

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico is facing a humanitarian crisis. Puerto Rico is in desperate need for us to assist them. Hurricane Maria, soon after Hurricane Irma, has left a trail of destruction for Puerto Rico's residents. Currently, 3.5 million American citizens in Puerto Rico are without power, 20,000 people are on a waiting list to leave the island, and about \$85 billion is needed in recovery funds.

The island and its towns have been completely cut off by water flooding, broken bridges, lack of electricity, and no cell phone service. As a result, there are displaced senior citizens and children who cannot get basic goods and medical supplies.

The people of Puerto Rico need supplemental funding not next week, but today. The Jones Act must be waived. Price gouging by airlines should not be allowed. Clean water needs to be shipped to the island, and hospitals need to be set up.

It is our responsibility as Members of Congress and U.S. citizens to provide relief to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the small Caribbean countries in that area. Please, let's save Puerto Rico.

HURRICANE HARVEY BRINGS NEW LIFE

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as Hurricane Harvey's hammering floodwaters crept closer and closer to their home, Annie and her husband, Gary, became nervously anxious because, you see, Annie was pregnant and needed to get to the hospital.

But the 2-mile drive to the hospital was no longer possible due to high rising water. So they called 911, but the lines were busy. Both doctors in training, the Smiths started preparing for a home delivery. Finally, a call to Annie's school brought a rescue team to their door. But the waters were still high and moving fast.

Risking their own lives, numerous neighbors and firefighters formed a human life chain, passing Annie along in the raging floodwaters to a high-water truck. A few hours later, Annie brought new life—Adrielle Smith—into the world.

That is the thing about Texas, Mr. Speaker, we help each other. That is what makes us Texas strong.

Congratulations to the Smiths on the birth of their hurricane daughter, Adrielle.

And that is just the way it is.

CILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, across the Capitol, Republican Senators fi-

nally decided to cancel the vote on a disastrous health bill that could have upended insurance markets and caused 3.2 million Floridians to lose coverage, increased premiums in my State by an average of \$4,000, and destroyed over 180,000 Florida jobs.

Now, not only did this process threaten the health and financial security of tens of millions of Americans, it also delayed reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

CHIP expires at the end of this week, but renewing it has taken a backseat to a cruel health bill motivated by a political vendetta and the hope of unlocking billions from campaign megadonors.

It is time for Congress to get back to work on CHIP, a program that ensures nearly 9 million kids get access to care—375,000 of them in Florida. It has only become stronger since the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

I hope my colleagues in the majority will waste no time in joining me in supporting this vital program. Let's help our children, let's reauthorize CHIP, and let's do it this week.

HURRICANE HARVEY

(Mr. CARTER of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Harvey took a lot away from us, but it couldn't take away who we are as Texans. It has shown our resilience and brought our communities closer together as we rebuild.

I am very proud of our volunteers and first responders who have shown hospitality and heroism to support our neighbors in need. When disaster struck, Texans came from across the State to help our communities rebuild and recover from this storm.

In my district, central Texans set up evacuation shelters and donated clothing and other necessary supplies. Our soldiers at Fort Hood and our local fire and rescue teams headed southeast to assist in lifesaving recovery missions because that is what Texans do: we come together to support one another.

I know we will continue to work together as we rebuild after Harvey and in the face of anything that comes our way.

By the way, a great big Texas thank-you to all our neighbors from across the United States who also came to help.

Our hearts go out to those recovering disaster areas in Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and all other communities in need of help. Let's do it together.

God bless Texas.

PUERTO RICO IS FACING A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the people of Puerto Rico are crying out for help, and these American citizens need America's help. Whenever there is a disaster anywhere in the country, we need to move fast. We moved fast when there was a disaster in Texas recently, which we unanimously supported.

We cannot afford to wait. People are dying. Every day it gets worse. There is lack of food, lack of water, lack of safety, and lack of electricity. These are American citizens. We cannot just allow this to continue to happen.

We must help the people of Puerto Rico and help the people in the U.S. Virgin Islands, who are also American citizens, as well as people in all of the islands.

It is just a crisis of tremendous proportion, and we have to help—not tomorrow, not next week, but immediately. These people need our help. We need to save Puerto Rico, save the U.S. Virgin Islands, and help and save the islands of the Caribbean, as we have done so many times around the world.

Let's do it now. Let's do it quickly. People are waiting for us. We don't want to wait until people are dying.

MAJOR HURRICANES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues in the House of Representatives, most of whom are not here right now but perhaps they are back in their office listening, and really to the American public and folks here in the Chamber, it has been a most interesting week—well, actually, the last 3 weeks.

The United States has been hit with three major hurricanes. In Houston, they say was a 500-year storm. The Florida Keys, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, disasters beyond, in many cases, human understanding. We have never seen 50 inches of rain in a matter of days.

We have seen storms in the Caribbean that have been vicious. I don't believe we have ever seen one that completely wiped out an island, leaving 3.5 million people without water and power, islands in the Florida Keys flattened, and floods throughout most of Florida.

These are natural disasters.

We look to our neighbors in the south, and we see Mexico City, that great capital, once again, lay bare with an earthquake. Further south and west of that, another community. Yet, just yesterday and the day before, another earthquake.

These are natural disasters.

As Members of Congress representing 350-plus million Americans, we have an obligation. You heard a couple of our colleagues speak to this.

I went to bed last night with visions and pictures of Puerto Rico on the television screen. I woke up this morning,

turned the television on, and it was all about the President calling a couple of athletes a name that I should not repeat on the floor.

□ 1630

What is going on here? How could it be that, 2 days after the devastation of Puerto Rico, our President would decide that the appropriate thing for him to do is to call out African-American athletes who are protesting the death of African Americans at the hands of police?

All of that was followed in just a few moments by experts who were saying that we are closer to nuclear war today than we have been since the Cuban Missile Crisis in the sixties.

What in the world is going on here? What is happening? Why are we in this situation? Why is it that we are not debating here on the floor of the House how to provide relief to Houston, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands—our own citizens?

Is there a debate going on in the House of Representatives in any hearing? No, there isn't.

Is there a debate on the floor about the necessity to rebuild, to find the money to put back the lives of people who are seriously at risk today?

What are we doing?

Well, here is what we are doing. We have got a President that is in a third grade brawl with a world leader. You may as well be in a classroom or on the school grounds with a bunch of third graders calling out each other about their mother. That is what our President did over the weekend.

How did that promote our humanity, our empathy? Not a bit.

How did it promote our division? Oh, it did a very good job of that. We see fans in the NFL stadiums boozing the athletes.

We see more division in our country. We see natural disasters. And our response? Let's pass a bill that will create a humanitarian crisis for 30 million Americans who will lose their healthcare over the next decade. That is what the Senate did over these last few days, a replication of what happened here on the floor of the House of Representatives months ago.

I think Americans thought those days were over when we would see the Senate and the House purposely harm people, purposely set out with legislation to physically harm people by denying them the health insurance that they have been provided over the last few years.

How can it be? How can it be that we would allow this to happen? But it is happening.

Thankfully, four Senators stood up to the President, stood up to the Republican leadership in the Senate and said: No. No. I am not going to set out on a vote that is going to harm people.

I thank them. They had courage.

Where were the others? Where were my Republican colleagues here on this floor who voted to do exactly the same

thing months ago? Millions of Americans purposely denied their health insurance.

Where is the outrage?

It is out there. Take a look at the polling. Take a look at the disabled men and women who were in the Senate Chamber yesterday who were physically dragged out of there—a fine testament to America's democracy.

Where is the outrage? Where is the outrage that there is not a bill on the floor this week to take care of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands—American citizens? I guess there is something more important to do.

Where is our President? What is his tweet today? His tweet today is who knows what. I guess he is going to Puerto Rico next week, thankfully. Maybe there will be some humanity expressed and he will put in motion the great power of this administration to bring relief and to ask the Congress to appropriate the money that is going to be necessary. Maybe.

Maybe it will be another tweet about a leader who has the fourth largest army in the world. You have third graders on the school ground bullying and demeaning, and you expect somehow to go anywhere except into a brawl?

There is a road that we could take, but it begins with reducing the rhetoric. There is a road we can take with North Korea. It is called negotiation.

Don't say it is not possible. It is far more possible and would have a far better outcome than all the bombast, all the rhetoric, all the threats.

All of us have been in the third grade. We know what happens when two boys start fighting on the school ground.

These boys have awesome weapons. We have 25,000 U.S. military on the DMZ border. They are ready to fight. We have an awesome military. It should only be used with wisdom. It should not be put at risk unnecessarily. There are tens of thousands of American servicemembers, spouses, and children nearby, and millions of South Koreans and North Koreans.

It is time for our President to speak softly. We know we have a big stick. Speak softly. Tone it down. Move toward the negotiations. It would be far more fruitful. We can do this.

I go back home, as I did this weekend, and I do my community events. People come up to me and say: I am scared; I am frightened. What is our President doing? Why is he acting this way? Why is Kim Jong-un acting this way?

We don't need another crisis. We have got to deal with this. We have got to do it with wisdom, plenty of strength, and determination. God help us if we get in a war on the Korean Peninsula again.

Consider for a moment that the 1953 Korean war never ended. It was an armistice. It is time for a peace treaty. It is time to recognize that there are two countries. It is time to settle this

down. It is time for this Congress to turn its attention to the reality of the crisis that faces Americans—yet we don't.

Instead, we have had more than 2 weeks of attention on legislation that would purposely harm millions upon millions of Americans by taking away their health insurance. We have got to put that behind us. We have got to find ways to improve the Affordable Care Act. We must do this. People are hurting.

There are problems with the Affordable Care Act, and we know where the fixes are, but we can't get our colleagues on the Republican side to work with us here in the House of Representatives.

Perhaps we will find Senator MURRAY and Senator ALEXANDER coming back together again, since it appears as though the ill-begotten Graham-Cassidy legislation is dead. Maybe Senators Murray and Alexander can come back together and work together.

I would ask my Republican colleagues here to work with us on the Democratic side to work towards solutions to strengthen and provide the necessary changes and fixes to the Affordable Care Act. We can do it.

While we are doing that, let us use the normal, natural empathy that resides in each one of us to reach out to those in Puerto Rico, Florida, Houston, and the Virgin Islands and use our innate compassion to provide the resources for them to rebuild.

Then, let's take it a step further. Instead of calling out Mexico, instead of getting into a verbal and perhaps economic conflict with Mexico, let us work with Mexico. Reach out to Mexico City now. Provide them with the assistance that this great country can. There are so many things we must spend our time on.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT), who spoke a few moments ago. I ask him to join me here on the floor.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to join the voices that echo the deep, troubling concern that we shared this weekend when we saw our President engage in a sterile fight, a childish, almost, type of fight with the NFL players.

We all know that football, baseball, and many of our sports have been a level playing field where many people of different races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds come together and cheer for a particular team from their hometown or their region.

Instead of concentrating on bringing healthcare to millions of Americans or retreating on failed attempts to repeal and replace ObamaCare, the President chose to engage in another activity: tweeting that insulted Americans across the country.

Instead of engaging in a real, substantive discussion about the Dream Act and DACA recipients, looking at the provisions of the bipartisan legislation that has been put forward and co-sponsored by close to 200 Members of

this House, led by Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, a Republican from Florida, and LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, a Democrat from California, instead of going through the provisions of that bill that could bring relief for 800,000 young people who otherwise would be potentially deported—they are larger than any of the congressional districts that any one of us may represent in this House. Instead of looking at the provisions of that, rolling up our sleeves and coming here this week to discuss how we bring relief to 800,000 young people who are working, going to school, and are members of our Armed Forces, he chose to engage in distraction.

Instead of looking at a real humanitarian crisis about to ensue in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and some of our neighboring countries of Barbuda, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, and the Caribbean, as well as the challenges of Florida and Houston, instead of taking a look at a potential humanitarian crisis that may ensue in Puerto Rico and bringing about relief for those 3.5 million Americans, he chose to look the other way.

We remember how a President hovered in his airplane over New Orleans and Louisiana as people drowned and died without getting the help they needed. This could be our modern-day Katrina, and yet our President chose to look the other way.

□ 1645

He could have engaged in bringing about results. Today, I join Congresswoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ and Congressman ADAM SMITH in signing on to a letter asking the Department of Defense to step it up in Puerto Rico.

We ask for a senior general to be appointed to work with FEMA to manage the crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands the same way it was done for Katrina. We ask for Department of Defense engineers and aviation assets to be deployed to Puerto Rico, as many of the municipalities up in the mountains are still cut off from the general population and have not been heard of for nearly a week.

We ask for technicians and experts to bring restoration of power and to work with telecommunications on the island because people are still disconnected from government, from hospitals, from the police department. There is no cell service; there is no energy on the island; and we ask for that as well.

We ask, in this letter, for the USNS Comfort, an offshore medical treatment facility, to be deployed to the island of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico only has two hospitals that have been able to restore power, yet the President looked this weekend the other way.

For three major pieces and issues that confront the American people: healthcare, as it pertains to close to maybe 30 million people that may lose their services if this failed attempt to repeal and replace ObamaCare goes through; DACA, impacting over close

to a million young people who go to school, who work, who are part of our future economic recovery, who are members of the Armed Forces; and the humanitarian crisis, a new-day Katrina that is about to ensue in Puerto Rico—for those three issues of great importance to America, our President looked the other way.

He chose to engage in tweets; he chose to insult our local athletes in an un-Presidential manner; he chose to turn his back on the American people.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ESPAILLAT very much for bringing to our attention the possibilities.

The U.S. military is awesome. I am very thankful that ADAM SMITH, the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, together with you and other colleagues, have called upon the President to deploy to Puerto Rico a military task force. The military is the most organized of all of our Federal organizations. They have the ability, they have the resources, and they certainly have the capability of addressing at least the immediate needs of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and even other islands that have been devastated in the Caribbean.

Ultimately, the task falls to those of us who are elected to represent the American people in the office of the Presidency, the House of Representatives, or in the Senate. And the questions we must ask ourselves: Are we meeting our responsibilities; are we deploying the resources of this Nation to assist in these devastated communities; are we providing the funding necessary to carry out these tasks; or are we engaged in legislation that would create a healthcare disaster on top of the natural disasters?

Well, thankfully, it appears as though four Senators have stopped a Republican effort in the Senate that is a repetition of an effort made here in the House of Representatives months ago, to stop the creation of a healthcare crisis in America.

There is more out there that will be brought forward. Tomorrow, my colleagues on the Republican side will meet to discuss tax reform. By all appearances, it appears that tax reform is likely to turn out—at least their version of it, is likely to turn out to be serious tax cuts for the superwealthy and for corporations with a hope and a prayer some day that it might create jobs.

There is precious little economic history to indicate that that would happen, but there is a lot of economic history and studies that indicate you continue to cut taxes for the superwealthy and we will have even a more serious inequality of wealth in the United States. That is a discussion for tomorrow and beyond.

Today, now, the discussion must focus on our American citizens who are not in harm's way, they are being harmed.

My plea to my colleagues here is to put aside these other issues, to focus

the great power and empathy of the American people on meeting the needs of our American citizens in Houston, Florida, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and then to reach out beyond to others who have been hurt, wherever they may be—Mexico City, other islands in the Caribbean.

Finally, a plea to our President. Mr. Speaker, a plea to our President: Tone it down. This is not a schoolyard for bombast and for belligerent talk. This is extraordinarily serious. It has been said by people who have followed these issues over the decades that we are closer to nuclear war now than we have been since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, please tone it down. Speak softly; tweet softly; don't worry about our big stick that we have. Go to the negotiation table; be humble; be firm; no nukes on the Caribbean peninsula. We can do that. We can do it.

This is my prayer.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

HURRICANES' DESTRUCTION AND COST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in all my years, I have seen a lot of storms, a lot of hurricanes, a lot of floods, a lot of tropical depressions, a lot of rains in Texas. We have a whole variety of weather in Texas and a lot of just about every calamity weather-wise you can think of. I have seen nothing come close to Hurricane Harvey. In 24 hours, we went from Tropical Storm Harvey to Category 4 Hurricane Harvey.

As with most hurricanes, there was no rhyme or reason for the destruction and the ensuing devastation. Harvey's bands of rains sat on southeast Texas with a vengeance and for days on end, and the situation turned quickly from bad to worse.

Mr. Speaker, we got 51 to 53 inches of rain in 3 to 4 days. That part of Texas' annual rainfall is about 53 inches a year. We got a whole year's worth of rainfall in under a week's time. Our great first responders, our volunteers, risked their lives time and time again to save others.

When the Nation saw that we needed help, the boats and the people just kept coming. We got the Cajun Navy from Louisiana; 100 guys with their own boats came to help us. They did things we didn't think were possible, so I coined a new phrase, "Cajunengineering." They came in and really helped us. We saw neighbors and strangers alike step up to help each other. That is the Texas way.

When the Nation saw that we needed help, people came pouring in. More