

minutes each, and the majority leader be recognized at 4 p.m.

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

COLORADO FLOODING

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak once again about the floods that were of biblical proportions that afflicted our State just a couple of weeks ago and the necessity of passing a piece of legislation, as we have done in the past on the heels of such natural disasters, that will allow my State to access existing emergency transportation funds more efficiently.

This is legislation my colleague and my friend and fellow Coloradan Senator BENNET and I have introduced.

It is critically important because it will allow us in Colorado to begin rebuilding our battered roads and bridges and highways without having to wait years for relief. In Colorado, hundreds of miles of roads and approximately 50 major bridges have been damaged. I want to display one photograph to give you a sense of what happened in Colorado.

I know Senator BENNET is here. I think he and I would agree that this is moderate damage represented in this photograph. There are many, many other scenes in our State where the roads are completely gone. You would not even know there was a road in the canyon like this one here. But this gives you a sense of what we have to do to repair all of this infrastructure.

Many towns, as I am implying, have seen the roads which provide access in and out of their communities severely limited. In fact, there a couple of communities that have been cut off. But the good news is that there are emergency relief dollars for transportation projects that have already been appropriated. They are available right now.

Why do I come to the floor, then, if that is the situation? There is an arbitrary statutory cap of \$100 million per disaster that applies to those funds. This could limit the flood relief that we receive and then unnecessarily delay repairs, not necessarily this year or next year, but for decades. But historically, this is the good news, this opportunity we all have, as Members of the House and the Senate, to lift this cap. It has routinely been recognized by Congress as an unwise impediment to helping States recover, particularly when they are hit by the size of this disaster.

We have made exceptions to this cap for nearly every natural disaster in recent years. We waived it for Hurricanes Gustav, Ike, and Sandy, as well as for the Missouri River Basin flooding in 2011. In other words, when States are devastated, as we have been by natural disasters, we as a Congress have said that putting arbitrary impediments in the way of relief efforts just does not make sense, especially—and this is really important to understand—when no new funds need to be appropriated.

The good news is, as I have alluded to, we are not asking Congress to appropriate any new money for transportation projects, nor does our bill increase budget authority or increase spending by the Federal Government. We are simply making sure that Colorado has fair access to the program that was created for the very purpose of helping States such as Colorado rebuild after a natural disaster.

In fact, if we do not raise the cap, then we may be in the situation—not just Senator BENNET and I—but the Congress may be in a position where we have to pursue something more serious that does require money—in other words, additional appropriations.

This is critically important. We have to do this. We need to. We must provide Colorado with certainty and relief as soon as possible. I want to again underline what happened in Colorado and what we are facing. Beginning on September 11, historic rains poured down. We had had a heat wave. We had been in the 90s, a very warm spell of weather. Literally overnight, beginning on September 11, historic rains poured down on our State without cessation.

Rivers overtopped their banks from Rocky Mountain National Park, which is our crown jewel in the National Park System in Colorado, all the way out onto the eastern plains. It washed away highways, it drowned family homes, and it transformed entire farms into lakes. Creeks such as South Boulder Creek, which runs right behind my home, swelled. My neighbors were evacuated. I could not get home for 24 hours.

Culverts such as those near Commerce City quickly filled with rushing water. Rivers such as the Big Thompson near Estes Park turned into walls of water that devastated entire communities.

Let me give you another set of metrics. The affected area covers nearly 200 square miles and over 80 percent of our State's population. If we counted—Senator BENNET and I would agree—5 million Coloradans that we represent or 80 percent of our State's population has been affected.

For a sense of scope—I did not know Senator MURPHY would be presiding—the floodwaters cover an area the size of Connecticut. Nine counties are considered major disasters. At least 9 Coloradans have died. Thank God it was not more. We had a lot of missing people, but we think we have identified where all of those people are. We lost 9 Coloradans. Nearly 20,000 homes are damaged or destroyed.

Nearly 2,500 people were evacuated by the Colorado National Guard, the most since Hurricane Katrina. Some bit of good news: The muddy waters have begun to recede. That has given us a better look at the vast extent of the damage: 200 miles of State highways and 50 bridges are damaged or destroyed. Preliminary estimates are that the infrastructure repairs could cost up to \$475 million.

I come with a heavy heart when I think about all of that. Then I have to also confess that this is a natural disaster that is beyond our capacity and Colorado's ability to address alone. We need help. We need support from our Federal partner.

I have always supported disaster aid whether I was serving in the House, as the presiding officer has, and when I have been in the Senate, for Hurricanes Sandy and Katrina and for all of the natural disasters that have hit our country since I began serving in the House in 1999.

I have to say that Coloradans now need our Federal partner to support our rebuilding and recovery efforts. I want also to say, though, in the face of this historic disaster, that I have been so heartened to see our Federal partners in the administration, led by FEMA, team up with our State leaders, who have been tireless, with the mayors, the council members, the county commissioners, our Governor, local communities, nonprofit organizations, and with countless friends and neighbors who have begun the hard work of recovery.

Our strong sense of community will allow us to recover and to rebuild stronger and more resolute than before. But we want to get going. We want to access these dollars right now. Those dollars are sitting in this account, waiting to help States such as Colorado rebuild and repair in the wake of a disaster. In fact, the U.S. Department of Transportation—I see our chairman of the EPW Committee, Senator BOXER, who is such a leader on infrastructure and knows infrastructure policy backwards and forwards—the U.S. Department of Transportation projects that Colorado, New York, and New Jersey, plus the 11 other States that have projects in the queue, could receive every single dollar they need and there would still be \$221 million in remaining funds in this account available for future emergencies across our country.

That is right. Everyone who has disaster-related infrastructure needs can receive relief, and we will still have significant funds to help other areas that may find themselves in need such as Colorado, New York, and New Jersey.

I want my colleagues to know that we have a real opportunity here. Coloradans need these dollars. These are legitimate uses of these dollars. Senator BENNET and I are going to be working every minute today, this weekend, next week, to make sure that Colorado can recover as quickly as possible. Perhaps in light of the challenges that we face in Congress, moving the government forward and doing what is right for the American people, maybe this is an example of how we can work together and do the right thing not just for Colorado but for the United States.

Mrs. BOXER. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. I would.

Mrs. BOXER. I wish to say to both of my friends, coming from a State that has experienced too many moments like the one you are going through, I have never seen anything quite like this in terms of flooding. But we have the most devastating fires, droughts, floods, mudslides, and earthquakes and the rest.

I wanted to be supportive of what you are doing. We all need to come together and help each other here. So I will do whatever I can to make sure that happens.

I ask unanimous consent that when my friend Senator BENNET completes his time I be recognized.

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

Mrs. BOXER. My question to my friend is: Is it not critical that we avert a government shutdown? Because if we go into a shutdown phase, people who want to apply for help—businesses and all the rest—are going to be experiencing far more pain. This is just a terrible time to even consider a government shutdown. We have so much we have to do. I wonder if my friend had thought about that when he voted to keep the government open?

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. I certainly did. I so appreciate the point the Senator from California is making. We have been assured that a shutdown would not affect Colorado. But as we all know there are unintended consequences. Just in the last 24 hours, Senator BENNET and I came to understand that the Utah National Guard, which was sending over a unit that has engineers and experts in flood recovery, probably cannot come to Colorado because their funds are going to be limited by the government shutdown.

For all of the assurance that this is emergency aid and emergency support—there are always situations where the full weight, if you will, and the focus of all of those good people who serve us, it is local, county, State, and Federal Government—they will be affected by this shutdown.

It is all the more important. We feel it in Colorado. The other thing I would add, and I wish to cede the floor to my good friend Senator BENNET, but what has been remarkable in Colorado is the partnership between the local, county, State and Federal governments. It has been seamless, for the most part. Then you mix in the NGOs, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and citizens who would hear the call and come to work to muck out basements, cut up debris. The spirit of community in Colorado has never been stronger. We ought to reflect that here. We were sent here to reflect that approach. That is America at its best.

I thank the Senator. I very much look to hearing the remarks of my friend and colleague Senator BENNET.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. I wish to first say thanks to the great Senator from Cali-

fornia at this time for her words. We need to pull together for other places, Sandy and other things. Now it is time for the country to embrace Colorado, as my senior Senator so eloquently said. I know he may have to leave the floor, but I wish to say how much I have appreciated his leadership in all of this. It has made a huge difference.

The work that is really being done is the work on the ground, as Senator UDALL was saying. That is the most important work—the first responders, neighbors helping neighbors. But it also has been a time when our political leadership has come together in a way at least for once not to get in the way and actually try to support the people who are just trying to serve their friends and neighbors. I wish to say thank you to Senator UDALL, my senior Senator and my friend, for his leadership.

As he mentioned, our State is a long way from recovering from the floods that have inflicted so much damage over this month. The damage has been historic. Based on the latest estimates, over 16,000 homes have been seriously damaged. Thousands have been destroyed. The floodwaters consumed more than 2,000 square miles across Colorado's Front Range—an area about twice the size of Rhode Island. To give some sense of scale, it would be as if Rhode Island were completely underwater twice or, as Senator MARK UDALL said, as if it covered a State the size of Connecticut. The floods have tragically killed at least nine Coloradans. We hope that number won't go up, but we don't know if it will.

Over the weekend I went to Jamestown, which is a small community about 14 miles northwest of Boulder, CO. Tara Schoedinger, the mayor of the town, showed me around. The damage to this one town was simply unbelievable. It was as if a bomb had gone off in the middle of this community. The flooding destroyed over a fifth of Jamestown's homes, half of its roads, both of its bridges, a central fire hall, and much more.

The storm killed Joe Howlett, age 72, a beloved pillar of the Jamestown community. The mayor's house is right next to Joe's house. The mayor's house is fine. Joe Howlett's house was destroyed by a mudslide that came down from the very top of the hillside, the very top of the mountain behind his house, killing somebody who had been the glue of that community.

I have a couple of photos from the visit that I wish to share to give a sense of scale of this damage.

This used to be Main Street in Jamestown. We can see it passing between these two utility poles on either side of what is now a raging river. Main Street is gone. It is not the asphalt that is gone; the whole street, the roadbed is gone. All that remains is a torrential river that ran in a completely different place than it does today.

This photo shows the end of Main Street in Jamestown. My deputy chief

of staff took that picture. This is what Main Street used to look like. This is what Main Street in Jamestown, CO, looks like as we stand on the floor of the Senate today.

I will say, as the senior Senator is still here, it was amazing, the resilience of the people of this community, the sense of humor people had, and the sense of community they had. There were probably 30 people or so left out of a town of 300. They had come back to see their belongings and to secure what was left of their homes. What they were talking about was how they were going to rebuild this community together. There were tears from time to time, as you naturally would expect there to be, but what really came through, as it always does at the back end of these disasters, was the human spirit we see in each one of our States. We are particularly proud of the Coloradans who are struggling together to get through this incredibly difficult time.

In my mind, these are the most heartbreaking pictures, people who have dedicated their lives to being able to secure homes for their families.

They, by the way, had no expectation there and in other parts of the State that they would ever be affected by a flood and see everything lost.

One woman came up to me while I was there and said, "this was our house."

It was in reasonably decent shape compared to some of the others I had seen. She also had a rental property down the road in which she had invested her life savings. She had no flood insurance.

She said: I just don't know how we are not going to go broke as a result of this piece of bad luck.

I also saw in Evans, CO—a rural community near Greeley in the northeastern part of the State—two trailer parks that had been entirely destroyed by floodwaters from 1 mile or 1¼ miles away. In the middle of these trailer parks, there was a cement pipe that was about this tall sitting underneath a carport. The thing must have weighed tons. It was a huge culvert pipe that had come from 1½ miles away through these raging waters to position itself in this trailer park.

The people who live there work in agriculture in our State, clean hotels in our community, and work in our oil fields in northeastern Colorado. When I went to the trailer park, the people were assessing the damage. They have lost everything. Because they couldn't qualify for financing for those trailer homes, they bought them with cash.

One person there said: Senator, it is awfully lucky this happened during the day and not at night because our kids were at school during the day. If they had been there at night, we don't know how many of them would have been killed by these floodwaters.

In addition to the human dimension of all of this, which is the most important dimension, the flooding also inflicted enormously costly damage to

Colorado's infrastructure. Over 200 miles of roads in Colorado have been affected by this flooding. The mountainous terrain in the State is going to make repair work exponentially more expensive and exponentially more difficult. I salute our Governor and everybody who is working to make sure that at least temporary roads are built to these communities in the next 90 days, which would otherwise be completely cut off.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from the Colorado Department of Transportation that estimates the total damage just to Colorado's federally maintained roads and highways. These are not our State and local roads; federally maintained roads and highways will exceed \$400 million.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATE OF COLORADO,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
Denver, CO, September 25, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, MAJORITY LEADER REID, MINORITY LEADER PELOSI, AND MINORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: As you know, this week Colorado begins the process of rebuilding. Over a dozen Colorado counties were devastated due to record-setting rains and heavy flooding. Today, thousands of our neighbors are without homes, power, or drinking water. For us to begin the rebuilding process, we must repair our roads, bridges, and culverts that were swept away by the floodwaters. We need the help of Congress to begin this process.

Multiple counties received over a foot of rain, which turned to floodwater. Those floodwaters destroyed many critical transportation connectors throughout our state. This week, the waters are receding and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has begun to assess the damage. At this time, we have identified a number of bridges in need of significant repairs or replacement, and approximately 200 state highway lane miles that washed away. In the interim, CDOT is working with the National Guard to restore access to communities severed from the rest of the state. This includes installing temporary crossing structures and gravel roads.

Although cost estimates will certainly change as we continue to inspect our infrastructure, CDOT's early estimate indicates that approximately \$475 million is needed to rebuild our highway system. This estimate includes materials, maintenance, reconstruction, and contracting costs. Last week, the Colorado Transportation Commission directed over \$100 million—CDOT's entire contingency funding line—to begin reconnecting critical roadways and communities. The Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) also acted swiftly to release \$35 million in emergency funds. While these contributions provide critical initial repair funds, CDOT has already secured 19 contractors and have

dedicated the advanced funding from the FHWA. It is clear that existing resources are inadequate to fix highway damage of this magnitude. Furthermore, CDOT's \$475 million estimate does not include costs to rebuild destroyed city and county roads that are also eligible for FHWA emergency funds.

Approximately \$1 billion is available from the FHWA Emergency Relief Program. States rely on this program in times of crisis and disaster to provide needed funding to repair federal aid highways. Unfortunately, although adequate funds are available, under the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, Colorado may receive no more than \$100 million in program relief. This is a significant hurdle for Colorado as we anticipate damages to exceed this limit by four times or more. In recent years, Congress raised the \$100 million cap for the most severe disasters. For example, the cap was raised by Congress to \$500 million for those states devastated by Hurricane Sandy. And, for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the cap was waived entirely for affected states. This flood was of a magnitude that Colorado will likely never see again and the total devastation will easily surpass several billion dollars. For this reason, we urgently need help from Congress.

I join Governor John Hickenlooper and the Colorado congressional delegation in asking for your leadership in raising the program limit to \$500 million for Colorado. Before Coloradans can begin rebuilding their homes and lives, we must rebuild the roads to their communities. Increasing this cap swiftly is of the utmost importance so that we may restore Colorado's transportation network. Please contact Kurt Morrison at (303) 757-9703 or me should you have questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

DONALD E. HUNT,
Executive Director.

Mr. BENNET. Earlier this year Congress passed funding for Federal Highway Administration emergency relief. States such as Colorado that have been hit with significant natural disasters are eligible for funding. Our State will be in desperate need of these funds, as New Jersey and New York were in desperate need. The scale of the damage far exceeds what our States and local governments can cover.

As my senior Senator said, there is a catch. There is a cap of \$100 million per incident, per State, on this Federal highway assistance.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from Gov. Hickenlooper urging Congress to raise the current cap on emergency funding and explaining why this is something Colorado desperately needs to have done.

STATE OF COLORADO,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
Denver, CO, September 23, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, MAJORITY LEADER REID, MINORITY LEADER PELOSI, AND MINORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: As you may know, this month massive rains and heavy flooding

left over a dozen Colorado counties in devastation. With the rains, highways, bridges, and culverts were washed away. As a result, even now many communities still are cut off and isolated from the rest of the state. Colorado is in dire need of help.

Communities across Colorado's Front Range and Eastern Plains are starting to deal with aftermath of the flooding and destruction. The affected counties include Boulder, Adams, Larimer, Weld, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, El Paso, Fremont, Jefferson, Logan, Morgan, Pueblo, and Washington—an area so expansive, that it surpasses that of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Rhode Island combined. Early analyses show that the flooding was so severe that it may not occur again for 500 to 1,000 years.

Thousands of Colorado families are without homes, potable water, or power. Before the state can fully restore essential services to impacted towns and cities, and allow residents to permanently return home, we must repair our devastated highway system. Early estimates are that at least 50 bridges will need significant repair—30 of which must be fully replaced. Approximately 200 highway lane miles must be reconstructed. Temporary crossing structures are needed in the interim. And, today, numerous state highways and local roads remain closed, cutting off primary, and in some cases the only, access to Colorado cities and towns. Assessing the damage to Colorado's highway system is underway. But early assessments are that the damage will be several hundred million dollars.

Under the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, Public Law 113-2, the U.S. Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief Program (ERP), received over \$2.02 billion to help states rebuild and repair damages to their highways and bridges. In this bill, states impacted by Hurricane Sandy could receive up to \$500 million per disaster in ERP funds; however, all remaining states—including Colorado—were capped at \$100 million per disaster.

Given the widespread devastation to our state highway system, we are respectfully asking that Congress raise this \$100 million cap for Colorado as well. As the Colorado congressional delegation stated in a letter to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, there are precedents for waiving or raising this cap. For example, the \$100 million was waived in response to damage caused by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, and Hurricane Irene and the Missouri River basin flooding. Recently, the cap was raised to \$500 million for those states devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

Based on Colorado's anticipated highway needs and the precedents mentioned above, we ask that you raise this cap for Colorado. Time and again, Congress has answered the call to help communities during times of disaster and loss. The September 2013 floods may prove to be the worst natural disaster in the history of our state, and is likely the worst we shall ever see in our lifetimes. Before we rebuild our homes and businesses, we must rebuild our roads to reopen our communities. On behalf of all Coloradans, please raise this cap to \$500 million, so that we may begin this process.

Sincerely,

JOHN HICKENLOOPER,
Governor.

Mr. BENNET. Senator UDALL and I have a simple bill that would raise the \$100 million cap for Colorado for emergency funding for our highways, matching what Congress has done, as Senator UDALL has said, many times previously—in fact, as far as I know,

every time an issue like this has arisen.

We have already talked to the Congressional Budget Office about this. They have looked at the bill. They have told us that it will not cost the Federal Government one dime because the money is already there. It has already been appropriated. It just needs to be used for the purpose Congress laid out—to help States with major disasters that inflicted cost damage on that State's highway system.

Colorado needs this Congress to act, and act now, to get this done so that Colorado can access the highway aid we will clearly need to recover in the coming months.

This \$100 million cap on emergency funding from the Federal Highway Administration, as I mentioned earlier, has been lifted many times before. It has been done routinely and swiftly by this Congress following other major disasters when it was obvious—as it is in our case—that federally maintained highway costs would exceed \$100 million. We lifted it for the Sandy States, as I have pointed out, earlier this year when we passed the Sandy supplemental on January 29, 2013. We lifted it on November 18 for Hurricane Irene and the Missouri River basin flooding. We lifted it on September 30, 2008, for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. We lifted it on May 25, 2007, for storms in the State of California. We lifted it on December 20, 2005, for Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. All told, Congress has waived this \$100 million cap 14 times in the past 25 years. It is routine, and it is normal when there is a major disaster that causes major highway damage in excess of \$100 million.

Senator UDALL and I have been working with our colleagues in the Senate. Nearly all of them have indicated a readiness to work with us to pass this bill. I am very grateful for that.

I also wish to thank my colleagues for working with us to get this done quickly for Colorado in recognition of how badly we need this cap lifted and this Federal funding made available.

I urge my colleagues to pull together to work with us to quickly clear this bill in the coming days so we can get Coloradans the help they need.

If you will indulge me a few more minutes—and if the Senator from California would as well—I wish to take a quick moment to tell you why this is so important.

A picture tells a thousand words—especially when I am the one who is speaking. I want to show the damage to Colorado highways as a result of this historic flooding.

This photograph was taken during a helicopter tour by Vice President BIDEN, Governor Hickenlooper, and FEMA officials of flood damage in Greeley, CO, earlier this week. We can see that a huge portion of the road has washed away and water has breached a dam.

I would like to say that FEMA has been doing a tremendous job with our local and State officials.

This is a section of Highway 72 that collapsed and washed away after a flash flood tore through Coal Creek near Golden, CO, which is outside of Denver—maybe in Golden they would say Denver is outside of Golden. This is what the road looks like there.

A bridge on the south side of Lyons is gone. Huge portions have broken off. This is a photo of the bridge that is missing. Here is another shot of large portions of U.S. 34 washed away.

This is a very clear example of the way these mountain roads work. In this case, when the prospectors first came to Colorado, what they would do is pan for gold in the bottom of the rivers, near the plains. They would see whether there was gold leaf there. That would lead them to walk up these valleys—very steep valleys—to see where the gold was coming from. They founded towns in these places. That is the way the river came, then the road followed the river, and that allowed them to get to their town. You can see in this case this road has been completely washed out by the river.

This is just another instance of mountain roads where we can see the dropoff below is what used to be road but no longer is.

Here is a roadway that, when this photo was taken, is completely submerged and with extensive damage. And then this, what used to be a ribbon of pavement, is now in fragments in the remaining water.

In times of disaster in this country, we have stood together time and time again. Working on behalf of the people of Colorado, along with Senator UDALL, that is what we are asking for again. We have pulled together with all of our colleagues and we are going to need all of you to pull together with us.

The Founding Fathers had a lot of work to do and they are often quoted around this place, but they were engaged in founding a country, not dismantling one. This is a reminder of why this vision was so important and why people, frankly, are counting on us to carry this on for this generation of Americans and for the generations that will follow us.

With that, I thank the Chair for his indulgence, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from California.

GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING

Mrs. BOXER. Let me say to my friend from Colorado he is right about a picture being so powerful. Having shown my share of those types of photos, I think the Senator underscores why it is important to have a national government. He and his colleague from Colorado makes the point, as did the Senators from New Jersey, New York, and California—regardless of party—that many times these natural disasters are just too much for

any one State, and that is why we need a national government that works well, not one that teeters on the brink of shutdown because political parties get into these partisan disputes and seem to lose their way.

As one who feels we have a very clear path ahead, there is no reason for us to add to the uncertainty the people in Colorado face right now because we don't have that particular funding laid out clearly at this point. We don't need to add a layer of fear that this government is not going to function. So I wish to thank my friend.

But I will say that we did vote 54 to 44 in the Senate to keep the government open and to make sure we don't get involved in clashes about other matters and add it to the resolution that keeps this government going.

Listen, there is no shortage of arguments we could have. Even within our own parties there are different views on many issues: how best to bring this economy back, how best to reform education, how best to have a very strong, lean military—we have arguments about all these things—how to deliver health care. All these things are worthy of debate, but they should remain separate and apart from our basic functions, one of which is to keep the government running and doing the things government does, and the second is to pay our bills, which requires us to make sure the debt limit is raised. When we see games being played in these areas, we know we are in deep trouble.

I see our leader Senator REID is on the floor. With his leadership we passed a bill to keep the government open. All JOHN BOEHNER has to do, as Speaker of the House—and I know the House well. I served there for 10 years—is to put our bill on the floor and let the Members vote. That is democracy. We don't have to have every Republican support it. We don't have to have every Democrat support it. Just put the bill on the floor.

When I served in the House I served with many different Speakers. I have to say, in my time, Tip O'Neill was the greatest. Why was Tip O'Neill great and why can JOHN BOEHNER learn from Tip O'Neill? Because Tip O'Neill knew what his function was. It was to keep this country going. It was to give a sense of certainty and calm to the people that even though we could debate all kinds of things, including whether to go to war or how to deal with many problems, we would keep the government going. We would pay our debts.

When Tip O'Neill was Speaker, Republican Ronald Reagan asked Tip O'Neill to increase the debt ceiling many times. Over the period Reagan was President, he asked to raise the debt ceiling 18 times. Did all of us agree the debt ceiling should be lifted? No. A few voted no, and that was fine. No one played games. Ronald Reagan was very clear on the debt ceiling. He said even any talk about not raising it was a problem for this economy, and he