

served together on the Armed Services Committee. He will remain on. The Senate will be in good hands with you and our other colleagues to carry on and solve the problems for this great Nation and indeed much of the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

#### SENATOR JOHN WARNER

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I want to make a few comments about my good friend, Senator JOHN WARNER from Virginia. When you first come to this body, you get to know people. Soon I got to know him as a Senator's Senator, because he was one of those people who was always trying to bring people together and take on the major issues that confront our country.

I had the distinct honor of traveling to Iraq and other countries with him and with the distinguished Presiding Officer. I admired the relationship between Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER as a template for how things should run in Washington, DC as we represent the 325 million people of America. There are two people from two different parties who work together to make sure that what we were doing was the very best job that we could to protect America.

So you are, both the Presiding Officer as well as Senator WARNER, two of my most significant role models in this Chamber. I admire you both for your service.

The Senator from Virginia was a member of pulling together the Gang of 14. It was now some 2 years ago when we were debating whether there would be a "nuclear option" and whether we would move forward in saving some of the procedures and the very functioning of the institution of the Senate. I remember working in awe with him as he and Senator BYRD and others worked on that historic document at that time, and on so many other occasions where he has been the person who has been the glue to bring people together. So he is a Senator's Senator, because he is such a proud American and such a wonderful leader for Virginia and for the Senate.

But he also is a wonderful Senator because he has a very unique ability of bringing people together. I would hope that all of us, the 100 Members of this Chamber, always continue to look to him for the kind of inspiration and great example he has been.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

#### HELP FOR RURAL AMERICA

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I intend to speak for these next few minutes, and then perhaps at least once or twice more as the day goes on. As you know, yesterday, because of my initial insistence on a potential rollcall vote that would require the Senate to come back, we were able to at least secure the introduction, at least the introduction of a bipartisan bill cosponsored by several leaders on the Republican side in agriculture and several leaders on our side on agriculture.

We voted to extend our Government operations until March. And attached to that continuing resolution were four very important bills to this country—Homeland Security, Defense appropriations, Homeland Security appropriations, in which I had a hand, as all of us did, in crafting. It has a disaster aid package, very specific, not a stimulus, not a spending bill, but a disaster aid package of \$22 billion that was passed.

The aid package is going to be a great help for the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, particularly, that were hit so hard by these last storms. That is Congress's responsibility, not to do it all, but to step up in times of disaster and help States and cities and counties through these major disasters.

I am starting to feel as if I am an expert on disasters, not something I want to be or that I am happy to be, because there is nothing happy about people losing their life savings, the only home they have ever lived in, having to use up all of their savings that they had for their retirement or their grandchildren or children's college education, to try to keep their home together after everything they have ever known is gone.

I have, unfortunately, in my short career here in the Senate, had to be witness to too many of these kinds of disasters in the State I represent. This Congress, particularly, I have to say, the Democratic Congress, has been very generous to help the people of Louisiana and Mississippi. I have been joined at times by Republican leaders who have understood what we are going through.

But a few hours ago we passed a bill with some objections, and mine was one, that said there was a glaring omission in all of these bills. It looks as though unless something is done in the next few days this Congress may leave here with \$700 billion for Wall Street and zero for farmers.

I represent large cities such as New Orleans, my hometown, and large parishes such as Jefferson Parish, in my neighboring city; cities such as our capital city, which is now the largest city in Louisiana because of the damage done to New Orleans by Katrina.

But I also represent rural communities such as Delhi and Rayville, and Cheneyville, and Dry Prong, and other places in between that have suffered

tremendously, not just from the levee breaches but from the hurricanes and the rain from Fay that hit Florida, but dumped inches of rain on our State, Ike and Gustav.

I have spent a good bit of the morning, and I wish to spend now, reading into the RECORD the real description of this disaster and continue to ask in public places such as this, on the floor of the Senate, for the leaders to come together and do something before we leave.

As I speak, the delegation from Louisiana on the House side is gaining signatures from the legislators in Mississippi, the Congressmen from Mississippi, Texas, and Arkansas to join this effort, and agriculture commissioners around the State, around the country, led by Mike Strain, our commissioner, interestingly enough, who is a Republican, I am a Democrat. This is not a partisan issue, this is an issue of fairness and justice, to try to help get our farmers some help before we send a \$700 billion package or \$350 billion package or \$100 billion package, whether it is in one tranche or three tranches or seven tranches, could there possibly be a tranche for middle America, and particularly for our farmers and our rural communities?

I wish to read a portion of a beautifully written statement that was delivered before my subcommittee earlier this week as we scrambled to get our information and our data together. It is not as though we were dillydallying or waiting to the last minute.

These storms, both Ike and Gustav, happened within the month. Ike happened 2 weeks ago. The people of Galveston literally were allowed back in the city I think 3 days ago to basically look, cry, and leave. I have witnessed this before as people came back to look, cry, and leave, all throughout the coast of Mississippi and Louisiana.

Well, my heart goes out to Galveston and to Houston. I committed to their leaders and to all of them, I will do everything I can in the time here to help them.

In the midst of all this, focused on levees and breakwaters and rising tides, what the Congress has forgotten is that rains accompany a lot of these storms. The rains fell and fell and fell and devastated parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Of course, earlier in the year, we had the great floods in the Midwest. Of course, even earlier in the year, we had the great fires in California. I am not here saying woe is us, we are the only ones who ever have disasters. What I am saying is, this Congress should not leave trying to bail out Wall Street and leave farmers holding soggy rice or sugarcane or rotten sweet potatoes or cotton in their hands that cannot be harvested. People are scratching their heads, asking me: Does anybody know we are out here? Does anybody care?

I was privileged to have Wallace Ellender IV testify before our Agriculture Committee this week. The interesting historical note is that his