

the farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and replace some of the farm animals that have been lost.

Yesterday's House bill comes in addition to the proposals Senator LEAHY and I offered last week—and it is similar to them—and in addition to the work Senator LEAHY did last month. So, again and again, Democrats presented option after option for disaster funding that helps the Midwest, helps the coasts, helps the South, and helps Puerto Rico and other territories. None of our offers are either-or, help this but not that.

Enough excuses from our Republican colleagues. We have had enough of the slow playing, but, more important, the people who need this help have had enough. The bottom line is very simple. The aid we seek is what Americans have always done. When there is a disaster, we all come together and aid those areas in a disaster because we know when a huge natural disaster hits from God, an area can't deal with it on their own. They don't have the resources or the ability, and they are, many times, in trouble because of the disaster itself.

We say: Come to the aid, but all of a sudden Donald Trump goes into the Republican lunch a week and a half ago and says: I don't want any aid for Puerto Rico. He falsely claims they have gotten \$91 billion—not true—and then all our Republican friends go along.

Well, we are not. The House will not. Senate Democrats will not. Plain and simple, we don't believe you should pick and choose. Why did President Trump single out Puerto Rico, which are American citizens like everybody else? A lot of theories, but regardless of what your theory is, that is not the way to govern as President, and, frankly, it is not the way we should govern as Senators. It is bewildering that our Republican colleagues have caved to President Trump's—what can we call it—temper tantrum, even though they are well aware of the problems and were ready to help Puerto Rico before he threw that temper tantrum.

Some say: Well, Puerto Rico is getting a little money. They are getting food stamp aid.

Well, great. Then let's just give food stamp aid to everybody else. Let's give it to everyone else. Now, what about all the farms that are underwater? What about all the homes that are flooded and needing help? If you give food stamp aid, that doesn't help them.

So let's be fair. Let's treat each area the same. Let's do what we have done in the American tradition: Come together, when there is a disaster, to help Americans. Let's not be so afraid of Donald Trump that when you know he is wrong, you just go along.

The idea that Puerto Rico should be treated differently from the rest of America is insulting. It is against our American values and a betrayal of the promise to look after all American citizens, not because of their politics

and not because of what their last names might sound like; as American citizens, we come together during times of need.

Democrats will not yield in our responsibility to all American citizens, and I tell that to all my friends from the farm States, even those who voted against aid to New York when we had our hurricane. I never even considered not voting for aid to any other place in the country. I always have.

I say to my friends: Let's treat everyone fairly, and we can get the much needed disaster aid out there quickly.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, finally, on chaos. Over the past 12 days, the President has sought to fix his broken policies by breaking down his administration piece by piece. Even in an administration where we have become used to seeing extremism and illogic rule the day, a government of whim, a government of erraticism, a government of temper tantrums, the last few days has reached a new low in dysfunction, and all of this has a simple root cause. Every time President Trump faces a new challenge, he just keeps pointing his fingers and blaming others—blame her, blame him, fire this one, and fire that one.

Mr. President—President Trump, you are not a TV host. You are the President. Work to fix it. Don't keep firing. Don't keep changing policies from one day to the next and then abandoning them. Roll up your sleeves, bring in the experts, and work to fix it. You are the President—but the President seems to much more enjoy blaming people, whether they are in his own administration, people of our political party, and everyone else in between, than actually solving the problems.

He says he wants to keep Americans safe, but President Trump fires the DHS Secretary and Secret Service Director on a whim and provokes shutdowns that cripple our airports and our ports of entry. The President says he wants to strengthen America's standing in the world. Yet no President has done more to undermine the work of diplomacy and the State Department than Donald Trump. He says Republicans will be the party of healthcare. Yet he sues to devastate our healthcare system, with no plans to replace it.

In this administration, chaos reigns, and the source of the chaos comes only from one place, the President of the United States and his erratic, vacillating, often vindictive attitudes toward personnel and policies. When will President Trump learn that the biggest problem is not the personnel executing his agenda; it is the extreme irrational policies that are abhorrent to American values and sometimes against the law, but he insists on it. Every day that President Trump treats the most consequential job in the world like it is some kind of reality TV show is another day that America's security, stability, and long-term prosperity is further in peril.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEBBIE SMITH ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would like to start by sharing a story about one of my personal heroes, Debbie Smith. Debbie Smith is living proof that one person can change the world if they have the courage to tell their story and fight for justice.

In 1989, Debbie was at home doing laundry. Her husband Rob, a police officer, was asleep upstairs after working a night shift.

Suddenly a masked man entered her home and threatened to kill her if she screamed. He blindfolded and abducted Debbie and took her outside to a wooded area behind her home, where he robbed and repeatedly raped her. The man threatened her over and over, saying: Remember, I know where you live, and I will come back to kill you if you tell anyone.

After he finally left, Debbie ran upstairs to tell her husband. She begged him not to make her go to the police. But he, as a police officer, insisted that she report the crime and go to the emergency room for a sexual assault forensic exam, sometimes called a rape kit exam.

Debbie did go for that examination and did report the crime. But for Debbie and millions of other survivors there are no immediate answers. Because of the nationwide backlog of untested rape kits, it would be years before she was able to identify her assailant and find any sort of peace.

Although the exact numbers are hard to estimate, experts believe that hundreds of thousands of rape kits remain untested in the United States, and, of course, each one of them represents a unique story of a sexual assault victim and holds the key to apprehending a violent criminal.

Waiting for that evidence to be tested can be excruciating. Debbie said that fear took over her life. She was haunted by the man's voice threatening to kill her. She was terrified for herself and her family, and she even became suicidal for a time.

It wasn't until 6½ years later that Debbie finally got the answer she had been looking for when a DNA cold hit revealed the identity of her rapist. She later said in an interview that DNA gave her back her life.

Debbie chose to harness her pain and to use it to save others from living through years of uncertainty as she did. She has become the fiercest advocate in the Nation for eliminating the rape kit backlog. She has devoted her life to making a difference for victims of sexual violence.

The aptly named Debbie Smith Act was originally signed into law in 2004 to provide State and local crime labs the resources they need to end the backlog of untested DNA evidence from unsolved crimes through additional funding and increased capacity. Under this law, Congress has provided more than \$1 billion since then in vital funding to forensic labs for analyzing crime scene DNA evidence, uploading the results into the CODIS database, which is what happens to the test after it is completed, and identifying violent fugitives and taking these violent criminals off the street.

Not only does this sort of testing provide relief for victims like Debbie and justice for their attackers, but the evidence is also effective in assisting investigations for other crimes. This is important because violent offenders will often commit many different types of crimes in many different jurisdictions. For example, if a criminal commits a burglary in one State, DNA evidence from that burglary case can be used later to connect this offender to an unsolved rape case in another State.

The States, thankfully, are following suit. Texas, I am proud to say, has led the Nation in passing mandatory rape kit testing laws, conducting audits of the backlog, and using Debbie Smith funds to analyze untested sexual assault evidence. I am proud to report that over the last 7 years we have reduced our statewide rape kit backlog from more than 20,000 to just over 2,000. This is an astounding achievement, and thankfully it is being replicated all across the Nation because of this important legislation and because of the courage of one woman, Debbie Smith.

By ensuring the Debbie Smith Act funds can be used to analyze evidence from all types of crime scenes, we can help forensic labs address their systemic backlogs and holistically target the cycle of violence. The Debbie Smith Act of 2019 will reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act program to continue the testing of DNA evidence from unsolved crimes nationwide, including rape kits. It will also reauthorize DNA training and education for law enforcement, correctional personnel, and court officers, as well as forensic nurses who take this DNA evidence during these rape kit collections to make sure that all of them are prepared to gather the evidence and to test it. Since 2005, Debbie Smith Act funding has led to the creation of 43 percent of all forensic CODIS profiles. Again, this is the FBI database, where the rape kit information can be entered to see if it matches previously entered DNA profiles.

Let me say that again. Since 2005, Debbie Smith Act funding has led to the creation of 43 percent of all forensic CODIS profiles as well as 20 percent of all offender samples in CODIS.

In total, Debbie Smith DNA grants are responsible for 45 percent of all matches made in CODIS, which is truly remarkable. Reauthorizing this legisla-

tion once again is a top priority for me as we work to continue chipping away at the nationwide rape kit backlog and provide these victims with the answers and relief they need.

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with Debbie several times, and we have been fortunate to have her share her perspective before the Judiciary Committee on multiple occasions.

I have also worked with two other inspiring victims from Texas—Lavinia Masters and Carol Bart, who, like Debbie, had the courage to come forward and talk about a very difficult event in their lives, but to use their pain as a way to help others. Lavinia and Carol have also lent their voices in advocating for reforms to reduce the rape kit backlog.

I am grateful to these and countless other survivors who bravely share their stories and ideas as we work together to eliminate the backlog once and for all. I hope the Debbie Smith Act of 2019 will soon be reported out of the Judiciary Committee and will quickly make its way to the Senate floor, pass in Congress, and make its way to the President for his signature without delay.

H.R. 1585

Mr. President, on another matter, earlier this week the House passed a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. Our Democratic colleagues keep saying how important it is to quickly pass this legislation to restore funding to VAWA as it is known, but I think it is important to back up for a moment and remember why that funding lapsed in the first place.

Earlier this year our Democratic colleagues allowed VAWA to get caught in the crosshairs of our funding debates, and they insisted we should not fund this vital program because it was overdue for updates. Their argument was this: We want to reform or update VAWA, so we are going to let funding for it lapse. It just didn't make any sense at all.

It is no secret that folks on the other side of the aisle think it is time we made some changes to the program. It is something I support, but we don't need to let the funding lapse in order to do it.

This is an issue that our friend and colleague Senator ERNST continues to champion here in the Senate. But the approach taken by our Democratic colleagues to get those changes is a headscratcher, to say the least.

There were, as I see it, two options on how to solve the problem. One was to provide an extension for the previous funding to the end of the fiscal year. That would have allowed us to work on the long-term reauthorization under the regular processes in the Senate, which, in my experience, is always the preferred action to take.

The second option our Democratic colleagues chose was to do nothing and let this important legislation expire

without a plan to replace it. For whatever reason, that was the option that Democrats in the House chose.

In the nearly 2 months since, we have tried to negotiate a short-term extension to fund these vital programs. As recently as last week, our Democratic colleagues had a chance to support the restoration of funding while our negotiations continued.

The supplemental appropriations bill introduced by Senator SHELBY would have funded the Violence Against Women Act through the end of the fiscal year—again, giving us time to negotiate changes in the law that Democrats obviously want. But our Democratic colleagues simply refuse to support even a procedural vote that would have allowed us to get on the bill and debate it and then amend it. It seems increasingly clear to me that rather than providing the funding for victims of sexual assault and other violence, rather than finding solutions, what is happening here is that politics is creeping in and rearing its ugly head.

It is clear to me that this isn't about finding a solution; this is about political game playing. Now, rather than going through regular order to create a long-term reauthorization that includes feedback from both sides, House Democrats are trying to jam a one-sided piece of legislation through the House and then through the Senate. I think this is very shameful.

Our Democratic colleagues first refused to fund the Violence Against Women Act. They allowed it to expire, and now they are using victims of violence as leverage to push through their rushed, one-sided piece of legislation. Throwing a temper tantrum and holding the Violence Against Women's Act hostage until you get what you want is not a responsible way to legislate.

I would encourage our colleagues across the aisle to put politics aside for just a moment and work with us to pass a short-term extension for VAWA while we use the regular order to discuss long-term solutions.

There is a good way and a bad way to do this, and, unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues have chosen the bad way, but we would ask them to reconsider and work with us—not for us, but for the victims of domestic violence who are suffering as a result of their game playing.

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.

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

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

All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Stanton nomination?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.