

show that nearly 35% of the nation's hospitals are operating in the red.

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

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio 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 gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE 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 gentleman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. STABENOW addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HURRICANE FLOYD DISASTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include therein extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, this evening for the first portion of my special order I want to take about 5 minutes to raise an issue.

On the eve of 1 year ago, on almost the same date, one of the most destructive storms ever to hit my State came upon the shores. On September 15, 1999, Hurricane Floyd made landfall at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in North Carolina.

Floyd moved into the interior of my State and over the next couple of days proceeded to dump anywhere from 10 to 20 inches of rain in towns and communities and farm areas in parts of eastern North Carolina. These rains came only 12 days after the region was hit with pounding rains by Hurricane Dennis.

To call the results devastating would be an understatement. Our citizens suffered a full-blown catastrophe of monumental proportions.

Floyd produced the worst flooding in North Carolina history, with water exceeding what has been called the 500-year flood plain.

In North Carolina alone, Floyd was responsible for 7,000 homes being de-

stroyed and 56,000 homes damaged. We can see from this photograph taken only a couple days after the rains as the flood waters had risen a whole town underwater. More than 500,000 people suffered without power for weeks on end. Damage estimates in my State range anywhere from \$4.5 billion to over \$6 billion.

Many people lost everything that they own. They lost their possessions, their homes, their farms, their cars, their clothing, their sentimental items that we rarely think about until they are gone: wedding photographs, military awards, the children's first report cards, love letters, those kind of things we cannot replace.

Jobs were lost because businesses were too flooded to reopen, making it that much harder for families to rebuild. And worst of all, Mr. Speaker, 506 people lost their lives, most of them due to drowning in fresh water.

I remember driving back to North Carolina that night and running into the storm on my way home. I remember touring the regions in the days that followed and seeing schools, homes, businesses, churches, entire towns flooded, as we see here.

At the peak of the emergency, 235 public shelters housed people. Almost 50,000 people were in shelters. I remember visiting them looking into their eyes and seeing the fear, the desperation, the hopelessness that those people felt. These were the images that no amount of time will ever replace.

In the face of so much destruction, so much suffering, it was inspiring to witness the people and the communities coming together and responding to disaster with the spirit of generosity and cooperation. People from all over North Carolina provided the victims of Floyd not only tangible items, like money, food, and supplies, but also equally important intangible things, their thoughts, their prayers, and their letters of support.

Another precious commodity donated was the time and effort countless thousands of North Carolinians gave. Volunteers aided in evacuation and rescue efforts and cleanups that affected towns and the care and treatment of families that were forced to live in shelters.

In addition, those volunteers provided valuable assistance and support to State emergency management personnel who worked untold hours. They led a valiant effort to respond to the needs of these victims, saving countless lives of people from all across this country and also donated to the cause of recovery.

I am so grateful for the many acts of generosity by my fellow Americans who saw people were hurting and decided to help. Yes, they sent money; but they sent a lot of other things. We even had schoolbooks delivered from as far away as Hawaii by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), here in this body.

From the governor to our own State's delegation here in Congress,

from Federal agencies to local leaders, the assistance North Carolina received provided absolutely critical help to our people.

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One year later, my State is still rebuilding, and we will be rebuilding for months, if not years, to come.

It is the assistance provided by my fellow Americans that made this possible, and as we reconstruct our State we are taking the necessary steps to provide for future disasters. By making our towns and cities more disaster resistant, we can reduce the loss of lives and property and lessen the devastating impact of future storms. If this storm did anything it proved determination and resolve of the indomitable spirit of the people of North Carolina. Our people come by the name Terrell honestly because we stand firm in the face of adversity. If anything knocks us down, we get right back up and fight another day.

Floyd dealt my State a crippling blow; but we are working to put our lives, our homes, our communities and ourselves back together. The people of North Carolina will never forget what happened in those days in September and the months that followed. Floyd has become part of our history, our culture, and our common experience. As Americans do when looking back upon a tragedy of this proportion, we were continually praying for our lost souls, comforting the anguished and distraught, honoring our heroes, rebuilding our homes and communities and looking toward the future.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I am joined this evening by a number of my colleagues to talk about an issue of equal importance to this Congress and to our Nation and, yes, to our leadership in the world: Education.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the critical needs of school construction, the shortage of teachers, the need to honor our teachers in a way that we have not done before. The critical need for construction in our communities across this country is at a crisis proportion.

I will be joined this evening by a number of my colleagues whom I will recognize in just a moment, who will discuss with me and with my colleagues the specific needs and plans that we have to help address these problems.

First, let me take just a moment to talk about some of the conditions in my congressional district.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand this evening a report prepared by the minority staff of the Committee on Government Reform's special investigative committee which is entitled K-3 Class Sizes in the North Carolina Research Triangle Region. The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) and I asked that this be done for our congressional districts, and this report has some startling numbers. It shocked the people in our congressional districts and it