

other disaster in more than 10 years, and not once has FEMA denied Puerto Rico access to funding on the basis of its ability to provide its own share of the costs when required. More importantly, even if cost share were an issue, which I don't believe it is, Puerto Rico could use its ample CDBG funding to meet any cost share requirement.

However, it does not appear that access to resources for cost share is actually an issue in Puerto Rico. According to the Treasury Department, Puerto Rico has billions of dollars in unrestricted cash on hand. In fact, the Treasury Department reports it has \$5.6 billion in unrestricted cash, to be precise. What is more, the land of Puerto Rico continues to collect tens—if not hundreds—of millions of dollars a month because revenues are exceeding costs on the island, which only adds to that \$5.6 billion balance.

Despite all of these resources, we have agreed that the Government of Puerto Rico needs additional funding for nutrition assistance. My Democratic colleagues have been in the forefront. The question is, Why? It is that this money is actually being spent. In fact, it is running out. So not only did my Democratic colleagues leave folks in the Midwest behind when they rejected the Shelby amendment earlier this week, but they also passed up an opportunity to help the people of Puerto Rico immediately.

Where do we go from here?

I think we need to find areas of agreement, which we have before in my working with Senator LEAHY, Senator SCHUMER, and Senator MCCONNELL. I am pleased that my Democratic colleagues have discovered a newfound concern for the people in the Midwest. We want to stay on that too. It is promising that we not only agree on that but also that we should provide funding for nutrition assistance for the people of Puerto Rico now. Yet, when it comes to additional funding beyond nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico, I believe that our constituents—the American taxpayers—deserve a detailed explanation of exactly why existing funding is insufficient and why the resources that we have provided have not been spent.

How do we know Puerto Rico needs more when it hasn't come close to spending what we have already provided it? Communities, meanwhile, that experienced disasters in 2018 are truly suffering because Congress has provided them with nothing.

Unless my Democratic colleagues can demonstrate this urgency, I believe they should stop holding hostage those who are suffering in the Midwest and those who have been impacted by disasters all over the United States. These people are in urgent need of funding so they can begin the rebuilding process, and many of them have been waiting for months and months for relief.

I hope we can come together and work this out in a deliberate and fact-based manner. Until then, I will con-

tinue to object to these haphazard unanimous consent requests that will get us nowhere.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 6 minutes regarding the Schumer-Leahy amendment. I realize this will put off the time slightly for the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am sorry that the Republicans objected to the earlier legislation we brought up, which would have helped the Midwest. It had money in it. Of course, we are not, by any means, asking for billions more for Puerto Rico in this amendment. In total, this amendment would add \$3.2 billion, of which only \$462 million is for Puerto Rico. The rest is for the Midwest floods, Alabama tornado, Florida, California, Georgia and other states.

I think it is unfortunate we have reached an impasse on the emergency disaster supplemental appropriations bill.

For months, I urged Senate Republican leadership to take up and pass H.R. 268. For nearly 3 months, it wouldn't. During those 3 months, American communities suffered, and new disasters struck the Midwest and the Southeast. The new criticism from the Republican leadership was, with the Democrats' pushing for more comprehensive aid to Puerto Rico in H.R. 268, that they must not care about the American communities that have been affected by more recent disasters.

But I would remind the Chamber that it was the Republican leadership that rejected my amendment to H.R. 268 that would have accommodated all of these other communities.

I would also remind the Chamber that the Trump administration has not asked for one dime for Hurricanes Michael and Florence, the Alabama tornadoes, or the Midwest flooding. To the Trump administration, it is as though they never happened.

I have always stood with victims of disaster around this country. When my own State of Vermont was devastated by Tropical Storm Irene, Members of this body came to me, not as Republicans or Democrats but as concerned American citizens looking to help, just as I always have, whatever State it might be. Red State, blue State, or purple State, I have always voted to support them, and today this Vermonter is here to stand with all the American communities affected by recent natural disasters.

I have not given up on finding a path forward. Today Leader SCHUMER and I offered a substitute that would provide \$2.5 billion in new funding to address the needs of communities affected by the 2019 disasters, such as flooding in the Midwest and tornadoes in Alabama. It would also accommodate the needs

of the American citizens—remember that they are Americans—in Puerto Rico and other Territories by including increased funding for the community development block grant and grants to help rebuild damaged water systems. It also includes Medicaid funding for the Northern Mariana Islands and cost match waivers for the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.

Finally, it mandates that HUD speed up the release of billions in previously appropriated CDBG funding which the Trump administration has unnecessarily withheld from disaster-stricken communities in Puerto Rico, in Texas, in Louisiana, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, in Florida, in South Carolina, in North Carolina, in West Virginia, in California, in Missouri, and in Georgia. We want to get help to all of those States.

I am disappointed that once again Senate Republicans have objected to this critical assistance. We are the United States of America. We are all Americans. We cannot pick and choose which American citizens to help in times of crisis.

Frankly, I was offended when the White House referred to Puerto Rico as “that country” that “only takes from the U.S.A.” I would remind the White House to look at a history book. Puerto Rico is part of the U.S.A. These are our fellow American citizens. We in the Senate must be better than that. We must stand with all American citizens in times of crisis.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Roy Kalman Altman, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Altman nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 62 Ex.]

YEAS—66

Alexander	Blunt	Burr
Barrasso	Boozman	Capito
Blackburn	Braun	Cardin

Cassidy	Hoeven	Roberts
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Cornyn	Inhofe	Rosen
Cortez Masto	Isakson	Rounds
Cotton	Johnson	Rubio
Cramer	Jones	Sasse
Crapo	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Daines	Lankford	Shaheen
Duckworth	Lee	Shelby
Enzi	Manchin	Sinema
Ernst	McConnell	Sullivan
Feinstein	McSally	Tester
Fischer	Moran	Thune
Gardner	Murkowski	Tillis
Graham	Murphy	Toomey
Grassley	Perdue	Warner
Hassan	Portman	Wicker
Hawley	Risch	Young

NAYS—33

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	King	Schatz
Booker	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brown	Leahy	Smith
Cantwell	Markey	Stabenow
Carper	Menendez	Udall
Casey	Merkley	Van Hollen
Coons	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Paul	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Harris

The nomination was confirmed.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Madam President.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Mark Anthony Calabria, of Virginia, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of five years.

Mitch McConnell, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, Mike Rounds, Marco Rubio, John Barrasso, Pat Roberts, John Thune, John Boozman, James E. Risch, Richard C. Shelby, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, John Hoeven.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Mark Anthony Calabria, of Virginia, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of five years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 63 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Warner
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Sanders
Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Blumenthal	Jones	Schumer
Booker	Kaine	Shaheen
Brown	King	Sinema
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—1

Harris

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 53, and the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Tennessee.

CHINA

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Madam President.

Today I received a letter from the U.S. Ambassador to China, Terry Branstad. Governor Branstad's letter said the following:

I am delighted to inform you that China's Ministry of Public Security announced China will make all forms of fentanyl a controlled substance effective May 1, 2019. If implemented effectively, this will fulfill the commitment President Xi made to the President at the G-20 last December in Buenos Aires. That commitment and this key development are direct results of your visit to Beijing during which you highlighted China's role in the global opioid crisis. Separately, I have asked my staff to share diplomatic reporting with you that addresses China's action in greater detail.

That is from Ambassador Terry Branstad, our Ambassador to China.

This is important news. It will save thousands of American lives. President Trump deserves great credit for persuading President Xi at their meeting in Argentina in December to do this, the one thing that our drug enforcement agents have said will reduce the flow of fentanyl into the United States more than any other single thing.

President Xi, the President of China, deserves the thanks of the American people for making this decision because our Drug Enforcement Agency is

convinced that this decision by China and its senior officials will save thousands of American lives.

The reason for this, we were told by our Drug Enforcement Agency personnel in China, is that, one way or the other, almost every bit of fentanyl that makes its way into the United States starts in China. These chemicals are made and mixed there. Then they come through the mail. They come through Mexico, through China, many different ways, but the chemicals start in China.

Every time China has made some form of fentanyl illegal, the availability of that form of fentanyl in the United States has begun to go straight down.

What President Trump and President Xi agreed to do on May 1 is to make all forms of fentanyl illegal. This means that if some clever scientist in China says: Well, this form of fentanyl is illegal, so I will make a different form that isn't, that clever scientist will now be out of business.

One thing the Chinese know very well how to do is to police their country. I would not want to be the Chinese person, after May 1, who is in violation of Chinese law that says all forms of fentanyl are controlled substances and illegal in China.

In October, I led a delegation of senior Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate to meet with the Chinese senior delegation. One would have thought that all we talked about was trade because trade was important to all of our States, but at Governor Branstad's insistence, in every meeting we had with senior Chinese officials, we said: Fentanyl is our biggest problem, and you can solve our biggest problem more than anybody else in the world. Instead of being our problem, why don't you be our solution? Why don't you let the United States point to China and say that you helped us solve a problem that is killing thousands of Americans on a regular basis?

China agreed to do that in December with President Trump. It has now been announced that on May 1, all forms of fentanyl will be controlled and therefore illegal.

We should watch and make sure it is effectively done, but what we should say today is: President Trump, we thank you for putting fentanyl on top of a busy agenda in December, and, President Xi, we are grateful to you for a decision we believe will save thousands of American lives. I might add, it is very helpful to have such an effective Ambassador as Terry Branstad in China because he knew how to focus the attention of many visiting delegations.

Our delegation wasn't the only one who carried this message; Senator PORTMAN and others have been there. But this is an example of China responding to an urgent American problem, and we ought to give both Presidents much more than a pat on the back for this important step.