

about one-sixth of households across the country that actually can qualify for the assistance. So this is a perennial fight we wage even when prices aren't as high as today. And now, that battle becomes all the more pivotal.

I Thank Senators REED and COLLINS for their leadership on this motion to instruct the conferees for increased LIHEAP funding, and I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with them to secure what is, in essence, literally life-or-death funding for our most vulnerable Americans. The cold weather won't wait—and neither should we when it comes to helping citizens survive through the coming winter.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, let's remember what this amendment does in the context of the LIHEAP issue. This amendment will add \$2.9 billion to the national debt and pass that debt on to our children in order to pay for energy costs which are being incurred today.

The correct way to do this is the way we proposed in the Senate, as Republicans, which is to pay for it. That is what we will do in the conference. There is already \$1 billion additional money for LIHEAP in the conference, and it will probably go up. The difference between those dollars and what is being proposed in this amendment is we actually pay for it.

It is inappropriate to go to this number, which is a 130-percent increase in the LIHEAP program, when spending on oil is estimated to go up by 28 to 30 percent or maybe even 40 percent. Increasing the program by 130 percent when the oil costs are going up 30 to 40 percent is inconsistent on its face.

It is especially inconsistent when one is taking that bill and giving it to one's children and their children's children so they end up paying for today's oil costs rather than their oil costs 2 or 3 years from today or two or three generations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senators were necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) would vote "aye."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 63, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 357 Leg.]

YEAS—63

Akaka	Feingold	Murray
Baucus	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bayh	Grassley	Obama
Bingaman	Harkin	Pryor
Burns	Inouye	Reed
Burr	Jeffords	Reid
Byrd	Johnson	Rockefeller
Carper	Kennedy	Salazar
Chafee	Kerry	Sarbanes
Clinton	Kohl	Schumer
Coleman	Landrieu	Smith
Collins	Lautenberg	Snowe
Conrad	Leahy	Specter
Corzine	Levin	Stabenow
Crapo	Lieberman	Stevens
Dayton	Lincoln	Sununu
DeWine	Lugar	Talent
Dole	Martinez	Thune
Domenici	McCain	Voinovich
Dorgan	Mikulski	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—28

Alexander	Craig	Kyl
Allard	DeMint	Lott
Allen	Ensign	McConnell
Bennett	Enzi	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Frist	Roberts
Brownback	Gregg	Sessions
Bunning	Hagel	Shelby
Coburn	Hatch	Thomas
Cochran	Hutchison	
Cornyn	Inhofe	

NOT VOTING—9

Biden	Chambliss	Isakson
Boxer	Dodd	Santorum
Cantwell	Graham	Vitter

The motion was agreed to.
 • Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I regret that I was unable to vote this afternoon on the Reed motion to instruct conferees with respect to S. 1932, the deficit reduction bill.

The LIHEAP program is of critical importance to Pennsylvania. My State routinely faces very harsh winters. Now that the cold weather is here and bills must be paid, I believe we must act to provide additional funding for this program. My record shows that I have been a consistent LIHEAP supporter, and I am hopeful that an increase will be promptly approved.

Mr. President, I ask that the RECORD reflect that, had I been here, I would have voted in favor of Senator REED's motion to instruct.●

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER.
 Under the previous order, the Presiding Officer appoints Mr. GREGG, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. CONRAD, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. INOUE, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. LEAHY conferees on the part of the Senate.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator

from Massachusetts be recognized at this point for 10 minutes, and after the Senator from Massachusetts has completed his time, the majority leader be recognized.

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.
 Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Hampshire.

SBA RESPONSE TO HURRICANES IN GULF STATES

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, obviously somewhere in the next few days—we don't know when yet—we are going to be wrapping up our business here, and that will mark the end of the first session of the 109th Congress. Before we leave, Members on both sides of the aisle are very concerned that we will not have provided the assistance to the small businesses in the Gulf States region that they desperately need in order to recover from the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The effect is that literally hundreds of thousands of small businesses are in desperate need of assistance throughout that region. Without the jobs those small businesses provide, the economy of the gulf coast is going to have a much harder time coming back.

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the gulf coast, regrettably—this has been commented on again by Senators on both sides of the aisle; it is not a partisan issue—there has been a stunningly slow response by the Administration to provide relief to small businesses.

The administration has now sent up three pieces of emergency legislation—three supplemental emergency spending bills worth more than \$62 billion—and yet we have not adopted any direct relief for small businesses.

The latest supplemental request asks for \$471 million in additional funding for SBA disaster loans and the SBA Inspector General. But, frankly, giving more money to the disaster loan program doesn't address small business needs. It's too narrow in scope and is not delivering relief with urgency.

Senator LOTT has talked about the problems—Senator COCHRAN has too—and there is a recognition that you have a lot of small businesses that can't wait till their disaster loans are processed or disbursed. They need access to capital immediately.

It is a matter of record now, commented on in many national journals, that the SBA has done a completely inadequate job—abysmal may be a better word—of getting disaster loan funds into the hands of small businesses in the gulf region.

It is not because of the lack of funds or the lack of employees. The SBA has enough funding to grant \$1.4 billion in disaster loans, and \$249 million for administration and staff. The staffing has been increased from some 800 employees to 4,000 employees.

As of Monday of this week, almost 39,000 small businesses had applied for