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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIVERA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 2, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID RIVERA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 3 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, it was to my profound disappointment that I learned last night that the House would adjourn the 112th Congress without providing assistance to the victims of Superstorm Sandy.

I am joined today, Mr. Speaker, by many of my colleagues from the jurisdictions whose people received the most damaging blow. Though my district did not sustain the extreme damage that those in New York, New Jer-

sey and Connecticut did, the President declared several Maryland counties eligible for Federal assistance from this storm, but it was minor, and my citizens are not in dire circumstances; but the citizens of some from whom we will hear today are in that condition.

Those counties joined hundreds in the 1,000-mile diameter of this storm—the largest geographically in the history of the Atlantic hurricanes. Now, at best, the Speaker has said that Sandy's victims will need to wait until the next Congress to receive assistance—Wait, they say, to millions who are in pain and in distress. We should not be waiting. We should be voting this very morning, which I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I expect to happen from my discussions with the majority leader.

As I said last night, I went with Congressman GREG MEEKS to Breezy Point and the Rockaways in New York, and what I saw there in Sandy's aftermath defied description and demanded action. To those who say that FEMA has not yet disbursed all the funds it has to assist families and businesses, I would tell them that they deeply underestimate the damage in these areas and the wide range of assistance required to alleviate the pain and suffering. At Jacob Riis Park, I saw the mountains of debris that the Corps of Engineers had begun to remove from neighborhoods. That debris represents people's lives, homes, and businesses.

With this legislation, we would have provided up to \$1.6 billion to the Corps to continue removing debris so that families could begin rebuilding. Would we have had to borrow that money? Yes. Just as if the furnace went out and the temperature were at zero, you would immediately replace the furnace to keep the families safe and borrow the money to do so; and, yes, we would have had to repay it, and we would.

This bill would have allocated \$6 million in emergency aid for food banks to

make sure that people in the richest country on the face of the Earth have some sustenance for them and their children. I saw an area of Breezy Point where more than 100 homes were devastated by fire when an electric transformer malfunctioned. The many firefighters who lived in that neighborhood could not get additional help from surrounding boroughs due to the severe flooding. They battled mightily and they saved many lives, but there is little left—indeed, none—of their homes.

I saw local businesses, Mr. Speaker, which had been there for years, completely destroyed, waiting for the \$620 million in SBA assistance this bill would have provided. We talked a lot about not imposing burdens on small business by additional taxes. These small businesses are out of business without our help. We walk away today from nearly \$4 billion in assistance to help reconstruct Rockaway Beach and other places, which is critical to the area's economic recovery and important to prevent further storm damage.

Finally, there is also the toll on transit and infrastructure, including inundated subway and traffic tunnels that were referred to last night. This bill would have provided up to \$10.9 billion for transit and \$2.2 billion for highways to help make sure that the area is not just cleared of water but repaired. If small businesses are going to be able to operate, it will be because consumers and customers can get to them and get to the schools and get to the hospitals and get to their families.

Waiting to act until later this month when Members were here and ready to vote last night is not the right choice. No Member of this House could travel to the Northeast, see the damage, and tell anyone in those areas to wait—wait for us to act, wait for us to help, wait for us to come to your aid. We cannot and we should not wait. We must not walk away.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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