

oil industry, and in the minds of U.S. policy-makers, that counts for a lot.

□ 1400

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GINGREY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. KIRK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HURRICANE WILMA AND RECONCILIATION

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a crisis in South Florida.

The third most destructive hurricane ever to hit this country struck my congressional district just over 2 weeks ago. Thousands of people are still without power, thousands still have holes in their roofs that threaten to condemn their houses with every new rain.

Thousands have mobility issues and are without housing because they cannot get up and down the stairs to their apartment. The list goes on and on, and it is truly heart wrenching.

Just last week I was delivering meals to seniors in my district who could not get out of their third floor condominiums. Even though it was 5 days after the hurricane struck South Florida, the residents there said that no one had heard from FEMA, no one had seen FEMA and, worse yet, no one knew how to get in touch with FEMA to make sure things did not get any worse.

And why do I fear that things could get worse? Because of problems like this. This is a third floor apartment, that is the ceiling of the apartment, and as we can see, you can look right through the ceiling at the sky.

This is the woman's master bedroom and literally during the storm, 1 minute after she walked out of that master bedroom the ceiling came down on her bed. The roof caved in. A minute earlier and it would have caved in on her.

Obviously, this apartment is uninhabitable. However, this is a three-story building. If we delay the disaster response, if we do not get FEMA tarp distribution centers set up right away, if we wait weeks before we deliver individual assistance, then not only are we saying to the woman that lived in this unit, tough it out, you are on your own for now, but we are also making the problem worse because there are two floors below this apartment unit.

If it rains through this massive hole in the ceiling in this woman's apartment, then it will leak down onto the apartments on the second floor and possibly weaken the structure, leading to the evacuation of everyone in that part of building. And that is beginning to happen; this is what is happening. Our ineffective response is not only irresponsible, but it also costs the taxpayers more money than necessary.

Now, I have been talking about a natural disaster, which is Hurricane Wilma. But I also want to talk a minute about a man-made disaster that is coming, something that will victimize once again the victims of Hurricane Wilma, Katrina and Rita. I am talking about the Draconian budget cuts proposed by the Republican leadership in their so-called budget reconciliation package.

Last week, the papers in South Florida blared the news that over 5,000 people's homes had been condemned, much of it affordable housing. In Broward County the median price of a home is \$348,000, making many homes and even rental apartments out of reach for thousands of south Floridians.

While the loss of 5,000 homes damaged by Hurricane Wilma is terrible, I would like to point out that the budget reconciliation package endorsed by the Republican leadership eliminates affordable housing vouchers for 3,500 people in Florida alone.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, while Hurricane Wilma made 5,000 Florida families homeless last week, the Republican leadership is proposing cuts that would make 3,500 more Florida families homeless. So first we get hit by Katrina, then we get hit by Wilma and either this week or next the American people will get hit by Hurricane Republican.

Hurricanes are natural disasters, Mr. Speaker. What we will be debating in the House this week or next is a man-made disaster, a man-made disaster that not only would leave 3,500 Florida families homeless through cuts to Section 8 housing vouchers, but also, incredibly, would cut \$58.9 million in elementary and secondary education funds for Florida students, \$4.9 million in cuts for supplemental nutrition programs for women infants and children,

\$25.1 million in cuts for children and families.

These are funds that provide for the Head Start program and help abused and neglected children. Cutting funds for abused and neglected children, what are we coming to here?

I urge my colleagues to vote against a man-made disaster that will originate from this body this week and sweep across the country, displacing thousands of people nationwide. I urge them to vote against the Republican budget reconciliation package.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the upcoming special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, there is a bill in the wings called the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, its fate yet to be determined because it is not at all clear that there are enough votes in this body to pass it.

Basically, this bill is part of the budget resolution for 2006, and what it anticipates is a three-step process except that those steps are treated very separately and in isolation. The first step is what the bill I am talking about proposes, that is, reductions in mandatory spending, so-called "entitlement spending," of about \$54 billion.

The second step to follow is a reduction in taxes in the amount of \$106 billion. That is what the budget resolution calls for. As a consequence, this bill does not achieve its stated name, which is the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Instead, by cutting taxes by more than they cut spending, it leads to a deficit that is \$52 billion bigger than would otherwise be the case. That is the second step.

And then there is a third step in this bill that is not much talked about, but it is written into the bill, written into the budget resolution for 2006, and that is an increase in the debt ceiling of the United States by \$781 billion. That is what happens when you have tax cuts that are not adequately matched by spending cuts. The deficit gets worse, and the bottom line is, \$781 billion will have to be added to the debt ceiling of the United States, the legal limit to which we bill because of the fiscal policies we have followed for the last 5 years.

Now, some supporters claim that this bill, the so-called Deficit Reduction