have been helping as well. Certainly, the Red Cross and Salvation Army have been at work. Business enterprises have stepped forward with their support. Individual citizens from across the Nation have helped. The church community is doing its part and will do more. In fact, on December 19, the church community across the country will hold a nationwide effort to gather support from various denominations to help with the housing needs, especially for those who are the working poor, disadvantaged and senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I believe those Members and staffers who joined us on the November 6 now have a clear view of the needs of the people of eastern North Carolina. I believe those Members and staff now understand why this Congress must indeed pass an emergency rebuilding and reconstruction package when we return in January.

When Congress returns, I and others will put before the Congress a comprehensive rebuilding and reconstruction bill. At that time, we will seek the support of our colleagues in the House and Senate, as well as the support of the administration.

One aspect of the legislation we will introduce will be the provision of grants rather than loans for those homeowners and businessowners who simply cannot be helped by loans alone. Unless we are able to provide grants, there are many, many who owned homes before the storm will not be able to afford replacement houses after the storm. Unless we are able to provide grants, there are many businesses, especially small farmers who were in business before the storm, but will not be able to return or remain in business because of the storm.

Over the years, America has come to the aid of many in foreign countries, as we should and as we must continue to do. We have helped to rebuild Europe. We have helped to boost the recovery of Japan. We have come and will continue to come again and again to the aid of Kosovo. Surely, Mr. Speaker, we can come to the aid of our fellow citizens in eastern North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, America is at its best when conditions of our fellow citizens are at their worst. America was at its best on November 6 when those Members and staffers gave of their hearts and time and hands to those storm-torn communities and to the flood victims.

In the budget agreement we just voted on, Congress did indeed provide some immediate relief, for which I am very appreciative, although I was forced to vote against the bill because it did not contain $81 million promised by the Senate leadership for the agriculture cooperative that would have aided our tobacco farmers, our peanut and cotton farmers. There were indeed provisions in there that will provide a response to the Housing needs and additional resources for agriculture and loans and grants. I also want to thank the administration for its support.

With this budget, we have made a significant step, but only a step. Much, much more is needed before we can say that Congress has done its part. We must, indeed, do more.

TRAGEDY AT TEXAS A&M

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as one of the last speakers to speak in this chamber in this century in terms of other than the purely procedural motion, it is with great sadness that I rise this evening to talk of a terrible tragedy that happened early this morning in College Station, Texas.

The university where I graduated from in 1972 and where my father graduated from in 1947, where my son graduated from in 1993, and my daughter in 1997, has a tradition called Bonfire. Students spend several months going out and first cutting down the logs and then transporting the logs to the campus, and then once on campus, sorting them out and stacking them together to create a bonfire which some years has been over 100 feet tall, and which this year was somewhere about 40 feet tall and was scheduled to be about 60 feet tall. Earlier this morning, somewhere between 2:30 and 3 a.m., the bonfire stack catastrophically collapsed, sending 50 to 60 students that were on the stack plummeting down. Unfortunately, at least six of them have been killed; over 20 have been injured. There are still five unaccounted for, and there is a possibility that the death toll could rise to over 10 students.

Mr. Speaker, this is a terrible tragedy for Texas A&M; it is a terrible tragedy for the families of the victims; it is a terrible tragedy for young people in our country. It is a sad, sad day in College Station, Texas.

Texas A&M truly is a family. There are over 250,000 living former students of Texas A&M, and the Aggie family, literally all over the world, is in shock and mourning for the students and their families, the students that were injured and killed and their families.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other Aggie traditions, one of which, unfortunately, will have to be utilized in the very near future. Silver Taps is a tradition at Texas A&M where any student that dies while an active student, there is a ceremony on campus where all of the lights are turned out in the evening, all the students gather at a common area in front of the academic building and Silver Taps are played. So sometime in December, there will be Silver Taps for the students that were killed earlier this morning and Aggies mourn their passing.

There is a memorial service that is going on as we speak. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), whose district Texas A&M is located in, flew down to College Station earlier this afternoon to be with the students there as they have that memorial service this evening.

The bonfire has been held every year but one year since 1909. In 1963, after the assassination of President Kennedy, the bonfire was canceled. That is the only time that it has been canceled until next week. Because of the tragic accident, there will be no bonfire at Texas A&M next week before the football game between Texas University and Texas A&M.

Mr. Speaker, again, I rise in strongest sympathy this evening. I would ask all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives to pray for the families whose children have been killed or injured. I have one more daughter, Kristin, who is a senior in high school this year, and she hopes to attend Texas A&M. It is my hope that the A&M administration, President Bowen, who is an excellent academic leader and faculty leader at Texas A&M, will conduct a full investigation of this accident. If there is a way to find a cause and to prevent it from happening in the future, I know that he will do that, but I also hope that we do not cancel the bonfire in the future.

Again, hundreds of thousands of former students of Texas A&M have participated in the bonfire. With almost no exceptions, those who have participated have nothing but the warmest, fondest memories. We need to grieve for our students who lost their lives early this morning; we need to support the investigation to find the cause of that catastrophic accident, and hopefully we can come up with safety procedures so that the bonfire can continue in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues pray for the families of those students who lost their lives early this morning at Texas A&M.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MYRICK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)