

the bill. That was taken out of the bill. The bill that was going to be voted on on the House floor was exactly in compliance with what the Republican leadership asked us to do.

Let me just say at this time, in my dealings with him, Majority Leader CANTOR has been very straightforward, very direct. Last night, I know that he was fighting to get the bill on the calendar. It was the Speaker that, for whatever reason, walked off the floor and said that the bill was being pulled.

Now I don't enjoy saying this. I consider myself a personal friend of JOHN BOEHNER. And JOHN BOEHNER personally has been very helpful to me over the years. So it pains me to say this. But the fact is the dismissive attitude that was shown last night toward New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, typifies, I believe, a strain in the Republican Party. I know this is not the place to discuss politics, but that politics seeps over into a governmental decision that was made.

I can't imagine that type of indifference, that type of disregard, that cavalier attitude being shown to any other part of the country when we're talking about real life-and-death situations here—and to just have the Speaker walk off and not even tell us. He tells an aide to the majority leader, who then tells us that the item that means life and death was taken off the calendar and is gone for this session.

Now they say it's going to be brought back up in January. The fact is: let's be real. We're not in session next week. The following week we're in session for 2 days. The following week is the inauguration, and we're in recess for 2 days. Then we have the State of the Union. Committees haven't even organized yet. And does anyone believe if they wouldn't vote for a \$60.4 billion last night, that the Appropriations Committee is suddenly going to get religion and going to vote the full amount, when we know what their attitude is—that somehow money going to New York and New Jersey and Connecticut is corrupt money, when money going to their States is so honorable. I would just say that these people have no problem finding New York when it comes to raising money. It's only when it comes to allocating money that they can't find the ability to do it.

So I'm standing here on the House floor today saying we have a moral obligation as Republicans, as Democrats, as Americans. I spoke to Governor Christie and Governor Cuomo. We've been in constant contact with Mayor Bloomberg. We cannot believe that this cruel knife in the back was delivered to our region. I have to go home this weekend and next weekend and the week after and see the hundreds and thousands of people who are out of their homes, who don't have shelter, who don't have food, and they're living with relatives, friends, and living in trailers. This is not the United States of America. This should not be the Republican Party. This should not be the Republican leadership.

I'm asking the Speaker, tell HAL ROGERS and these people who somehow who have become very sanctimonious when dealing with New York and New Jersey that they have an obligation to do what they have to do—and that's provide the aid and relief that we need. If there's one penny that they have a problem with, let us know. But don't walk out in the dark of night and ignore us.

#### HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Let me thank Mr. KING, my colleague from New York, for his remarks. I really appreciate what he said—that this is not a Republican or Democratic issue. It shouldn't be politicized. Natural disasters and responding to them are what I've seen over my 25 years in Congress, and they are what bring us together to try to help people. The Speaker should not use this opportunity to tear us apart.

I was here last night when we got the word through Congressman KING that the Speaker was going to pull this bill. And what the message said was, Well, we can do this in January. We'll do it sometime later in January in the new Congress.

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As Congressman KING said, we can't wait. My district was devastated by this storm. I would ask of Speaker BOEHNER, come to Sea Bright, New Jersey. Drive through Sea Bright, New Jersey. It's a town that has less than 2,000 people. The business district is totally destroyed. One or two stores have reopened; the rest are still closed. Most of the people still have not been able to return to the town.

Go to Union Beach in New Jersey, also in my district, where you can see that now everything is exposed. We still have people that do not have a place to stay, that are looking for an apartment or staying in motels or looking for a trailer to be placed next to their home and still don't have it.

We need to rebuild now. We need to act now. We can't wait for the next Congress or another couple of weeks or another couple of months.

What I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, is how is it possible that this has become a political issue? It is clear that we're here today. We can vote on this. The votes are clearly there. We should have an open debate. That's what democracy is all about. And all of a sudden, because the Tea Party or some conservative element is worried that they have to vote on another spending bill, all of a sudden the Speaker says, well, we can't do this today. This is politicizing a situation that should not be political. It is another example of what I call the "do-nothing" Congress.

This Congress did very little. It had fewer bills passed than in anybody's

memory. Rather than go out on this negative note about not bringing up an emergency because of a hurricane, a devastating natural disaster, why not do something positive on a bipartisan basis, Mr. Speaker. Bring this up. Let us have an open debate. We're still here. Don't let this Congress die on this negative note. Let it build on a positive note, so when we come in and we're sworn in on Thursday, we can show that we can work on a bipartisan basis.

I have never seen anything like it. To me, it is just deplorable.

#### FAREWELL REMARKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RIVERA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RIVERA. Mr. Speaker, as we close on the 112th Congress, I wish to express my gratitude to the residents of Florida's 25th Congressional District for having given me the honor and the privilege to serve them as their elected Representative in the United States Congress.

When my constituents first elected me to come to Congress, they did so with what I thought was a very clear mandate as to what the focus of the 112th Congress should be, and that is to restore fiscal responsibility to the Federal Government and begin moving our economy forward to create jobs. Here in the U.S. House of Representatives, I believe we have strived to meet the challenges that out-of-control spending have created in the form of yearly deficits and long-term debt accumulation. The 112th Congress' passage of the free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama and South Korea demonstrates what type of pro-economic growth and job-creation policies can be achieved when we place the Nation's long-term economic interests before parochial or short-term considerations.

Unfortunately, too often in the 112th Congress, our efforts here in the U.S. House of Representatives to restore fiscal responsibility to the Federal Government have not been met with the same sense of urgency by our governing partners in the United States Senate or the White House. Last evening's vote regarding a so-called fiscal cliff is yet another example of Washington's willingness to forego making difficult, long-term decisions regarding spending in deference to short-term fixes that do not solve our looming debt crisis. That same debt crisis, that is the real fiscal cliff that our Nation faces; because whether we realize it or not, the more our Nation climbs this mountain of debt—a mountain we ourselves are creating—the higher the cliffs will be.

I urge future Congresses to meet this challenge, take up the challenge in restoring fiscal responsibility with a renewed sense of vigor and urgency.

I also want to encourage my colleagues in the 113th Congress to apply that same sense of urgency to another