

with verified loss. That is comparable to the loss in New York State from Superstorm Sandy. In Superstorm Sandy, there were 124,000 homes with verified loss in New York—about the same number. Again, we are talking about 114,000 homes in Louisiana. Now, that was not all of Superstorm Sandy, just New York. I am not counting New Jersey. That was another significant number, but that gives us a sense of the magnitude we are talking about.

I thank all of our colleagues and our colleagues in the House and President Obama for proposing the beginning of an appropriate response. Before we broke for the elections, we did pass significant emergency funding to go beyond the normal help in the Stafford Act and other statutes that pertain to FEMA and related agencies. About \$400 million was sent to the flood victims in Louisiana, but by any metric, that can only be the beginning. In fact, President Obama at the time and Congressional leaders at the time pledged that this would be the beginning and that we would come back now and, between now and the end of the year, finish an appropriate response.

I mentioned losses in New York caused by Superstorm Sandy. It was just a little more losses on homes flooded than we are talking about in Louisiana, and yet New York received \$8.6 billion related to that in emergency CDBG funds. We are not asking for near that amount, but that gives you a sense of the magnitude of the need. Certainly, the request the Governor and others—including myself and Senator CASSIDY—have put forward is fully justified by the numbers, by the metrics.

I would simply ask all of our colleagues in the Senate and all of our colleagues in the House to do the right thing—to look at the facts, to look at the figures, to look at the numbers, and to make the appropriate response, as we have in every other previous disaster, as we did in the lesser flooding in South Carolina, as we did in Missouri, as we did, certainly, with Superstorm Sandy, with Ike, Katrina, and Rita, et cetera—no special treatment. Just look at the numbers and look at the metrics. Do the right thing.

Our request from Louisiana is fully in line with that and fully justified by that precedent. It is a serious natural disaster. It was woefully under-reported. So it is important that we all learn more about it, focus on it, understand the magnitude of the loss, and ensure that we respond properly and adequately before the end of the year.

I look forward to continuing to work with all of my colleagues, starting with Senator CASSIDY, to do just that.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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?

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS).

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 152 Leg.]

YEAS—97

| | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| Alexander | Flake | Murray |
| Ayotte | Franken | Nelson |
| Baldwin | Gardner | Paul |
| Barrasso | Gillibrand | Peters |
| Bennet | Graham | Portman |
| Blumenthal | Grassley | Reed |
| Blunt | Hatch | Reid |
| Booker | Heinrich | Risch |
| Boozman | Heitkamp | Roberts |
| Boxer | Heller | Rounds |
| Brown | Hirono | Rubio |
| Burr | Hoeven | Sanders |
| Cantwell | Inhofe | Sasse |
| Capito | Isakson | Schatz |
| Cardin | Johnson | Schumer |
| Carper | Kaine | Scott |
| Casey | King | Shaheen |
| Cassidy | Kirk | Shelby |
| Coats | Klobuchar | Stabenow |
| Cochran | Lankford | Sullivan |
| Collins | Leahy | Tester |
| Coons | Lee | Thune |
| Corker | Manchin | Tillis |
| Cornyn | Markey | Toomey |
| Cotton | McCain | Udall |
| Crapo | McCaskill | Vitter |
| Daines | McConnell | Warner |
| Donnelly | Menendez | Warren |
| Durbin | Merkley | Whitehouse |
| Enzi | Mikulski | Wicker |
| Ernst | Moran | Wyden |
| Feinstein | Murkowski | |
| Fischer | Murphy | |

NOT VOTING—3

| | | |
|------|--------|----------|
| Cruz | Perdue | Sessions |
|------|--------|----------|

The bill (H.R. 4511) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from South Dakota.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

THE ELECTION AND REPUBLICAN PRIORITIES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, there is no doubt that the election we have just been through was a bad one. Emotions ran high on both sides and are still running. But this is hardly the first time it has happened in our history, and it won't be the last.

Take the election of 1800, for example. The campaign between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson was no picnic either. It was emotional, hard fought, and full of partisan attacks. Each side alleged that the other would bring about ruin to our young Nation.

In his novel address, the new President, Thomas Jefferson, specifically referenced the contentious process that the Nation had just gone through, but then he said the following: “[B]ut this [meaning the election] being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the Constitution, all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good.”

Let me repeat that: “all will . . . arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good.”

That is the key. That is what separates our Nation from tyrannies and other oppressive forms of government. In the United States, we may have contentious elections. But at the end of the day, we accept the results, and we move forward for the common good. That doesn't mean we give up fighting for what we believe in, of course, but we fight within the law, not outside of it.

Our form of government endures because as a nation we respect the rule of law. But there is another thing to remember about elections—not just the obligation that we have to accept the results and move forward, but something else, and that is what President Obama reminded us of the day after the election: We are all Americans, and at the end of the day, we are all on the same side.

Everyone is sad when their side loses an election, but the day after, we have to remember that we're actually all on one team. This is an intramural scrimmage. We're not Democrats first. We're not Republicans first. We are Americans first. We are patriots first.

That is from President Obama the day after the election. Indeed, we are Americans who believe in God-given freedoms, and what unites us is greater than what divides us. In the coming days, I look forward to working with my fellow Americans from both parties to meet the challenges that are facing our Nation.

There is one thing that this election made clear: It is that this economy is not working for American families. In one CNN exit poll last Tuesday, 63 percent of voters rated the economy as poor. That result should not surprise anyone. The last few years have been tough for American workers. Job creation has been sluggish. Wages have been stagnant. Economic growth has lagged far behind the pace of other recoveries, and opportunities for workers have been few and far between.

There is no wonder so many hard-working Americans feel that they have been left behind. To the millions of American workers who are discouraged by this economy I want to say this: We

hear you. Republicans hear you. I promise you, we are going to act. Growing our economy is going to be our No. 1 priority next Congress.

There are a number of things we can do to get the economy healthy again. We can reform our Tax Code to reduce the burden on American families and businesses. Right now our Nation has the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. More and more American companies are focusing their business operations overseas because the tax situation is so much better abroad.

That means American jobs are going overseas with them. We have lost our competitive edge in an increasingly global economy. Instead of pushing corporations out of our country, we should bring our Nation's corporate tax rate in line with those of other countries to keep more jobs here in the United States.

Another big thing we can do is repeal some of the burdensome government regulations that are weighing down businesses. While some government regulations are necessary, every administration has to remember that regulations have consequences. The more resources individuals and businesses spend complying with government regulations, the less they have available to focus on the growth and innovation that drive our economy and create new opportunities for American workers.

Over the past 8 years in particular, businesses have had to devote far too many resources to complying with government regulations. That has left them with few resources to dedicate to growing and creating jobs.

Another thing we need to do is address our national debt, which has nearly doubled over the past 8 years. That debt is a drag on our economy. It slows growth and reduces economic opportunity. It is time to get our government back on a budget.

Another way we can help lift the burden on American families is by repealing and replacing ObamaCare. The President's health care law is broken. The promise of lower premiums and affordable health care has given way to the reality of giant premium increases and massive deductibles. It is time to give the American people health care reform that actually works.

Another priority of the new Republican Congress will be national security. Americans are rightfully worried about the threat posed by terrorist groups such as ISIS, which has spread violence and devastation not only in the Middle East but across Europe and beyond. We have even experienced ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks on American soil in San Bernardino and Orlando.

More recently, there were attempted bombings in New York and New Jersey and an ISIS-inspired stabbing attack in Minnesota. Republicans are committed to defeating ISIS abroad and keeping Americans safe here at home. We intend to make sure that our law enforcement agencies and our Nation's

military have the tools they need to defeat terrorist threats. We will make sure that our military men and women remain the best equipped and the most prepared fighting forces on the planet.

Another key component to keeping Americans safe is securing our borders. We must have secure borders and policies that encourage legal immigration while discouraging illegal immigration.

Then there are the other priorities we need to address: confirming a Supreme Court nominee who will judge based on the law and the Constitution, protecting religious liberty, encouraging investment in our Nation's infrastructure, and more.

To all the Americans who voted for change in this election, to every worker who has felt left behind in this economy, I want to say again: We hear you. Republicans hear you. We are going to fight for your priorities here in Washington. We are committed to earning the trust that you placed in us on election day.

The election is over, and it is time to take up the work of governing the Nation. Our Nation is facing many challenges. It is time for all of us—Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative—to unite to address them. If we work together, I firmly believe we will once again be able to say, as President Ronald Reagan once said:

American's best days are yet to come. Our proudest moments are yet to be. Our most glorious achievements are just ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Arizona.

EARMARKS

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, a lot like indigestion, the desire for earmarks keeps coming back up. Tomorrow afternoon our colleagues in the House will vote on a provision to overturn the Congressional ban on earmarking. As someone who helped put that ban in place, I believe it is important to explain why it is very much still a necessity.

Consider the following: A teapot museum in North Carolina, an indoor rain forest in Iowa, bridges to nowhere in Alaska, a sheep institute in Montana, a Woodstock museum to commemorate the 1969 concert in New York, a \$350 million rocket launch site in Mississippi that was mothballed upon completion that has been derided as the "tower to nowhere," and the weather museum in Punxsutawney, PA. These are just some of the more infamous pork projects that were tucked into bills in Congress here during the bygone earmark era.

During the heyday of earmarking in 2006, I believe there were some 16,000 earmarks spread around among the appropriations bills at that time. Members of Congress gleefully touted the outrageous manner in which billions of dollars were being misspent on obscure, parochial projects. Earmarks were the

currency of what was dubbed the "favor factory" by a superlobbyist who would eventually go to jail for corruption.

Earmarks were used to reward campaign donors and political supporters and to buy and sell the votes of politicians. The deciding vote that was necessary to pass ObamaCare, for example, was secured with an earmark for Nebraska and derided as the "Cornhusker Kickback."

Republicans lost control of Congress in 2006, in part, as a result of the public's disgust with the corruption within the favor factory. When Republicans retook the House of Representatives in 2010, a moratorium was put on Congressional earmarking, which the Senate also adopted. That remains in place to this day.

Now some Republicans in the House are pushing to reopen the favor factory by lifting the moratorium, promising this time it will be different. Taxpayers ought to know that these promises are simply hogwash. Having spent years fighting against earmarks, I am disappointed that one of the very first votes after this election will be on a Republican-led proposal to bring back earmarks.

Congress should instead immediately pass legislation to make the ban on earmarks a permanent statutory prohibition. After all, you cannot drain the swamps by feeding the alligators pork. With our national debt approaching \$20 trillion, taxpayers expect Congress to focus on cutting wasteful and unnecessary spending instead of pigging out at the trough.

One of the worst parts of earmarks is that we spend our time here when we are earmarking not providing oversight for the massive appropriations bills that get passed. That is the worst part of it. We spend time doling out what amounts to a small portion of the Federal budget, but it takes so much time and effort from Members and their staffs just to secure that small bit of money that we are not spending the time we should providing oversight on the rest of the budget. That is the biggest crime of earmarks.

Instead of bringing them back, I hope that we will actually pass a statutory prohibition that will remain.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, like the majority of Americans who supported the Democratic candidate for President in the most recent election, I was disappointed by the results. But last Wednesday, I publicly congratulated President-Elect Donald Trump. I believe the bedrock principle of America is that we select our leaders and then come together as a country to try to find common ground and move forward.

On election night, the President-elect said: