

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAMBLISS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like the record to show that I was necessarily absent during today's vote due to a funeral which I attended in my home State of Iowa. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the amendment. •

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HURRICANE RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACTING

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this morning I and a number of other Senators held a policy committee hearing on the issue of FEMA and some of the expenditures dealing with Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath of the devastation of the gulf coast of our country. Some of what we learned is enormously distressing. I will share some of it with my colleagues, including some ideas about what we ought to be doing about it.

One of the people who came to Capitol Hill this morning was a man named Paul Mullinaux, a truck driver who owns his own tractor and trailer and lives in Florida. He was contracted by FEMA to haul ice to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and for the devastation on the gulf coast. Mr. Mullinaux is a person who, when asked to perform this service—obviously he was paid for it, but with his refrigeration truck and with an opportunity, he went to New York City and picked up a load of ice in his 18-wheeler and his refrigerated trailer. That load of ice was for delivery to Carthage, MO. He wasn't sure why it was to be delivered to Missouri, but it was. He took his 18-wheeler to Carthage, MO.

When he arrived at Carthage, MO, they told him that what he needed to do was to go to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. So he had driven his 18-wheeler with a load of ice from New York City to Carthage, MO. Then he was told, go to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. He got in his truck and went to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama.

When he got to Alabama, he told us this morning, he spent 12 days sitting on the Maxwell Air Force Base tarmac with apparently hundreds of other trucks and a load of ice. He said other trucks were loaded with ice, they were loaded with blankets, they were loaded with all kinds of things that evacuees would have needed, the victims of the hurricane would have needed. For 12

days he and his truck, with his motor running for the refrigeration to keep the ice cold, sat there. Finally, at the end of 12 days he was told he was to take his truckload of ice to Idaho.

Remember, this is a truck driver contracted by FEMA to pick up a load of ice in New York and take it to the gulf coast to try to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. He got the ice in New York, went to Missouri, then was told to go to Alabama. He went to Alabama, sat there 12 days and then was told, by the way, now you should take this ice to Idaho and put it in storage.

Mr. Mullinaux told them, I wasn't aware there was a hurricane in Idaho and I don't intend to drive to Idaho with this ice. At that point, they talked about calling the National Guard to escort him off the military base because he had a bad attitude. I would have had a bad attitude sitting there 12 days with a refrigeration truck running with a load of ice that was supposed to go to hurricane victims. At the end of 12 days, he refused to go to Idaho, so they sent him—and he said they sent many other trucks—to Massachusetts to offload the ice in a warehouse where it is now being stored.

Think of this. The Federal Government, through FEMA, paid \$15,000 to a trucker to pick up a load of ice in New York to help hurricane victims and they told him to go to Missouri. He went to Missouri. They then told him to go to Alabama. He went to Alabama. They then told him to wait for 12 days. He sat on the base in Alabama for 12 days and then they told him to take the ice to Idaho, to put it in storage. When he refused, they said, well, then, take it to Massachusetts. He took it to Massachusetts and it is now in storage. From New York, to Missouri, to Alabama, to Massachusetts.

In effect, the American taxpayer has paid this one trucker \$15,000 to haul ice from New York to Massachusetts to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. It is unbelievable and staggering incompetence that FEMA is paying this kind of money. But it was not only Paul Mullinaux; it was not just him. It was hundreds and hundreds of other truckers with exactly the same experience. Loaded with blankets, loaded with ice, loaded with the things the victims needed, sitting in an airbase, being paid \$800, \$900 a day per truck while victims waited. Incidentally, Paul Mullinaux said they had a small television in that truck of theirs sitting on the tarmac of the military base along with hundreds of other truckers, and they were seeing on the nightly news the victims who were begging and pleading for the things they needed to keep them warm, to give them sustenance, food, ice, good water, blankets, clothing. And they were all on trucks, sitting there, day after day after day after day after day, and, finally, never delivered.

The question is, when you hear this sort of staggering incompetence, who is in charge? Who is accountable? Harry

Truman used to have a little sign on his desk that said "The buck stops here." Where does the buck stop with this? Is anybody accountable? FEMA? It used to be an agency we were enormously proud of. Regrettably, many of the top positions in that agency were filled with cronies who had no information, no experience, no capability with respect to disaster preparedness or disaster response. And this is but one small story of Paul Mullinaux, a trucker who came here to tell his story, furious as a taxpayer about what has happened.

Al Knight and Mike Moran came, Knight Enterprises. They were hired by a subsidiary of Halliburton to do some work down in the Gulf of Mexico to try to deal with the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. They went out as a result of an oral contract and hired 75 skilled, experienced electricians to do a job. It wasn't very long before the subcontractor with Halliburton said, don't worry about that; your electricians will not be on the job very long. We are bringing in new people.

Guess what. They did bring in new people. My guess is a fair number of them were undocumented workers. They say almost none of them spoke English. They say their electricians were trying to work beside them and these were not skilled electricians. In many cases, they didn't know what they were doing.

Why were they there? Why were they there to replace Louisiana workers who wanted the jobs to help get back on their feet, people who were victimized by Hurricane Katrina and Rita? Why were others brought in from out of state to take those jobs? Money. Just money. Because the President said, by the way, with respect to reconstruction in the Gulf of Mexico, in Louisiana and related States, Mississippi and so on, we will get rid of the Davis-Bacon requirement.

What is Davis-Bacon? It says the Federal Government, when it does work in your region, is going to pay the prevailing wage. They will not come in and hire a bunch of fly-by-night operators in order to drop the wages to dirt-poor levels. We will, as a Federal Government, pay prevailing, regional wages, when we do contracting in a region. But when the President said, by the way, Davis-Bacon does not work, does not count, with respect to reconstruction in Louisiana, Mississippi, and elsewhere, he opened the door for these firms to hire a bunch of workers for dollars a day with no benefits, and put them up in conditions—by the way, this picture was taken last weekend. Those are some of the workers who are brought in to take jobs that days ago belonged to the people of Louisiana. Workers who got hit by these hurricanes were anxious to get these jobs to try to get back on their feet. No more. The jobs now belong to these folks who live in these conditions—the exploitation of workers in this country. That is what