

standards and fund scientific research, and they develop new technologies to warn us of impending storms and engineer new materials that make buildings more secure. That is probably one of the biggest reasons why the damage from Hurricane Harvey didn't compare to the damage from the Galveston hurricane of 1900—because of building standards, building codes, and new materials that have been devised to help make buildings more secure. That is why Harvey wasn't like Galveston in 1900, and in the days and weeks ahead, we need to remember how far we have come. That is not to say we still don't have a long way to go.

While the strong Texas economy is crucial to recovery efforts, education will be too. Thousands of Texas schoolchildren have been displaced by Hurricane Harvey, and many public school children are still wondering when their classrooms will be opened, if at all, or whether they will simply be transferred to other schools because their schools literally do not exist anymore.

Yesterday, I spoke with Mike Morath, commissioner of Texas public education, who told me about the many challenges schools in Texas are now facing. For example, an entire school district in Rockport, TX, is closed indefinitely, leaving more than 3,000 students without friends and teachers to go to school with. In the Houston Independent School District, more than 200 schools were affected by the flooding, with at least 50 suffering extensive damage.

Our healthcare facilities are also dealing with other concerns. Bill McKeon, president of the Texas Medical Center—one of the largest medical centers in the world—told us that his employees had problems getting to work due to road closures, debris, and families without homes and vehicles. When your office is in the world's biggest medical complex and employs more than 100,000 people, that is a big problem. It is a big problem, but we are going to deal with it.

Like Galveston in 1900, like New Orleans after Katrina, these storms humble us but provide us the way to show the human spirit and ingenuity that so routinely follows as we rebuild and recover.

Once again, David McCullough's words are useful. He said: "A sense of history is an antidote to self-pity and self-importance."

Colleagues, let's keep in mind those wise words of David McCullough as we weather this storm and brace ourselves for the next.

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

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

NORTH KOREA

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I am here today to urge the White House and the National Security Council to develop and deliver to Congress a clear, comprehensive U.S. strategy to address the urgent threat posed by North Korea's nuclear missile program.

I have submitted an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act—the annual national defense bill that we will consider soon—requiring that strategy within 90 days, and I hope all of my colleagues will support it when the time comes.

I am honored to colead two Senate panels that have been focused on this threat for years: the Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces—where I work with my colleague Senator FISCHER to oversee our Nation's nuclear arsenal, missile defense systems, and nuclear nonproliferation programs—and the Banking Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance, where I work with Senator BEN SASSE to oversee the development and enforcement of U.S. sanctions laws.

In my role on these two panels, I have traveled to South Korea, the DMZ, and China. I have met with U.S. forces and foreign leaders to discuss our challenges and our options for overcoming them. I have worked with colleagues—both Republican and Democratic—to shape legislation to improve our homeland defenses, strengthen our military, and expand our sanctions in response to Kim Jong Un's dangerous behavior. I have sat in dozens of meetings, hearings, and classified briefings on the subject of North Korea's nuclear program and what we can do about it.

Just yesterday, every Member of the Senate had the opportunity to attend one of these briefings and hear from the leaders of the Pentagon, the State Department, and the Intelligence Community about our various efforts against Kim Jong Un. I am sorry to say I walked away from yesterday's briefing with the same concern I had after every briefing on this subject in the past 8 months. We have operational plans for our military and scattered talks among our diplomats, but we need a substantive strategy.

With each passing week—at times, with each passing day—North Korea is making its intentions clear and its progress toward a nuclear-capable ICBM known to the entire world. We see missile tests with growing ranges, warhead tests with growing yields, test shots that fly over the territory of our allies, and threats that target U.S. territories. Kim Jong Un says he wants to shoot a nuclear-armed missile into the U.S. mainland. I take him at his word, as we all should.

In times like this, it is critical every move we make be a deliberate one that moves the ball forward toward the outcome we want, the outcome we need to achieve. We should be doing everything in our power to do that in a way that

will not put America's sons and daughters, moms and dads, brothers and sisters who make up our Nation's military in harm's way unnecessarily.

There are more than 20,000 U.S. servicemembers in South Korea. At last count, more than 300 of them were from my home State of Indiana. Another 40,000 U.S. troops are in Japan and nearly 4,000 on Guam, not to mention the thousands of sailors and marines aboard our vessels at sea in the region.

I have every confidence in the ability of these men and women to defend our Nation, but we owe it to them to make every appropriate effort to end this conflict in a way that doesn't unnecessarily put their lives at risk.

We talk a lot about a whole-of-government effort. That is not what we are seeing right now when it comes to our response to North Korea. I see a Treasury Department that needs to dramatically step up its sanctions enforcement to not just induce pain but to cripple North Korea's ability to progress further on its nuclear program.

I see a diplomatic corps grappling with the top national security priority in the Pacific—bar none—lacking the resources, the guidance, and the backing from Washington to do their jobs. I see a U.S. Embassy in Seoul with no Ambassador. I see a State Department without key positions filled in various areas, including arms control, nonproliferation, and Asian affairs. I see a Defense Department without an Assistant Secretary for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities—or, for that matter, an Assistant Secretary for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs.

We can do better, and we must do better. This is not a partisan critique. It is not fearmongering. It is not a call to arms. This is my effort to speak on this floor, before my colleagues and the country—a request we have all made to the White House many times. Give us a strategy on North Korea and let our country unite behind it.

The country is looking for leadership on this. The world is looking for leadership. Let's define our objectives based on the best interest and safety of our country and our allies and develop our strategy to achieve it. Let us work together across departments and agencies, across branches of government, and across party lines to get there.

This is way too important to not do that. No more mixed messages. No more bluster. We have to act. We can't afford to waste our efforts in chaos and disarray. We have to continue improving our missile defenses and be prepared to use them to protect our territory, the territory of our allies, and all of our people.

We have to sanction Chinese banks that do business with North Korea. We have to cut off the lifelines of the Kim regime, including oil supplies and foreign currency—not to topple the government but to eliminate their ability to continue down this murderous path.

We have to be doing far more to get our partners in the region to do more— allies and competitors alike—in service of a goal we all share. There is ample support for all of these efforts in Congress.

Senator FISCHER and I worked together to provide even more funding for missile defense than the President requested because it is so important. Senator SASSE and I have worked together to gather options from some of the Nation's best and brightest minds on how to shape sanctions that could actually impact North Korea's ability to continue their nuclear program, whether Kim Jong Un agrees to it or not.

I believe there will be ample support among our allies—and even our adversaries—around the world if we provide the kind of clear, forceful, and effective leadership America has always been known for in the past.

There is not a nation on Earth that is safer with the existence of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, and that includes North Korea itself. However hard the path forward may be, we can all agree that the status quo is not enough. It is not even close and will not continue to work.

We cannot fix that without a strategy. I am here today asking the administration—once again, reaching out our hand to them—to take that first essential step forward and asking my colleagues to support my amendment to the national defense bill to require the administration to submit a North Korea strategy to Congress within 90 days. We can do this together.

I yield back.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business, for debate only, be extended until 12 noon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, before we adjourned for the recess, I came to this lectern to issue a call for comity, cooperation, and compromise. My message that day was simple: If we are serious about legislating—if we are truly committed to doing the work the American people sent us here to do—then we must look beyond the horizon of our differences and find common ground.

Since January, this Congress has been its own worst enemy. It has been mired in the muck of its own making, bogged down by partisan squabbles and gripped by gridlock—the likes of which I have never seen in all my years of public service. I wish I could say the situation across the country is better, but sadly it isn't. The polarization we see in the Senate is only indicative of the division we see all around the Nation. The events of August threw that division into sharp relief, but it also showed us our ability to heal—our remarkable capacity to lay aside superficial differences in moments of crisis to come together as one.

In Charlottesville and Houston, August brought us a tale of two cities—one that showed us at once both the weaknesses and strengths of our great country.

In Charlottesville, we saw the worst of America on full display. In the violence, vitriol, and vulgar racism of Nazi demonstrators, we stared evil in the face, and in the terrorist attack that ensued, we saw the ideology of hatred brought to its logical endpoint. None of us will soon forget this attack on innocent civilians. I am sure, in the stagnant human air of that hot summer's day, we caught a glimpse of the darkness buried deep in the soul of America.

Charlottesville was more than a tragic event. It was a gut-check moment for all Americans. It was a national low point that demanded all of us to take stock of where we are as a society and where our rhetoric is taking us.

The men who perpetrated this horrific act of violence—whether by their words or by their actions—represent the dregs of a dying culture, but if the violence in Charlottesville showed America at its worst, then the rescue and recovery efforts in hurricane-ravaged Houston showed our country at its best.

Just 2 weeks after the brutality in Charlottesville, our Nation again watched in horror as Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas, unleashing a flood of biblical proportions. Relentless rainfall battered the coast for days, leaving in its wake a trail of destruction and shattered life.

Harvey left behind unprecedented devastation, but it also gave us countless stories of hope and heroism. On national TV, we saw a weatherman rushing to the aid of a stranded driver, pulling the man to safety before the current could take him away. We saw everyday Texans wade in the neck-deep waters to form a human chain, saving the life of a stranger trapped in his car. We watched as three teenage boys navigated the streets of Houston in a fishing boat, driving from house to house to rescue their neighbors as the floodwaters poured in.

These are just a few stories among thousands more. These stories remind us of the hope and humanity borne of tragedy. They bear testament to the innate goodness of the American people,

and they show us that, in moments of crisis, our capacity to come together for the good of our communities is really unparalleled.

Tragedies like those in Houston strip us of all that is superfluous, leaving behind only our common humanity. In the moments of peril that moved tens of thousands of Texans to band together to save their city, considerations of race, religion, class, or creed fell into complete irrelevance. The first responders, volunteers, and Good Samaritans who put their own lives at risk to rescue others served indiscriminately. They took no thought for whom they were helping—what their background or beliefs were. Houston's heroes saw only lives that needed saving, and they went to work.

If there is any good that comes of tragedy, it is that for a brief but beautiful moment, we are able to see each other as we truly are—not as Republicans or Democrats, rich or poor, Black or White, but as members of the same community, partakers of the same human condition and children of the same God. For a brief moment, we are able to see each other as Americans.

I pray that the hope of Houston may inspire all of us here in the Senate. I pray that we may look to the city's example in the work we have before us, setting aside our petty partisan differences to come together for the good of the Nation. I pray that, as Senators, we might see each other as friends and equals, partners and patriots, anxiously engaged in the important work of legislating. I pray that we can esteem each other by our mutual love for this great country, not by the R or D that follows our names.

Now, more than ever, we need strength and unity here in the Senate. The challenges we have before us are enormous. In the next few weeks alone, we need to secure emergency relief funding for the victims of Hurricane Harvey, raise the debt ceiling, fix our broken Tax Code, and find a way forward on immigration reform. Our to-do list just keeps growing.

Each of these items taken on its own is challenging, but taken as a whole, our agenda is daunting. But I truly believe we are up to the task. I truly believe we can step up to the plate, just as the people of Texas did, to tackle the challenges before us.

As I said before we broke for recess, the Senate is capable of so much more. I know because I have seen the Senate at its best. I have seen the Senate when it truly lived up to its reputation as the world's greatest deliberative body. I believe we can again see this body at its best.

My central message today is simple. We can do hard things. I know because we have done them before. So let's make laws, not excuses. Let's move forward on an agenda that puts the needs of America's families front and center.

This is an important pivotal time in our Nation's history. It is up to us to