

this a Democratic or Republican issue. I have asked and succeeded in getting 10 of my Republican colleagues to join the effort. So this isn't trying to make one party look good or one party look bad. All we want to do is help disaster victims and help the Governors and the mayors and the county commissioners who, right now, believe me, are just pulling their hair out. They have very limited tools. They are not sure what they can do.

People are angry, they are devastated, and they are shocked. Families are having to bunch in and live together. Some people are still in shelters. I have been through this nightmare. I know what they are going through. And then they have to hear from Washington that the ERIC CANTOR crowd decided now is the time for us—even though for 50 years we have been doing emergency funding—to figure out where to get offsets before we can send them help. This is no way to run a railroad, and it is no way to fund disaster assistance.

As I said earlier, this color is too pleasant—this green on this map—to really reflect what this map shows. These are all the States in the Nation that are experiencing disasters this year. For the first time in a very long time—maybe in our history—we have had Presidential disasters declared in all but two States. They are different kinds of disasters—some fire, some floods, some earthquakes—but nonetheless devastating to the communities trying to rebuild. So this isn't a Texas or Louisiana or just a west coast issue, this is an entire nation that is waiting for Congress to act and to send not just FEMA money but FEMA, the Corps of Engineers, Agriculture, and community development block grant funding. For the life of me, I cannot understand why we are having this debate at all.

Just to recap, here is the list. And I will not ask that it be submitted for the record because it is too long and comprehensive. It is very fine print of project after project that has now been stopped—stopped—because FEMA is operating on fumes. They are virtually out of money.

Now, yes, the new fiscal year for the Federal Government starts next week, but, remember, the House of Representatives only offered 6 weeks of help based on last year's reality. They are not even taking into account what actually happened. They are just saying: Well, we budgeted \$2.65 billion last year; that must be good enough for this next year—not taking into account any of the realities of what I have just talked about. And by the way, you can have basically a 6-week rate—no money for the Corps of Engineers, no money for Agriculture.

Please, if you hear one thing—any of the Members of the House who are considering voting for this—please don't try to go home and explain this to your constituents because hopefully they will be smart enough by listening to this debate and understanding that you

really didn't vote to help them. You voted for some philosophy that is hard for even some in your party to understand, but you did not vote to help your constituents.

One final point. People on the other side will say: Well, I voted for this \$2.65 billion, and I know it is not a real number, but it is sort of enough to get everybody through, and then we will pass the regular appropriations. Mr. President, I have heard that as well. And then when the regular appropriations bills come, this money can be tucked into these bills and help will be on the way, they will say.

Well, I want to say again that 1994 was the last time this Congress passed all 13 appropriations bills on time and got them to the President's desk. So that is wishful thinking. That is not going to happen this year, no matter how hard we try, because it hasn't happened since 1994.

So don't think you can fool your people and say: Well, I voted for this, but we are going to help you through the appropriations process. I am on the Appropriations Committee. We have had a very difficult time because of all sorts of reasons in getting our process back on track. We are supposed to be finished with all of our bills in November. It is already the end of September, and we still don't have all our bills out of committee. And even if the House has their bills out of committee, getting those numbers reconciled between the House and the Senate sometimes takes months. Sometimes, Mr. President, as you know, we never get to it and we just do a continuing resolution. So there is not enough appropriations in the regular bills.

So for all the reasons I spoke of—and I will end where I started—let's fund disasters now. Let's fund the help to our people now. We are going to be here until Friday—potentially our leadership will keep us in until we get this resolved. But the Senate has made a great bipartisan effort, with Senators such as Senator BLUNT and Senator TOOMEY and Senator VITTER and the Senators from Maine and other Senators from the other side who have joined this effort.

I am asking the House: Please reconsider your position. Please fund disasters now. We will figure out the way to pay for this over time. We have already made provision for this in the negotiations that were done a month ago between the Republican and House leaders. Our people are depending on us to act.

Mr. President, again I urge my colleagues in the House, please reconsider your position. Join the bipartisan work underway in the Senate to get this job done for the people we represent and the people of our country who are truly desperate for us to act right now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavoidably detained for rollcall

vote No. 139, a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consider H.R. 2832, a bill to extend the Generalized System of Preferences, and for other purposes. Had I been present, I would have voted yea to the motion to invoke cloture.

RECOGNIZING SOUTHEAST KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize one of Kentucky's most successful educational institutions, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, SKCTC. Beginning last year, SKCTC celebrated its 50th anniversary of providing higher education in southeastern Kentucky across five full-service campuses. To commemorate the event, SKCTC's Pineville campus held an open house for over 500 high school students from the area. To highlight the school's success over the years, President Dr. W. Bruce Ayers gave a presentation of SKCTC's history to all who attended.

SKCTC's Pineville campus was originally launched in the early 1960s as a nursing school. Over the years, the school expanded its buildings and curriculum and has become the main location for many of SKCTC's medical programs.

The campus is home to about 50 percent of the school's allied health students, who are enrolled in programs such as respiratory therapy, radiologic technology, surgical technology, clinical lab technology, or one of several nursing programs to become a licensed practical nurse or a registered nurse. As a whole, SKCTC holds a remarkably high pass rate on licensing exams for graduated students—some of the medical programs maintain a pass rate of 100 percent. As a result, the majority of SKCTC students leave the school with a medical license of some kind.

The people of southeastern Kentucky are privileged to have such a reputable institution that continues to provide future generations of Kentuckians with a quality education year after year. To help celebrate this landmark occasion, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article describing the anniversary celebration at SKCTC—Pineville be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Middlesboro Daily News, Mar. 22, 2011]

SKCTC ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED AT PINEVILLE CAMPUS (By Lorie Settles)

PINEVILLE.—The fiftieth anniversary of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKCTC) was commemorated at the Pineville campus on Friday with an open house for area high-school students.

Members of the faculty and staff of SKCTC Pineville welcomed nearly 500 teens on Thursday and Friday, reported Kim Ayers, the college's recruiter. The guests hailed from high schools including Jellico, Harlan Independent, Cumberland Gap, and Knox Central.