

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind all Members that remarks in debate should be addressed to the Chair and not to others.

□ 1030

FEMA FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KERNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago we voted on the emergency supplemental appropriations; and I voted yes, partly of course to acknowledge the fact that the debate we had a couple of weeks ago had been vindicated. That debate was over whether or not FEMA was running out of money or whether or not they could stand a \$329 million cut in their budget.

Recognizing the diversity in topography of this Nation and the weather of this Nation, we realize that those of us in the southern region are now in the hurricane season, from the month of June through at least September or October. Throughout the Nation, because of the differences in weather and, of course, the potential of global warming, we have had erratic weather activities.

We, in Houston, a couple of weeks ago, experienced that with Tropical Storm Allison with the fall of 36 inches of rain that fell in our area in a 24-hour period. That caused an enormous amount of damage, some 5,000 homes damaged, water to the roof levels of many of our residential areas, and a whole litany of damage that was not expected.

For example, we noted that the medical center, one of the prized medical centers of this Nation, suffered about \$2 billion in damage, and that number is growing. In touring that site, we saw the enormous impact in research, in hospital beds, in emergency facilities that were lost.

Additionally, in the 18th Congressional District, which I represent, St. Joseph's Hospital, which is a pivotal hospital in the downtown community, the downtown business community, with thousands and thousands of employees, lost its level-three emergency center, which is still not open. In a tour that I took last week, 154 patient beds were lost, as was their kitchen facilities, able to serve not only patients but employees, and, as I indicated, not only their emergency trauma unit, which leaves the downtown business community without a nearby trauma unit for emergency purposes, but also research and other laboratory facilities. Gone.

In addition to the medical centers of St. Joseph Hospital, we have found

that the academic institutions, which are about to start to be opened, and the secondary schools in our public school systems, have been damaged. And, in addition, major damage has confronted our universities.

I toured the University of Houston. At that time they thought their damage was about \$100 million. Now it is rising to \$250 million, and insurance is way under \$100 million. In looking at that damage, I noted precious resources, such as books, research facilities, school classrooms, equipment, and teacher offices were damaged.

Texas Southern University, which is about to begin its mitigation process, likewise has an enormous amount of damage in their law library as well as the various buildings that have been impacted by the damage, mostly in the basement levels.

Mr. Speaker, I raise these issues because I think it would be foolish for this House to debate and play around with the needs of the American citizens. Houston may not be the only place that will suffer some sort of weather damage and some sort of catastrophe that warrants the intervention of FEMA. Right now, my district has a number of FEMA representatives and offices around the community trying to work with those who have been devastated not only physically and property-wise but also psychologically.

I was appalled that we would stand on the floor of the House and actually debate cutting FEMA. My understanding is that we are trying to submit additional dollars into the VA-HUD bill for FEMA. And that is not only for Houston, Texas, but may be for other disasters that we certainly do not wish for but may happen. But the dilemma is the administration has not seen fit, along with FEMA, to stand up and request the dollars, to work with us in Congress to acknowledge that their funds are depleted.

I recall very vividly when we were on the floor debating and arguing against cutting FEMA that I had an amendment to add those monies back in, and we were then being told that FEMA had \$1 billion in its account. Twenty-four hours after that debate, we were told that, in actuality, they only had \$178 million and, in fact, even 24 hours later maybe that would be gone. We in Texas had to request that our matching dollars be lessened to 10 percent and that FEMA would pay up to 90 percent.

We are now in the midst of trying to rebuild lives. In fact, our local community agencies have come together to give washing machines and refrigerators and other necessities. In addition, I have been able to secure matching monies totaling \$4 million from one of our utility companies, Reliant, to be able to add dollars for people who have been displaced because of the damage, and also compounded by the enormous heat that we face in Houston.

This is time now, Mr. Speaker, for us to gather together, to take the smoke and mirrors away, to stand on the floor of the House and work for the monies for FEMA, but as well for the administration to be able to stand up and request these dollars so that all America can be protected in the time of disaster.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested.

S. 180. An act to facilitate famine relief efforts and a comprehensive solution to the war in Sudan.

PAYING RESPECT TO SERGEANT
STARNES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOLF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. KERNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KERNS. Mr. Speaker, last weekend, we laid to rest an officer killed in the line of duty in Martinsville, Indiana. Today, I come to the floor of the House to pay respect to this brave officer, Sergeant Daniel Starnes. Sergeant Starnes was taken from us after struggling 27 days to recover from infections caused by four gunshot wounds.

His death has brought the Martinsville community to its knees. Because of the dedication and the courage of men and women in law enforcement, like Sergeant Starnes, all too often we take for granted our family's safety and the safety of our police officers. It is through their commitment to serve and protect us that we have peace of mind and a sense of security. We must also always remember that behind the badge is a human being. Sergeant Starnes was more than just a model law enforcement officer, he was a husband and a father and a friend to so many, and his loss weighs heavy on us all.

Over this past weekend, thousands of law enforcement officers from across Indiana and our great Nation turned out to honor Sergeant Starnes. And while his death has shocked people in Morgan County and throughout Indiana, it has also brought the community together in an outpouring of support and love for the Starnes family and those in law enforcement who put their lives on the line each day.

During the funeral procession through town, people lined the streets with either their head bowed, their hand over their heart, or flying an American flag to pay respect. During such a difficult time, it was uplifting to know that the community cared and demonstrated its respect for Sergeant Starnes and his fellow officers.