

State in our Nation that can't come up with critical infrastructure projects we could invest in to make America stronger. It is one of the few things Government does which we can show has a direct relationship to economic growth.

Certainly we understand that this current economic crisis we face had its genesis in the subprime mortgage market, and we shouldn't overlook the fact that 2.2 million Americans stand to lose their homes to foreclosure. I think the administration's proposal so far has been anemic. This notion that we would ask mortgage companies and financial institutions to voluntarily restructure mortgages will take us, perhaps, a short walk down the road but not where we should be. We need to find better ways to give these families, if they can, the ability to stay in their homes and make their mortgage payments.

I have a bill that changes the Bankruptcy Code, that allows a bankruptcy court to take an honest look at a person's income potential and restructure a mortgage so that they can stay in their home and won't face foreclosure. Foreclosure is a disaster not only for the family losing the home but for those who loaned the money for that home and, ultimately, for the neighborhood surrounding it.

So Mr. President, there is certainly much we can do. I am sorry we didn't get a lot more done yesterday. We tried, but the Republicans resisted again. They wanted another day off, and we had it. Instead of getting serious about amendments to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, instead of having the debate leading up to amendments and the vote on the economic stimulus package, the clock ran out.

Well, it is about time for the Senate to roll up its sleeves and get to work so America can get to work. I hope that today the votes that are scheduled will be the beginning of an honest debate and that at the end of the day we will pass an economic stimulus package, conference with the House, and send it to the President for his signature before we break for our Presidents Day recess period which begins next week.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

#### TENNESSEE TORNADOES

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I had originally scheduled time to speak a little about the stimulus package and the many frailties I see with this package. However, due to the tragedy last night in Tennessee, I wish to talk on a different subject matter.

The senior Senator from Tennessee joins me on the floor this morning, and, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield half of my time to the great LAMAR ALEXANDER, the senior Senator from Tennessee, if that would be acceptable.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Chattanooga for his courtesy. I, too, would like to talk about the economic stimulus package and how we Republicans have been ready to go to work on it for 2 weeks, and will later today. But Senator CORKER and I have something that is closer to our heart today, and that is the devastation that came across our State last night from a string of tornadoes that was as rough and as pervasive as anything I have seen in my lifetime.

Most Americans saw reports of it while they were watching coverage of the elections, but the trouble began in Memphis in the middle of the day, with schools being closed because of tornadoes. It moved on to Jackson, where 3,300 students at Union University barely escaped, although the school was heavily damaged.

Often, tornadoes and severe weather of this type head in one direction and then the other, but this one just kept going. It kept on going into middle Tennessee, to Sumner County and Macon County, where several lives were lost, and moved into east Tennessee and the mountain area just this morning. So there is a lot of trouble in our State as a result of that, and Senator CORKER and I want the people of our State to know we have been monitoring that during the night, and we and our staffs are working together today.

We have talked to the Governor and State officials, local officials. I talked to the athletic director of Union University on his cell phone a few minutes ago. I was trying to reach David Dockery, the president of Union University.

So for the next several days, we will be doing all we can do from the Federal level to assist the Governor and the local officials in dealing with the devastation that was caused last night by the severe storms. Forty-five people were killed, more than another 100 injured, a lot of damage to buildings in areas across our State.

I thank Senator CORKER for taking this time to allow us to express to our constituents our feelings for them. We do want them to know they have our full attention today. The Governor is at the front of the line. That is the way we do things in Tennessee. We work easily with him and his staff and the local official. We will stay in touch with them, and those who need to be in touch with our Senate offices can do that.

We will move promptly to deal with applications for disaster relief. Sometimes they say they need to take enough time to be accurately filled out rather than have a race to the mailbox to get those in. But we will be working with local officials with those to do all we can.

I thank the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. CORKER, for his courtesy in allow-

ing me to express my remarks, and I look forward to working with him to help deal with the pain that has been caused to many Tennesseans.

I yield for Senator CORKER.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, thank you for letting me spend a few minutes on this topic that is such a huge issue in the State of Tennessee. I certainly thank our senior Senator for his leadership. Our senior Senator was also the Governor of Tennessee. I know he knows full well what many people across our State today are facing.

Again, I thank him for his leadership on so many issues. I know both of us today have spent time talking with county mayors across the State of Tennessee, talking with our Governor, talking with officials at Union University and other places. I know that for all of us our hearts and prayers go out not only to the people of Tennessee but also the Mississippi, Arkansas, and Kentucky people who also are dealing with some very tragic circumstances.

I know people in Tennessee are looking to their county mayors and our Governor for leadership, their officials with the National Guard, and FEMA. My understanding is they are providing outstanding leadership and that people have worked throughout the night to make sure that relief has been given, that people have been taken into homes and other places. Today, as they begin to dig out, if you will, and really see the extent of the damage, that will continue.

I am very proud to serve with LAMAR ALEXANDER and to be with him today. I know both of us want the people of Tennessee to know we are very aware of the tragedy they are dealing with. We are with them and their elected officials at the local and State level. We want to work with them as time goes on to make sure that much needed Federal relief, which will be on the way down the road, is forthcoming.

I wish to thank all of those volunteers. I have heard stories of heroic things throughout our State where ordinary citizens have done things to ease the pain and to create safety for many of our citizens in harm's way.

Again, our thoughts and prayers are with all of our citizens, especially those who have been so tragically affected by the events of the last 24 hours.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

#### ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the economic stimulus