

may overrule me, but it is worth arguing about to try to see if we can come to some reasonable compromise, which Leader REID has offered.

But there is already a crisis. For those who think this is manufactured, why don't they spend time this afternoon calling some of these small businesspeople who have shut down their operations?

They were building a road in Alaska, and they stopped because FEMA stopped their funding weeks and weeks ago. This isn't made up by MARY LANDRIEU. We can call Craig Fugate or anybody on this list if anyone thinks this is manufactured. They have stopped their projects because FEMA technically ran out of money months ago. They are operating on fumes. They stopped paying for all of their regular work that was going on rebuilding lots of places in America so they could give out their emergency aid to the east coast. They had no choice because we didn't give them enough money to make it through the year.

I sent a letter to the leadership on this issue months ago because I know this; I am the chair of the committee. They keep saying to me: Senator, we are running out of money. I have been saying this—and I will present letters for the RECORD. Anyone who follows this knows this is true. This is not a manufactured crisis.

This whole issue started when Representative CANTOR decided that the way to fix this problem was to cut something in the budget and have to offset something in order for us to move forward, and then the gears stopped. It was like he just threw a wrench in the gears. Everything was going along quite smoothly.

I know the American people are tired of the fighting and the name calling. I am, proudly, a centrist Democrat. I am still proud to say that. I have negotiated on probably every major deal that has been done—or compromised. I have been a part of almost every one for the 15 years I have been here. Some people don't like that about me, but I think that is good, and I am proud of it.

I most certainly am not one of the ones who like to start a partisan brawl just for the heck of it. This is an important principle. The principle is this: Should Americans have to scramble to find offsets while the water is rising and the wind is blowing, when we don't require the same for emergencies overseas? We don't scramble to find offsets when a famine happens or a drought hits in Africa. We send money because that is what Americans do. Yet our people are calling for help at home and somehow—this is on the tea party agenda—before we can send them help we have to find an offset in Washington, an offset that everybody agrees to. Good luck.

There are very few things here that two people agree to, let alone 535. If I had to do that, Mr. President, for

Katrina and Rita, I don't know what I would have done.

We are in a crisis. It may not be for everybody in the country right now, like it could be next week if the government shuts down, which it will not. We are going to find a way forward. But for these people it has been a crisis for several months. Bridge projects are shut down, libraries are shut down, and all the workers have been sent home or told not to expect a paycheck on this project. I don't know how many people will continue to work without receiving a paycheck. Maybe some people are still doing that.

No. 2, we sent \$1.3 trillion to Iraq and Afghanistan in the last 7 years—\$1.3 trillion, not requiring one offset. Yet people in Florida are looking for help as are people in Vermont, and the Cantor doctrine says we have to find cuts in the budget.

The Senator from Florida wants to speak. I want to be accurate in this debate, so I want to correct one thing I said. I said that never before have we offset FEMA money. My staff corrected me and said that one time in history, in recent memory, we did that for a small amount of FEMA money when President Clinton was the President because the Republicans had just come into power and argued about it back then. President Clinton, to his credit, found an offset they could agree to, and they did it.

I don't think we should make this a routine exercise. It is not right for the flood victims or the taxpayers in the long run. Eventually, we will find a way to pay for these things, so let's reason together.

HARRY REID sent us a reasonable compromise. The House should focus on this and try to take this compromise—if we can. It has been worth discussing because this is going to go into law one way or the other, and we are going to be living with the consequences. Those of us on the gulf coast who are in hurricane alley—I will show this chart, and it is quite disturbing. I will put it up again.

This chart shows from 1851 to 2008. These lines represent every hurricane that has hit the lower 48. These large colored lines are Katrina, Gustav, Rita, and Ike. Most certainly, along the east coast people should know that this is just what happened. There was also a tornado chart that showed where the tornadoes hit, and there was one for the earthquakes. Every part of the country at some time experiences a disaster. We don't have to run up to Washington and gut the education programs overnight or gut our transportation programs overnight or try to call a special committee meeting to find out where we can come up with \$1 billion by Friday to send to FEMA. We send it, and then we make those decisions over time. It is the way any corporation would operate, it is the way any family would operate, and it is the way our government should operate.

Again, if we take this Cantor doctrine to its ridiculous extreme, we

would have firetrucks screaming down the street while a house is on fire, and before they turn the hose on, they would ask the family to come out and they would ask them what they should cut in the city budget before they turned on the water. We can only make reasonable assumptions about what disasters there will be—their frequency and their rate. If we go under a little bit, then we have to provide the money until we can fix it in the long run.

I am going to yield the floor. I thank the Members for engaging in this debate.

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#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

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#### SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM EXTENSION AND REFORM ACT OF 2011

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 2608, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2608, an act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes, with an amendment.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid amendment No. 656 (to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill), to provide continuing appropriations in fiscal year 2011 and additional appropriations for disaster relief in fiscal years 2011 and 2012.

Reid amendment No. 657 (to amendment No. 656), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions, Reid amendment No. 658, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 659 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 658), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 660 (to amendment No. 659), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I want to comment before the Senator from Louisiana leaves the floor. It is kind of like we have seen this movie before. If I recall, it was Friday. The Senator from Louisiana and I were out here with this chart talking about the same thing, showing all of these paths of hurricanes and how those folks who live along the gulf and the Atlantic coast understand what natural disaster is.

We are playing with people's lives when we threaten not to fund FEMA,