

his country. Now he will be remembered by every student who walks through those halls. He will be honored by these students as they grow and learn to dedicate themselves to do what they do and love the way that Sergeant Pilla did.

I thank Sergeant Dominick Pilla for his service.

To all of the men and all of the women in the Armed Forces who serve our country so bravely and so selflessly, may God bless them.

CALLING FOR VOTE ON DISASTER FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, today, I join my colleagues in calling for an immediate vote on disaster funding.

In 2018 and so far in 2019, we have witnessed devastating disasters with hurricanes hitting Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas; wildfires in California; flooding in the Midwest; an earthquake in Alaska; and several other widespread weather events that have harmed communities across our country and our territories.

The people in our districts and States need our help, and it is our duty to fight for them.

I thank my colleagues for joining me today, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY), whose district adjoins my district.

Mrs. ROBY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for leading this very important conversation here tonight, and I thank all my colleagues from our neighboring States and across this country for keeping this issue in the forefront of the American people's minds.

Over the last several months, Americans in many corners of this country have experienced a devastating loss of life, property, and livelihood because of wildfires, flooding, and severe storms. I am here tonight to express my strong support for the many Alabamians, both in the Second District and in neighboring Lee County, who have been badly impacted by severe weather.

Last October, areas of the Wiregrass region in Alabama's Second Congressional District were ravaged when Hurricane Michael made landfall. Barbour, Dale, Henry, Geneva, and Houston Counties were the most severely impacted.

Throughout the Southeast, people lost their loved ones and their homes, and our farmers were dealt a devastating blow during the middle of harvest.

□ 1730

This unprecedented disaster resulted in a tremendous economic setback for our agriculture community and our

State. Last month, our neighbors in Lee County faced extreme devastation when tornadoes touched down. Many were killed, and many homes were lost and destroyed.

Madam Speaker, we are here tonight because these people need help. Here in Congress, it is our responsibility to make disaster recovery funds available now. I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stop playing political games with disaster funding. By politicizing this humanitarian issue, we are playing politics with people's lives.

We must immediately advance commonsense, nonpartisan disaster assistance for the people who have been hit hardest and are struggling to recover. I am hopeful that alongside my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that a solution will be reached soon. Many Alabamians—many Americans—are depending on it.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for leading this discussion.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my gratitude to MARTHA ROBY for her speech and for her sentiments on her people in Alabama.

Next, Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT), who is my good friend and who has been one of the champions for the disaster supplemental. He has worked tirelessly for the last 7 months to advance this effort.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. DUNN, for leading this effort. I know his district was hit probably harder than any other district in the United States.

Madam Speaker, I rise today alongside many of my fellow colleagues to again stress the hardships many of our fellow Americans faced following these devastating natural disasters of 2018.

On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael entered my home State of Georgia as a Category 3 storm. With it, we saw widespread damage from dangerous winds, flooding, and torrential rains. Hurricane Michael traced a path of destruction through south and middle Georgia, straddling both mine and Congressman SANFORD BISHOP's districts.

Our districts are largely rural areas that have also been hit hard by tornadoes and flooding in recent years. These areas are key to the State's agriculture sector, which is Georgia's number one industry.

Madam Speaker, the American farmer is the backbone of agriculture, and agriculture is Georgia's number one industry.

Fearing the worst of this storm, many farmers began harvesting what they could as Hurricane Michael crept closer and closer to Georgia. It was the best yield we had seen in years for what was gathered before the storm hit. After years of low commodity prices, unfair trade practices, labor shortages, and consecutive years of devastating storms, we needed it. Once

Hurricane Michael hit, it was all gone. Not only did we lose billions of dollars in commodity crops, like cotton and peanuts, but we also lost orchards and forests that will take decades to regrow.

Since the day after the storm, I have worked side by side with my friend and colleague, Congressman BISHOP, in an effort to bring our communities impacted by Hurricane Michael tools they need to recover and rebuild. At every turn, we have worked together to bring attention to the crisis and to bring relief to these farmers alongside our other colleagues who have been impacted.

The President and Vice President personally came down and promised help. I was there. For months, we have stressed the magnitude of the damage to our colleagues, and for months we were promised this was a priority for the White House and congressional leadership from both sides of the aisle.

"Any bill to fund the Government has disaster relief." I don't know how many times I have heard it. I can't name all the people I have heard it from. As we stand here today 6 months later, these can only be called empty promises.

Never before have we seen American communities that were wrecked with catastrophes neglected like this. To this day, OMB has not even submitted a request for disaster assistance, calls to White House staff have gone unheeded, and but for one tweet on April 1, it seems the President has moved on.

For months I have received calls from farmers and the lenders they rely on that the financial impacts from Hurricane Michael were becoming increasingly more difficult to bear. Then last week, the Senate showed how truly ugly and partisan politics have become, voting down a measure that would have brought billions in Federal relief that communities in my home State of Georgia and around the country desperately need to get back on their feet again, money to restore infrastructure and restore services, as well as farm aid.

Certainly, no one would have stood in the way of disaster relief for States like Vermont or New York. Rural Americans, we have been forgotten. We were forgotten again last week in the Senate's failure to pass disaster assistance.

Rural Americans are Americans, too, whether the press likes it or not, and whether certain Members of the Senate like it or not. They need our help to rebuild. If the Senate cannot pass a bill to provide this Federal disaster assistance, the bottom line is farm bankruptcies will continue, and I fear that the community banks and businesses that support the farm sector will too.

The truth is if Hurricane Michael had hit Americans who aren't farmers or farmers who aren't Americans, the stories of Washington's apathy to get things done would be the front page of every paper.

Mr. Speaker, the American farmers work day in and day out to feed and clothe America and the world. I urge the White House and the Congress to reverse their course of abandoning our farmers and keep the promises that were made to them.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend, AUSTIN SCOTT, for his words. He has truly been at the forefront on the fight for this disaster supplemental since day one.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Omaha, Nebraska, (Mr. BACON). General DON BACON is my good friend and classmate.

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to advocate in support of a disaster assistance package for recent floods, storms, fires, and others. Last month, my district and home State of Nebraska was hit by devastating flooding, destroying more than 2,000 homes, 340 businesses, and taking several lives, making it the worst natural disaster to hit the State in our 152-year history.

Many families and communities in my district have been severely impacted. For several days in March, the only way in and out of Valley and Waterloo, two towns in our district, was either by boat or helicopter. Next door to our district, one-third of Offutt Air Force Base was under water to include 60 structures.

The economic impact has also been severe and will hurt the State of Nebraska for years to come. Current estimates reveal that the cost of the damage will surpass \$1.3 billion to \$1.4 billion. This includes \$449 million in damaged roads, levees, and other infrastructure.

Currently, 200 miles of Nebraska roads are in need of repair. What once was a short drive of minutes, in some cases may take hours, disrupting everyday commerce and travel.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture estimates that the March floods will have \$400 million in losses for livestock, \$36 million in livestock feed loss, and \$440 million worth of potential crop loss from delayed and prevented planting. Nebraskans are a strong and resilient people, but they need to know that we are with them and will help them through these difficult times.

While Nebraska has been experiencing these horrible floods, I take solace in our first responders and National Guard. I cannot thank these brave men and women enough for helping so many in our community. In many small communities across Nebraska, first responders are only volunteer, often rushing out to help others while their own homes were in peril. These heroes selflessly saved countless lives and property.

I want to give a shout-out to the Waterloo Fire Department volunteers; they rescued nearly 200 people as volunteers over the course of a week. I think of the Salvation Army leader who ran the collection center, working countless hours while his own home was underwater.

In these trying times, I urge my colleagues to put politics aside and come together to help Nebraskans and other Americans hurting from these natural disasters that have occurred over the past year. We are Nebraska strong. We need Federal support.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank General BACON for his words.

Madam Speaker, from Nebraska we have a true leader of the House and a good friend.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, I thank Dr. DUNN for hosting this very important discussion. As we have visited on several different occasions, I want to publicly commend the gentleman for his dedication for fighting for the right thing to do, for his deep compassion for the people he represents and the tireless effort that he is making to explain the consequences of Hurricane Michael as it hit him, the floods that have hit us, and the wildfires that have hit others. I thank the gentleman so much for the time and for his leadership.

Madam Speaker, when spring approaches in Nebraska, we expect our rivers and streams to peacefully rise as snow from the nearby Rockies gently melts. We are the Cornhusker State, but we actually could be called the River State. Here is why: We have more miles of rivers than any other State in the Union. The Missouri, the Platte, the Republican, the Elkhorn, and the Niobrara are our most famous rivers, but we really don't think of them as threatening—until they are.

So as General BACON just said, this was the most destructive storm in most Nebraskans' lifetimes. A perfect storm of factors caused the pain and destruction now all around us. Lands that were soaked from earlier autumn rains were frozen solid and then covered in snow. When the bomb cyclone's lethal mix of blizzard and rain did hit our State, an enormous quantity of water, ice, and collected topsoil sped down the hard land like a furious slurry, into rivers, creeks, and reservoirs bursting through dams, levees, and other structures that normally would hold this back.

Madam Speaker, it is pretty hard to get the mind around what a 500-year event actually means. But as I was standing at the ridge on Offutt Air Force Base, which is located right south of Omaha near the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers, I could see how the unprecedented force of water covered one-third of that entire base and many communities in eastern Nebraska. As the rushing water hit the bank on the other side of the river, on the Iowa side, it blew it out and created a 62-foot deep hole.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee here in Congress, I turned to the commander of the Corps of Engineers who was with me.

I looked at him, and I said: What is the number?

He immediately shot back without hesitation and said: It is going to be a lot.

Now, a little bit down the road to the west is the town of Fremont. Mayor Scotty Getzschman is a dedicated local public servant who is in the heating and air-conditioning business as his main job. He brought out a 1940 map of the old river channel of the Platte River. The problem for this town of Fremont began when the river got a bit nostalgic and sought to go back to its old ways. In a place now named ground zero near the Rod and Gun Club west of town, massive chunks of ice and the pressure of the Platte blew the levee. Water began to find its own channels in multiple breaches, and the southern part of the town of Fremont endured serious flooding.

We surveyed the damage from a freshly patched hole made from remnants of an old hog confinement lot and riprap from the old Scribner Air Base.

An initial call for help in the community brought 250 people out. Shortly thereafter, 1,000 people showed up to sandbag. One man moved his car to higher ground because he could see what was coming, but then it was later swept away by the raging river, and he spent the next few days at the intersection directing traffic as a volunteer.

Madam Speaker, a bit west of the town of Fremont is the small town of North Bend, and that is where a ditch dike could not contain itself and made its own channel, creating fingers of water flowing throughout the city, and the vast majority of homes in this small community were hit. The paved streets looked like mud streets by the time I got there, but even with 6 inches of water inside of it, the North Bend Eagle, the local newspaper, figured out a way to get that edition out.

Realizing that he was in a critical spot, the North Bend school superintendent transformed the entire school, really one of the newer buildings, into a center of gravity for emergency operations. Though school was canceled, it didn't mean the kids weren't busy. Initially they sandbagged, then they began to volunteer for days on end with the cleanup effort.

The people of North Bend organized themselves, and word spread. Goods poured in from all over the country. And as the superintendent told me, he said that what was happening there could make a good country song, they would have so much more appreciation for Nebraska.

Areas south of the town of Columbus, a little bit further to the west also were particularly hard hit with very large and mounting ag losses, the most visible sign of which were dead cattle. In fact, this past Saturday I went to a high school fundraiser in Columbus, and along Highway 81 the speed signs were still bent over with grass attached to them showing the magnitude and the volume of water that rushed over that area.

There is a truck stop there named T-Bone, Madam Speaker. It greets passersby with two enormous cowboy boots on poles embedded in concrete. One was found 300 yards away at Matulka's garage. The other one was across the highway about a half mile away. They will probably be put back up to greet passersby once again. By the time I got there, the 4 feet of mud and water had receded, and a lot had been cleaned up.

I looked at Fred, and I said: How did this happen?

He said:

At T-Bone's, we don't mess around. We are Nebraskans. We get it done.

On a more positive note, Madam Speaker, a Federal project initiated after the last flood of 2011 saved the little town of Schuyler, Nebraska, and a couple of other things positively have happened. Nebraska's congressional delegation asked for expedited federal disaster assistance, and the President granted it.

□ 1745

Even in the midst of this trauma, Nebraskans found a way to get a few laughs. Along the fence across from that truck stop of T-Bone's, there was a hand-painted sign that said, "Mud Wrestling Tomorrow."

Back at Offutt Air Force Base, it is a pretty jarring scene when you see a large fuel tank lifted up and turned on its side. It shows you the powerful force of this water.

As many of the Members of Congress who have experienced this have had the same outpouring of support from family and friends around the country, I want to tell you just a quick few things that happened to me.

A nun from Rome wrote to me and offered her prayers. A Congressman from another area of the country texted me and said: "I'll send my staff. Whatever you need." The Jordanian Ambassador to the United States contacted me with her concerns.

Madam Speaker, as you and I have seen firsthand, a natural disaster can create certain blessings in disguise. It is a time when we can come together and put aside any political differences and lend a helping hand to our fellow citizens.

I think that is exactly what America wants Congress to do right now: put our differences aside, find consensus, quickly pass a supplemental to simply help my constituents and the others who have been so devastated by these unpredictable, unforeseen events. Many have waited and waited, and I think this is the time.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative FORTENBERRY for his compelling description of the damages that were suffered in Nebraska and also of the response of those brave people.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGGLEMAN). Representative DENVER RIGGLEMAN is my good friend and one of the most outstanding members of the new class here in Congress.

Mr. RIGGLEMAN. Madam Speaker, to my colleagues, I rise in support of them and the incredible work they have done for disaster relief, and I also rise today to speak about my district, the Fifth District of Virginia, which borders North Carolina, which was devastated last year by two hurricanes, first Florence and then Michael. The damage was immense, and the impact on families was tragic, including the loss of lives.

This is not an issue I take lightly. In fact, I pledged to make a donation to Drakes Branch Volunteer Fire Department in Charlotte County, which was an area the hurricanes hit particularly hard, actually, with the collapse of the volunteer fire station back into the river—and the fact is they had nowhere to actually do fire emergency work.

Applications for FEMA aid were filed in Charlotte County, Danville City, Franklin County, Halifax County, Lunenburg County, Mecklenburg County, and Prince Edward County. And many additional counties in my district were affected by these hurricanes.

Unfortunately, the effects were not limited to my district, and the lasting damage done by these storms lingers in these communities today. Yes, they are rebuilding and recovering, but we cannot ignore the opportunity to prevent this from happening again.

There are other things we can do not only with disaster relief and supplementals, but also working on issues like I am in the Financial Services Committee by addressing issues in the National Flood Insurance Program.

The NFIP is a necessary Federal backstop for flood insurance, but substantially increasing private participation will help Americans better prepare for potential future flood emergencies.

I would also like to take this time to commend the great work done by so many emergency responders and volunteers who helped the communities of the Fifth District and throughout the other States and in my colleagues' districts, helped them dig out and move forward after these hurricanes.

I have visited with many of these brave men and women who put themselves at risk to help their communities. I commend the strong folks who make up all of these communities, linked not only by hurricanes but by their ability to move on with great resilience.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative RIGGLEMAN for his words, and I know that his constituents are fortunate to have a man of his rare abilities serving them at all times.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON). Representative DUSTY JOHNSON is another outstanding member of the freshman class.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam Speaker, I am honored to be a part of this Special Order tonight.

I want to highlight the dire situation in my home State of South Dakota. Our State is just barely beginning to

recover from dramatic flooding while, simultaneously, we are trying to prepare for the disaster to get worse as a blizzard this week will dump freezing rain and more than a foot of snow onto already saturated ground.

Now, I have heard colleagues talk about similar and, in some cases, even more dramatic damage to their homes, and we have seen, in their States and in mine, commerce interrupted; we have seen livelihoods devastated; we have seen cattle killed; and, worse yet, we have seen human life lost.

Now, within South Dakota, there have been many impacted communities, although perhaps none more dramatically than Indian Country. When I have talked to President Bear Runner, Pine Ridge; President Bordeaux, Rosebud; or Chairman Frazier from Cheyenne River, their texts, their phone calls, our face-to-face meetings, they are heavy with the frustration and the exhaustion, the irritation, the concern about what is going on for their people. Madam Speaker, put more appropriately, they are concerned for what is going on with our people.

Right before I walked onto the floor here, I came from a meeting with Chairman Harold Frazier, and he had picture after picture after picture, Madam Speaker, of the devastation there at Cheyenne River: cemeteries under water, roads under water, cattle under water, cars under water.

I know South Dakota is not the only community that is impacted. Many of us need a helping hand. Many of the people in our States are too proud to ask for a helping hand, but tonight I would just ask my colleagues in this body and my colleagues in the Senate to do everything they can to put politics aside and to pass a disaster relief bill that can do much-needed work for our country.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative JOHNSON for his description, his words, and also for his granular knowledge of his district. I know that that is a benefit to everybody there.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD). Sheriff JOHN RUTHERFORD is my good friend whose district of Jacksonville, Florida, abuts mine on the east side.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding and giving me the opportunity to speak about this very important topic impacting our State and our constituents.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to strongly urge House and, particularly, Senate leadership to stop turning their backs on hurricane survivors in my home State of Florida and pass a disaster supplemental bill before Congress leaves for the next 2 weeks.

Last October, Hurricane Michael ravaged our State, hitting the panhandle with speeds of up to 155 miles an hour and killing 49 people. Six months later—6 months later—families, farmers, and businesses are still waiting for the assistance that they deserve.

Families lost homes, precious belongings, things that can never be replaced.

Florida's timber industry was decimated. The total timber damage is an estimated 2.8 million acres of timber that is now lying rotting on the ground—2.8 million acres.

This is, unquestionably, one of the worst storms to hit Florida in our long history.

But not only are Florida agriculture and other industries desperately awaiting our help, our national security is also being impacted. Tyndall Air Force Base, one of the Nation's premier military installations, was completely demolished by this storm.

Since Congress has not passed emergency funding, the Air Force has been forced to move money from other accounts to help pay for the recovery. The Air Force is now facing even tougher choices, like limiting flying time and construction projects from other installations.

Madam Speaker, this is simply unacceptable. Maybe if the Senate Democrats would spend less time focused on running for President and more time doing the job that they were elected to do, folks back home would already have the disaster relief that they are due.

I voted, along with my House colleagues, to pass a supplemental back in December. In December, we passed that. The Senate Democrats have just obstructed that effort.

Entire small communities that were wiped away still have no assistance coming from the Federal Government. I hope the hardworking taxpayers of Florida remember this lack of concern when they go to the polls in 2020.

Our Senate is broken by a 60-vote cloture rule that has to be removed, and I hope the folks back home will remember this in November of 2020.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Sheriff RUTHERFORD for his words. He has been a stalwart ally and a great friend ever since we arrived here on day one. He is a true friend to all of Florida.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), one of the true leaders of our Conference.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. DUNN from Florida, for leading us in this Special Order tonight and providing this opportunity to talk about a very important aspect of our job together as it affects our different regions and our States across the country.

This is an important opportunity to highlight, in my own district, our critical need for disaster funding in California, as well as the success stories we have had in the past, but, also, the needs of my colleagues in the Southern States and now, unfortunately, too, in the Midwest, my colleagues from Nebraska.

Unfortunately, it appears that we will head into a 2-week recess now without the Senate doing their half of

the job in this Congress and sending a relief package to the House that is so desperately needed—a real shame.

This comes after the Senate Democrats rejected the latest attempts by Republicans to reach a compromise. It highlights one common trend I have seen so far in this Congress that Democrats are not interested in good faith negotiations with Republicans. They say all or nothing; take it or leave it.

We have got two different Houses. One has a majority of one and the other has a majority of the other. We are going to have to come together a lot if we are going to get anything done in this Congress. What we have right now is no way to govern.

Disasters take a substantial toll on many areas of the country. In my own district, 2 years ago was the spillway disaster at Oroville on the Oroville Dam. Now, with 2 years of good work, that spillway is now back functioning once again, rebuilt with a heck of a lot of money and a lot of people coordinating to get it done quickly.

We just saw, in the last few days, 25,000 cfs of water is coming over that spillway in order for the lake to be regulated safely and accurately for flood control as well as storing water that we need through the year.

Unfortunately, that isn't the last disaster in northern California. We had two more on top of that: near Redding, California, what is known as the Carr fire—a firenado, they labeled it—doing so much devastation on the west side there; then, ultimately, in November, 2 days after the election, in Paradise, California—we have all heard about that—a whole town basically has disappeared in that fire, in that conflagration, destroying, again, thousands of homes and buildings, and dozens of people were lost in that.

The Camp fire and the areas around it—Concow, Magalia—they will be recovering for quite some time. Thankfully, we have had help, and we are thankful for that. We are thankful for the funding for the Oroville Dam spillway. We are thankful for the help initially here for the Carr fire in Redding and for the Camp fire in Paradise.

But, for all the combined disasters we are looking at—Mr. SCOTT in Georgia, who still needs help, and my other colleagues—we have to have a stable flow into the coffers for our disaster relief that is so desperately needed all over the country.

Why isn't the Senate doing its job? With all that has happened in our home State of California, why is the junior Senator from California more worried about, 2 years ahead of the election, spending all the time in the other 49 States campaigning instead of showing up to vote on the relief measure when the Senate considered it last week and the House passed a version of it back in December?

It appears that Senator has more important things to do. I hope Californians will remember that for a lot of reasons.

The Camp fire in Paradise was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California's history, the deadliest in our country for over 100 years.

It is time for the Senate Democrats to quit fooling around with political games and get this disaster assistance in place, not just for me but for all my colleagues around the country who have people they are responsible for and need to get the work done.

We have done our job in the House. D.C. must do its job overall, the Senate included.

□ 1800

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Representative LAMALFA for his sincere words and his seasoned judgment and insights. Let us hope that those words fall on fertile ground.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida's First District (Mr. GAETZ), one of my dearest friends in the House. We were friends for many years before we came to this House, and his talents are known to all of us. He is an Olympian among his class.

Mr. GAETZ. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank Dr. DUNN for the work, not only in ripening this issue, but also in crafting disaster response legislation that would work for the people impacted by Hurricane Michael.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Georgia, AUSTIN SCOTT. Well before others were speaking out on this issue, Dr. DUNN and Mr. SCOTT were working very hard to ensure that the needs of our constituents were adequately represented.

Madam Speaker, disasters give us time to rise to the occasion as leaders in our community. They give us the chance to inspire people on their worst day, and to ensure that those who carry the disproportionate burden of challenge will be assisted and helped by their fellow countrymen and women in the United States of America.

But sadly, following Hurricane Michael, we have not, as a Congress, risen to the occasion, particularly in the Senate, where there is no movement now on legislation, before a two-week recess, to address the terrible tragedy of Hurricane Michael.

It is unfathomable to me that every other major storm that has hit our country, named, has received a disaster supplemental. And I guess the constituents that I serve, that Dr. DUNN, that Mr. SCOTT serve wonder, What is so special about us? What is so different about the people of South Georgia, South Alabama, North Florida, that we would be left out?

Is it that Hurricane Michael blew at less of a rate of wind? No. Is it that it dumped less rain?

I guess it's just that the people impacted by Michael are unique victims of a broken system in Washington that careens from disaster to disaster itself, rather than focusing on the disasters impacting our constituents.

And, Madam Speaker, what is so deeply tragic about this is that as folks

are trying to put their lives, and their schools, and their families, and their churches back together, we are moving into the summer lightning storm season in my community, and they are going to be victimized all over again, because we have got 72 million cubic tons of fuel on the ground in North Florida and South Georgia, and South Alabama, and with the first lightning storm that is going to ignite.

And so, as my Democrat colleagues, in a matter of a day or so, prepare for their retreat, my constituents prepare, not for a retreat, but for the advance of fires that will take their homes, their lives, their farms, their livelihoods, and their hope for a brighter future.

So I beg, I plead, I implore my colleagues, let's look past the politics of this moment. Let's realize that it could be any of our districts uniquely impacted by a storm, or a fire, or an earthquake or some other terrible disaster; and that, while on most days, we wear our jerseys and suit up and compete against one another in the marketplace of ideas, let's come together as one team, as one country, and do right by those who are suffering from these terrible tragedies.

Again, I thank my colleague from Florida for yielding time, and I thank him for his leadership.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to introduce Representative GAETZ and hear his oratory. I thank him for his brilliant words.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER). Representative ROUZER is a friend. He has visited my home. I have visited his district. He truly knows what it is like to see other districts and empathize with them and to reach out; and I am deeply gratified to have him here speaking today.

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Florida, Representative NEAL DUNN, who is not only a great colleague but a great friend.

Madam Speaker, it is not just Hurricane Matthew—pardon me, Hurricane Michael. In my district we had Hurricane Matthew in 2016—but it is also Hurricane Florence that devastated southeastern North Carolina and many other areas this past fall as well.

A lot of the previous speakers, colleagues who have come before me here today have talked about the need for disaster assistance, and they are exactly right. I want to complement what they have said, supplement what they have said, and paint a little bit of a broader picture here.

You have got to understand that agriculture, in particular, has faced 5 years of really, really low prices; so farmers, whether they are in North Carolina and have suffered from the flood of Hurricane Florence, or whether they are in Georgia or Florida or anywhere else and have suffered from Hurricane Michael, or the floods in Nebraska, for example, they have no equity left.

They have suffered 5 years of really, really low prices. We had a farm bill in place that, quite honestly, was not adequate in terms of the safety net that was in place and, as a result, they have no equity.

And think about this: Think about all those out there—and for those who are not involved in agriculture, think about it this way—assume that you have invested millions and millions and millions of dollars that are plowed, literally plowed into the ground, but have no opportunity to produce a crop.

You have no equity left. You just took a loan out from the bank. You are highly leveraged because of 5 years of low commodity prices. You have taken that loan out. This is the one year that you had available to you to make up the difference, to begin to turn it around financially.

And lo and behold, you get hit by Hurricane Florence, totally flooded early September, no opportunity to harvest your crop, and there you are.

That is the scenario. That is the picture. That is what so many farm families all across Eastern North Carolina, all across the Southeast are facing today.

Meanwhile, you have got Members of the House and the Senate who care very deeply about their constituency, who have been working very, very hard to get an ag disaster package, and find it incredibly frustrating that here, in April, months after these storms have hit, we have made no progress. And there are a variety of reasons for that.

But the fact of the matter is, this Chamber and the Senate Chamber need to come together with the White House to get this ag disaster package done just as quickly as possible.

In North Carolina, agriculture is an \$87 billion industry, the largest industry, by far.

And let me make one final point. When these farm families are gone, when these farms are gone, they are not coming back; they are growing houses instead. They are not coming back.

This agriculture disaster package is so critically important. We have got to get it done. I thank the leadership and the spirit of my good friend from Florida, NEAL DUNN, and I really, really commend him and my other colleagues for putting forward the effort tonight to raise awareness of this issue. It is so critically important, not only for my home State of North Carolina, but for America.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative DAVID ROUZER for those words. It is a sad story that the gentleman told, but it is a story that needed to be heard and is one that is being lived out through many of our districts; the end of generations of farming in some families. It is a very sad story.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN), a good friend of mine from our class. He is a great Congressman. We have vis-

ited in his district. And let me say that it has been a pleasure to work with him and his wife.

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I thank Dr. DUNN for his work here this evening to bring attention to something that is critical for not only our great citizens in Florida, North Florida, but of course we heard about North Carolina, Nebraska; and, of course, we have been waiting since last October in Georgia.

You have heard about devastation from Hurricane Michael. It left a tremendous trail of destruction. It was a Category 3 storm that reached my district with winds over 100 miles per hour. We lost trees, power lines, crops, poultry houses, and much more.

While traveling the district, I was able to see firsthand the heart-wrenching wreckage that Hurricane Michael left behind, and it is still there to this day, nearly 6 months later.

Many of our farmers in my district are struggling to survive. I mean, we had cotton on the ground, probably the best harvest we were going to have in a long time. Gone.

In addition to Hurricane Michael, it is also important to highlight the need for the assistance we have been working to secure for our blueberry and peach producers in the State who still suffer from losses and damaged bushes and trees resulting from late season freezes.

Not a day goes by that I don't hear from a Georgia-12 farmer about the urgency of providing disaster relief funding immediately.

And just last week, Senate Democrats chose to block a desperately-needed bipartisan disaster relief package that would have provided critical funding to our communities, not only in Georgia, but across the Nation that have been affected by these disasters.

Let me just say this: Holding farmers who feed and clothe our Nation hostage over partisan politics is downright shameful.

I cannot stress enough that local farmers must obtain bank loans ahead of the upcoming planting season. So the urgency of getting a bill passed in both Chambers and sent to the President cannot be overstated. We do not have time for political games aimed at undermining our President.

Madam Speaker, agriculture is the number 1 industry in Georgia and in the 12th District of Georgia. I know this process has been more challenging than many of our farmers could have imagined, and I just want to reiterate that I will always stand with rural America 100 percent.

I will not stop working until the farmers of the 12th District of Georgia and across our great State get this disaster relief that they need and deserve.

I would like to thank Senators PERDUE and ISAKSON for leading the effort in the Senate, my colleagues AUSTIN SCOTT, SANFORD BISHOP, and NEAL DUNN, and others that you will hear from here tonight in the House, and all of my colleagues here this evening for

the commitment to getting this done. It cannot wait any longer.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I wish to thank Representative ALLEN for his words and his support.

Next, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), one of the most senior and experienced representatives in the delegation from Florida, a man who has been a personal mentor to me and a great model.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I will tell the gentleman this: He has been a great model for me serving on the Energy and Commerce Committee. It is always good to go to the physician to hear firsthand what the patients need and want. So I thank the gentleman for healing his constituents over the years, and now serving them in the United States Congress.

Madam Speaker, I cannot stress enough the devastation that hurricanes over the last few years have inflicted not only on the State of Florida, but all over the country, as you can see, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, what have you. And folks, we need to get—come together. We need to come together and get this done for the American people.

This should be a no-brainer. We have waited too long for this to happen, and it needs to be a bipartisan bill out of the Senate. Get it on the floor of the House as soon as possible so we can help our constituents.

One particular case, in the city of Tarpon Springs alone, Hurricane Irma exacerbated shallowing problems at its port. This puts at risk the livelihood of our marine and tourism business owners and impacts \$250 million in yearly commerce a year.

A remedy known as the Anclote River Dredge Project was set to be funded under the previously-passed emergency supplemental bill. We were given assurances—I understand we have a lot of disasters that need to be taken care of—but we need to take care of our constituents, and this is a good example.

And we did this right. We have county matching funds, State matching funds that are at risk right now. The city has put up money. We have got to get this project through.

The seafood industry is suffering. Again, commerce, the sponge industry is suffering because of the lack of dredging of this beautiful Anclote River.

Unfortunately, the sheer number of areas in need of repair from disasters force the already-allocated funding to be moved to other projects, and I understand that. But these projects are important as well.

We need to ensure projects like Anclote are quickly and adequately fixed after a hurricane or other disaster; and, therefore, I support the immediate consideration of a disaster supplemental bill.

I thank my colleague, NEAL DUNN, for this Special Order. He is doing an outstanding job.

We have got to get this done quickly for our constituents.

□ 1815

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative BILIRAKIS for his leadership and for the personal generosity of his time spent with me tonight.

Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, next, I would like to introduce the third and final Representative from Nebraska, a good friend and a good friend of Nebraska. Thank you so much very much for being here.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman DUNN for yielding. I appreciate his taking the initiative to bring folks together to discuss, unfortunately, the need to address the disasters across America.

Madam Speaker, representing one of the most rural districts in America, we have a lot of natural resources, among them, a lot of rivers, a lot of miles of river in Nebraska.

Not so long ago, conditions were such that the rivers flooded in the central and eastern part of Nebraska. In the west, a blizzard hit with the bomb cyclone, and it created massive damage. The chunks of ice flowing down rivers took out a dam, probably the first dam to break due to ice floes and the chunks of ice.

It has been tragic. There has been loss of human life, certainly the loss of livestock.

The initial estimates are about \$400 million in infrastructure damage and another roughly \$1 billion in damage to crops and livestock.

I appreciate the fact that President Trump moved quickly on Governor Ricketts' request for the disaster declaration.

We are working together among the Nebraska delegation, both Senators and all three House Members, to make sure that we articulate the needs of not only Nebraskans, but when you remove agriculture products, as is the case, ultimately, consumers will likely be impacted.

This is something we should always keep in mind because everyone needs to eat. When we lose the channels of supply for agriculture products, that is bound to increase the cost of food.

When you look at the storm, the bomb cyclone that hit, it probably couldn't have happened at a worse time of year, right in the middle of calving season.

It is a devastating condition here.

I do appreciate the fact that so many producers—I talked to one today. Instead of a 30-minute commute for a drive to work, they have to go 95 miles one way to work, because the bridge is out. When one bridge is out in rural Nebraska, that takes a few miles to make up for that.

I think we are resilient. As operators are resilient, so they are looking up. But we are concerned that, here in the next few weeks, in fact, there is another storm forecasted for later this week where folks are bracing for perhaps even more damage. Hopefully, we can get through this.

Again, I appreciate this opportunity to share what the needs are in Nebraska. I will be introducing legislation to extend a number of tax provisions often provided to disaster areas to cover this year's disasters. I hope we can offer that support to disasters from last year as well, since we are discussing this evening multiple disasters from last year and this year.

Madam Speaker, again, I appreciate this opportunity.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative SMITH for his words. It speaks to the disaster, what happened in Nebraska, that all three Representatives showed up.

Madam Speaker, next, I would like to introduce and yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), my good friend.

We share more in common than most Representatives. Because of the vagaries of redistricting, we ran in 2016 in the same 12 counties. He was a great support, a great example, and cleared the way for me. I want to say that I am deeply grateful for having Dr. TED YOHO here tonight.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Speaker, I want to compliment Dr. DUNN for doing an awesome job. His leadership on this is well noticed and well taken by the people of his district and all north central Florida, working together with the Georgia delegation and other States.

Florida is no stranger to hurricanes. The year before, we had Hurricane Irma that went through the whole State, bypassed the panhandle. In 2018, we had Michael that hit the panhandle with virtually a Category 5. It was 2 miles short of Category 5.

The estimated impact for Hurricane Michael—in fact, it was so severe, before I get into the impact, we couldn't get ahold of Dr. DUNN, so our office was very concerned about that. We took a load, with the Gilchrist County Sheriff, to take supplies up there, looking for Dr. DUNN. We didn't know if he had survived, because nobody had heard. So we are thankful that Dr. DUNN is here, and I know his constituents are.

The impact of this went from timber, cotton, cattle, peanuts, nursery, poultry, vegetables, other field crops, dairy, aquaculture, fruit crops, tree nuts, beekeepers, to mention a few. That is no structures.

The estimated cost just in the panhandle of Florida is \$1.5 billion.

We heard these other States talking about agriculture as their largest economic driver in that State, their largest industry. Florida is the third largest State in the Union, with 22 million people. Agriculture is our second largest industry. It is vital.

We look at the past—this is my fourth term in Congress—and I remember Hurricane Sandy came, hit the

Northeast. Relief was put out. It was sent out.

This is something that we need to come together as Americans. We send billions of dollars in foreign aid around the world. It is time for us to look internally, fix our problems here, because the expense of these storms, they accumulate. They don't go away from one year to the next, and we are going into the next season, the next fire season. This is something we need to work now, to correct these things.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of Dr. DUNN.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, let me say that I am deeply indebted to Dr. YOHO. Our channel of communications went down after the storm in a way that America has never seen. We lost cellphones, landlines. We lost police radios. We were talking to each other by ham radios and runners.

When Dr. YOHO could not raise me or my office staff, he mounted a rescue operation complete with food and supplies and took care of the east end of my district. I will always be grateful to Dr. YOHO for that, and I thank him so much.

Madam Speaker, for my final guest, I would like to introduce the Representative from south Georgia, another good friend and a neighbor. We don't quite abut districts, but we come pretty close. I spend a lot of time in his neighborhood. He needs to spend more time down on my beaches.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I thank Dr. DUNN for the work that he has done, as well as my other colleagues, Representative AUSTIN SCOTT, Representative SANFORD BISHOP, and Representative MARTHA ROBY. All of these fine legislators have worked diligently on this, and I thank them for their efforts, as well as others.

Madam Speaker, I have the honor and the privilege of representing the First Congressional District of Georgia. The First Congressional District of Georgia includes the entire coast of Georgia, over 100 miles of coastline. We have a lot to be thankful for, a lot to be proud of. We have two major seaports and four military installations, Moody Air Force Base, Kings Bay Naval Base, Fort Stewart, and Hunter Army Airfield. We have the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. We have two Coast Guard stations, one in Savannah and one in Brunswick.

We have so much to be thankful for, but we also have a very strong agriculture community, particularly in the western portion of our district. It is very, very important.

Madam Speaker, much of the State of Georgia is in need right now, and they can't wait any longer.

In the First Congressional District of Georgia over the past few years, we have had hurricanes. We had Hurricane

Matthew, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Michael. We have had fires. We had the West Mims Fire. We have had freezes and harsh freezing conditions that impacted our agriculture community.

These disasters have been detrimental to agriculture in Georgia. By the way, agriculture in Georgia is our largest industry. That is very important and very important for the First District.

In fact, just to be specific, blueberries, which are the leading fruit now in the State of Georgia, blueberries alone make up a \$1 billion industry. That is "billion" with a B, a \$1 billion industry. Those farmers are the backbones of their communities.

Blueberry farmers, in some areas, their crops make up 30 percent of the portfolios of banks. That is significant to these communities, and we simply cannot allow these farmers to continue going without this assistance.

The banks are waiting for many of these farmers to repay their loans. It is putting them in jeopardy of not being able to farm next year and putting entire rural economies at risk. When you put 30 percent of your portfolio at risk, you are putting your community at risk.

Congressional inaction on this is absolutely unacceptable.

The Senate's failure to pass disaster aid last week was one of the worst moments that I have experienced in Washington since I have come to Congress.

These people need assistance, Madam Speaker. They need assistance. We need to help them. The American farmer feeds the world. Georgia farmers are an integral part of this. Blueberries are an important crop in our district. Agriculture is the number one industry in Georgia.

It is time for us to respond to this. This is what we are to do as Members of Congress. We cannot simply ignore this. It will not go away.

We need these farmers. They need our help, and we need to respond.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to support disaster aid.

Mr. DUNN. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend, Representative CARTER, for his impassioned words. Obviously, he is echoing thoughts that we have heard from the other speakers.

Seldom has a Special Order been so well subscribed. So many people came to speak, so many people moved and hurt by the disaster.

It leaves me with very little time, but I want to say a couple things.

I want to reiterate that this is an unprecedented event for timber. Nobody has ever seen this much timber on the ground, 3 million acres of timber. Think about what that does to the foresters, the loggers, and the sawmills.

The military, we have lost an Air Force base, probably \$4 billion to \$6 billion worth of damage to that. We will rebuild it. We will rebuild it, and it will be great, but we need help from Congress to do that.

I have a Navy base in my district, \$288 million in damage.

I have a Coast Guard base in my district that is particularly sad. They have a single building standing. They were victims of the storm; they were first responders to the storm. They were not paid, because they are with the Department of Homeland Security, for a month. It is shameful. These are fine people in the Coast Guard.

We have housing problems right now. Thirty percent of the homes in my home county is uninhabitable. Fifty percent of the commercial real estate is not usable.

We have special geography. We are 100 miles away from the next place where there is multifamily housing. We need housing on the ground in the affected areas.

Madam Speaker, I thank all the people who took time to come and tell our story, which is a sad story, and I urge the Congress to come to our rescue.

That picture, by the way, is not 6 months old. It is 2 weeks old.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

2019 DEMOCRATIC FRESHMAN CLASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. STEVENS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Ms. STEVENS. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI), my friend.

RECOGNIZING BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS E. KUNKEL

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I thank the freshman class for giving me the opportunity to take a few seconds here.

Madam Speaker, I wish to recognize Brigadier General Thomas Kunkel upon his departure as Chief, Air Force Legislative Liaison to the U.S. House of Representatives.

In this role, General Kunkel managed the Air Force interaction with Members of Congress and their staffs in support of the Air Force programs and congressional oversight and travel.

He served as the Air Force's senior escort for staff and congressional delegations, traveling to more than 20 countries, supporting leadership, Members, and committee offices.

□ 1830

Prior to his current position, he served as the 23rd Wing Commander,