

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FLORIDA FLOODING

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, we have had a severe act of Mother Nature in Florida and a number of other Southeastern States, where skies of Biblical proportions in dumping rain have occurred. In Pensacola, FL, there was close to 25 inches of rain that fell within a 24-hour period. The counties of Escambia and Santa Rosa in Florida were particularly hard hit, and just today the Governor of Florida requested a major disaster declaration from the President and sought assistance for that part of Florida. I passed along the Governor's request to the White House and asked that it be approved as soon as possible.

Right now the State of Florida government and local governments as well are assisting people in need, and they are surveying the damage to assess the extent of the storm's impact. We are going to do everything we can to make sure the people have the assistance and the help they need during this very difficult time. Of course, it was not just in Florida that these storms hit; it was a number of States—Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia. As the storm proceeded on upwards, it occurred in a lot of the Southeastern United States. But particularly those States plus ours, in northwest Florida, is where it really hit the hardest.

Many people have worked around the clock to save lives and to provide support in the immediate aftermath of the storm. Thank goodness there is a Florida National Guard that is as experienced as it is, and it is experienced because we are accustomed to storms, particularly hurricanes. But we are not accustomed to 25 inches in 24 hours, and all emergency personnel are down there helping.

According to Florida's request for Federal assistance, in addition to the spinoff tornadoes, some parts of the panhandle received this enormous amount of rain, and another indication is that in just 1 hour, 5.68 inches of rain fell—in 1 hour—in the city of Pensacola.

It brought floods. It destroyed homes, roads. It destroyed essential infrastructure. If you have seen any of the views on television, then you have seen the devastation, you have seen people being pulled out of the water, cars completely submerged, portions of roads taken out. It has occurred in multiple States.

Responding to a disaster such as this is a critical responsibility for not only government in general but for the Federal Government and the unique things and people and services the Federal Government can provide. It is one of those things government is supposed to do for people. It is supposed to help in

times of emergency. The President has already declared a disaster in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama, making Federal resources available there. I hope the President is going to do the same for Florida. Sometimes challenges are just too great for any one local community or State to take on alone. The unique position of the Federal Government in a time such as this is to coordinate resources and people across the Nation to solve our biggest challenges. A lot of that is done through FEMA, and who better to have the help ready than the head of FEMA, who is a Floridian and who was the head of Florida's emergency department before President Obama tapped him to be the head of FEMA.

With this terrible toll on people's lives, I hope this will serve as an example of how we can all come together when people are in need. Clearly, our hopes and prayers and thoughts are with the people who are affected by these storms.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GOLD SCAM

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, while I had the opportunity on the floor, I wanted to call to the attention of the Senate that the Special Committee on Aging, which I have the privilege of chairing, held a hearing last week on scams particularly affecting senior citizens—but not limited to senior citizens—in the selling of precious metals, in particular gold.

Basically, the bottom-line takeaway from the hearing is if you are an American getting a cold call suggesting to you that you should invest in a precious metal such as gold, more than likely it is a scam and you are about to be robbed of your money if you play along and start investing in this fictitious investment in gold. The testimony showed that most of the time the scammers do not even purchase the gold and certainly are not storing it—even though they are charging the poor victim, often a senior citizen, storage fees for this fictitious gold.

I was astounded. We are accustomed to getting telemarketer calls—unless you are on the Do Not Call list—but telemarketers still call through the Do Not Call list. That is another giveaway. If you are on the Do Not Call list and you are getting one of these calls to invest, they can make it sound so good.

We had a man who was about to be sentenced and was one of the telemarketers. Why do these scams often end up being from South Florida? But

it is true—not only these kinds of scams, but also Medicare and Medicaid fraud. It is concentrated in South Florida. This man was a part of this scam calling unsuspecting Americans to get them to invest in something that sounds too good to be true, only it is the gold standard. People fell for it, and then they sent him money. He showed us. They have four different stages: someone who first gets you interested, someone who comes in and closes the deal, another person who comes along and then gets up the deal, and then others who keep you hooked into the scam until you find out that you don't have any gold that is being held in trust for you in storage but, in fact, it is all a sham.

I wanted to share with folks what the Senate Special Committee on Aging found out. If you get a cold call and they want you to invest in gold, chances are it is a scam and it is not real. It is a word to the wise: Beware. Don't fall for it.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

JOB CREATION

Mr. COATS. Madam President, all 100 of us, Republicans and Democrats, are concerned about our fellow citizens who are unemployed, struggling to pay their bills, and desperate to find meaningful work. We are concerned about the lack of opportunities in many of America's communities and the urgent need for more good-paying jobs across the United States.

There are Hoosiers and citizens across this country hurting in this economy, and it seems as though a new negative economic headline comes out every day. Consider some of the recent discouraging reports we have heard. According to a new USA Today/Pew research poll, Americans by a 2-to-1 margin rate the Nation's economic conditions as poor, and just 27 percent say there are enough jobs available where they live.

A few days ago, the Commerce Department estimated that between January and March of this year, the U.S. economy grew a shocking 0.1 percent. That is .1 percent from no growth whatsoever and just .2 percent from racking up a first quarter of recession.

It takes two quarters back to back to qualify for recession, but we are in the recovery period from one of the deepest recessions since World War II. Now we are into the fifth year, close to the sixth year, of a stagnant economy growing at half the rate it normally does after a recession, and Americans are still out of work.