

Block Grant Act for individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina.

A bill (S. 1748) to establish a congressional commission to examine the Federal, State, and local response to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Region of the United States especially in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and other areas impacted in the aftermath and make immediate corrective measures to improve such responses in the future.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection being heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1761

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read the title of this bill for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1761) to clarify the liability of Government contractors assisting in rescue, recovery, repair, and reconstruction work in the Gulf Coast Region of the United States affected by Hurricane Katrina or other major disasters.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection being heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

AMENDING THE UNITED STATES GRAIN STANDARDS ACT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1752, introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1752) to amend the United States Grain Standards Act to reauthorize that Act.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 1752) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1752

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Sections 7(j)(4), 7A(1)(3), 7D, 19, and 21(e) of the United States Grains Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 79(j)(4), 79a(1)(3), 79d, 87h, 87j(e)) are amended by striking “2005” each place it appears and inserting “2015”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) take effect on September 30, 2005.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2005

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 1 p.m. on Monday, September 26. I further ask consent that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate then proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 317, John Roberts to be Chief Justice of the United States. I further ask consent that the time from 1:30 to 2:30 be under the control of the majority leader or his designee, the time from 2:30 to 3:30 be under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, 3:30 to 4:30 under majority control, and 4:30 to 5:30 under the control of the Democratic side.

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

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the Senate does continue to make steady progress on the business of the American people. We are hard at work funding the basic obligations of Government.

Today, we passed the Military Construction Appropriations Act. The Military Construction appropriations bill funds the entire Department of Veterans Affairs along with the construction of all five branches.

It provides for cancer research and funding for our VA hospitals, along with covering the cost of our treasured national monuments. I congratulate Senators HUTCHISON and FEINSTEIN for accomplishing consideration and passage of that bill in a single day. It took the cooperation of a lot of Members and proves that we can go quickly through the appropriations process. Again, I thank both of them.

This morning we also passed with near unanimous support the Agriculture appropriations bill. I thank Senator BENNETT and Senator KOHL for their tremendous work and leadership on this important bill. The Agriculture bill targets spending on the needs of rural America, while also maintaining funding for essential food assistance programs. The bill is particularly important to farmers in States all across the country, but in particular I want to comment on my home State.

It provides \$2 million for Appalachian Horticultural Research, a collaborative project between the USDA and the University of Tennessee to help trees fight and resist disease; about \$955,000 for research into the best way to protect soil and water quality on farms which can suffer from heavy erosion; nearly \$40 billion for the very successful Boll

Weevil Eradication Program which will help cotton farmers continue to combat this destructive pest.

These programs, along with major funding for USDA's rural development programs and housing services, are helping farm areas around the country continue to feed America and, indeed, continue to help feed the world.

Last week we also passed a third appropriations bill, the Commerce-Justice-Science bill. In addition to funding basic Government business, it includes significant Katrina-related measures. More than 350,000 families have been made homeless by the Katrina disaster. The CJS bill provides Federal housing assistance of up to \$600 per family per month for up to 6 months to get these families back on their feet. I commend my colleagues for remaining focused on the appropriations process so that we can also meet our responsibilities to the victims of Katrina. We have extraordinary challenges before us, and we are working hard to deliver meaningful relief in the gulf region in a fiscally responsible way.

We moved quickly in the initial days to allocate appropriate funding. We also lifted the burden of student loans for those displaced from colleges and universities. We made sure that FEMA had funding to cover their national flood insurance obligations, and we passed legislation to get the Federal courts back on track in the regions affected. Since then, we passed aggressive tax relief to encourage charitable giving and to help hurricane victims rebuild their homes, restore their possessions, find housing, and find jobs. All of this is only the first step. There will be more. Helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina recover and rebuild is a monumental undertaking, an undertaking this body is focused on. We understand the absolutely critical importance of doing this in a fiscally responsible way, with full accountability and full transparency. This is America. America is up to the challenge. The Senate will continue to do its work moving forward in this regard.

PROGRAM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, next week we will begin to debate the nomination of Judge John Roberts to be America's Chief Justice. I am confident it will be a continuation of a process that has been quite dignified and civil. We will continue that momentum as we go through next week. A final vote on his nomination will be held on Thursday, and I look forward to a full and robust debate that brings credit to this great institution. Our duty to advise and consent on the selection of Supreme Court Justices is perhaps one of our most solemn obligations. I thank my colleagues for their continuing hard work in this regard.

In summary, the order we have laid out provides that we will begin the Roberts nomination on Monday. We were prepared to have Senators deliver