congress.

Then, in early January this year, when called upon to hold up what they said they would agree to, their end of the bargain, Republicans wanted to change the rules again and they