

When President Clinton asked for relief for the Midwest floods just in the last Congress, it just took us 29 days, less than one half of the time that this bill has languished in this House and in the Senate. The other issue that the Republicans talk about as being a must add to the emergency relief for flood victims is this sampling issue. It is all about politics, because Republicans have been quoted as saying, "If we allow sampling and the count that will result, we will find poor people, we will find minorities, and we are afraid that they will vote for Democrats and that will be to our political disadvantage."

So the Speaker of the House, who two years ago said that he thought sampling made sense and ought to be pursued has changed his position. And who suffers? The victims of the rain and the floods are held hostage as this political dispute is engaged.

Mr. Speaker, a number of us have risen on this floor tonight, a number of us are rising throughout this city and talking to the press, talking to the public, and talking, yes, to our colleagues. We have a budget agreement. We sat down and for 5 months worked out a very tough problem. I supported it. That is the proper process, not to hold hostage, either Government employees or flood victims or some other group and say, we will hold their relief in abeyance if they do not agree with us.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we urge the leadership of this House and the Senate to bring to this floor a clean, continuing resolution, relief for flood victims, support for our troops in Bosnia and around the world. Pass that, the President will sign it. We can pass it by 12 noon tomorrow and the President will sign it by tomorrow afternoon. That is what we ought to do. Let us be about the business of giving relief to the victims of these floods.

REPUBLICANS PLAY POLITICS WITH DISASTER RELIEF BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. ROTHMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, what would my colleagues think of someone who stood by watching while a neighbor's house was burning down? What if that person refused to call the fire department for help unless he or she got something in return? We would not think much of that person.

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Yet that is exactly what the Republican majority in Congress is doing with the flood victims in North Dakota as well as the victims in 35 other States.

The President of the United States and many of us in Congress have been trying to pass a \$5.5 billion disaster relief bill for these families. But the Republican majority, much like they did with the government shutdown last

year, is putting extremist ideology and partisan political maneuvering ahead of the relief for these needy people. Instead of giving these families the needed relief that they so very much deserve, they are holding the disaster relief bill hostage by trying to attach highly partisan legislative riders that have nothing to do with disaster relief. They know that these highly partisan extremist Republican riders would never pass the Congress if voted on separately. So what did they do? In very cynical judgment, the Republican leadership decided to tack these partisan riders onto a disaster relief bill, saying in their own political calculus, well, maybe we will embarrass the President of the United States into vetoing this, or maybe he will be so embarrassed he will not veto it and then we will get these partisan goodies for us, the Republican party.

They underestimated President Clinton who said loudly and clearly that he would not be put in the position of having the Republican majority hold these victims hostage and let them get away with it. The Republican majority would have to put forth a clean disaster relief bill. Otherwise, he would not sign it. If they want a debate on these other partisan issues, fine, let us debate them in the Congress. If they are right, we will pass them. If they deserve support, we will support them.

Last week, the Republican Senate majority leader is reported to have said that he would happily provide more trailers for these disaster victims to stay in while they, the Republicans, try to wear down the President to get their legislative goodies. If such reports are true and those remarks were in fact uttered, they are morally reprehensible. Such a position is unfair to these needy American families. Thousands of American citizens are homeless. They just lost all of their worldly possessions and are sleeping in shelters. They await Federal disaster relief funds to finance the rebuilding of their homes and their cities and helping each other in times of need. Is that not the essence of what it means to be an American, being part of the American community?

If the Republicans really believe that their highly partisan political riders are worthy of support, they should remove them from the disaster relief bill and have the Congress take them up separately once the disaster bill, the clean disaster relief bill, has been passed by the House tomorrow. Then we will take up whatever riders they want.

I urge my colleagues and my friends on the other side of the aisle to tell their leadership, the leadership of the Republican party, to stop playing politics with the lives of these thousands and thousands of disaster victims. Put forth a clean disaster relief bill. We will pass it in Congress. Our President will sign it. And let us help these people. Then we will take up your political stuff.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOB SCHAFER of Colorado). The Chair must remind all Members that under the rules and precedents of the House, it is not in order to cast reflections on the Senate or its Members individually or collectively.

NAFTA IS A FAILURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LIPINSKI] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight deeply concerned, deeply concerned about our failed trade policies, deeply concerned about the plight of American workers, deeply concerned about the future of America.

Four years ago in this Chamber we had a long, long debate on NAFTA. NAFTA proponents pushed hard for its passage. They promised that NAFTA would create 200,000 American jobs. They warned that NAFTA was critical to the American economy and that American jobs depended on its passage.

After 40 months under NAFTA, we can clearly see that the reality is vastly different. The reality is that NAFTA worsened our trade balance with Mexico and Canada. Since NAFTA went into effect, our \$10 billion deficit with Canada turned into a larger \$23 billion deficit. Our \$1.7 billion surplus with Mexico slid into a \$16 billion deficit. Our growing trade deficits with Mexico and Canada mean that we are buying more than we are selling. It means that American jobs are being lost.

The reality is that 90 percent of the companies that promised to create jobs have not. Allied Signal, General Electric, Johnson and Johnson, Mattel, Procter & Gamble, Zenith and Exxon. The list goes on and on and on. They promised NAFTA would create American jobs. In a sense, they signed a promissory note to all the working men and women of America. The note was a promise that working Americans would be better off with NAFTA.

It is obvious today that these multinational corporations have defaulted on this promissory note. NAFTA is a complete and utter failure for working Americans.

Four years ago, in 1993, we all heard the mantra of 200,000 jobs over and over again. Guess what? It is now 1997 and we have lost an estimated 400,000 jobs. This is a net loss. It is a staggering sum. Bear in mind that this is not just another number. There are real people behind the statistics, real people with real families and real problems.

In their blind devotion to free trade, NAFTA proponents lost all contact with reality, and in so doing sacrificed 400,000 American jobs at the altar of free trade.

Some folks want to expand NAFTA to Chile and other Latin American nations. I am absolutely shocked. Can