Springs, Louisiana. I was gutting a home, ripping out Sheetrock, tearing out floors, throwing out furniture, throwing out photo albums, appliances, and family heirlooms. Mr. Speaker, I did it in a home and literally stripped out every foot of Sheetrock in the house, from the floor to the ceiling and ripped out all the floors. Everything in the house was gutted down to the studs.

This was a house where a woman, who recently retired in June or July of this year, was living. She has been living there since the early 1970s. Never has she had even a single foot of water in her house or a single inch of water in her house. Yet, on the floods that we had in south Louisiana around August 11th, this home received over 6 feet of water in the entire home, everything.

Outside the house, we stacked up piles of debris from 6 to 8 feet high. I call it debris, but in reality it was memories. It was that woman's life that was piled up in the street. Everything that she owned was thrown out.

Mr. Speaker, we had a storm that was a 1,000-year event. We experienced over 31 inches of rain in some of the peak areas in 36 hours. To translate that to snow, you are talking about 25 feet of snow. To my friends from the North, that is what we experienced the equivalent of in just 36 hours. This is on track to be the fourth most costly flood disaster in United States history, and, again, it was a 1,000-year storm.

Now, this happened in south Louisiana last month, but this could happen anywhere. Whether it is a snowstorm, it is a blizzard, it is a tsunami, it is an earthquake, it is a tornado or it is a terrorist attack, it could happen anywhere in this country.

Now, historically when these catastrophic events have happened, the country has stepped up to provide assistance. Whether it is September the 11th, Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Katrina or other disasters, the Nation has stepped up whenever these disasters have crossed over into catastrophic territory.

In this instance, we have had over 100,000 homes and businesses flooded. So that story I told about the home that we went in and stripped and gutted—one of many homes that we worked in—you can multiply that same exact scenario tens of thousands of times over.

Now, in this particular case, this house is probably worth $150,000, maybe. It is probably going to cost them $80,000 to rebuild the house to get it back. It is going to cost them $30,000 to replace the car that they lost. It is going to cost them $20,000 to replace their clothes and contents of the house.

Because this home is in a floodplain—at the time when it was built, it was not, but now it is—it is going to probably cost them $100,000 to elevate that concrete slab and lift it up to the higher-base foot elevation. You can do the math. You are talking about over $200,000 just to get themselves back to where they were the day before this storm.

I am going to say it again, Mr. Speaker, this is happening in south Louisiana. While the water has receded, their lives remain upside down, and it is hundreds of thousands of households.

This is a parochial issue to me. It is my hometown. It is my community. It is my neighbors. It is my relatives. But the next disaster, whether it is next week, next year, next month, next decade, it is going to be in your town. It is going at your home. It is going to be your relatives, your neighbors.

The American people need to know that when we have a catastrophic disaster like this, that the country is there to offer a hand up. Let me lay out this financial scenario. I talked about the $200,00 for this one homeowner, not including the other businessowners and others that are affected by this disaster. Because of HUD rules and some of the rules put in place by the mortgage companies, folks are going to have to make a decision on whether they are going to have their home foreclosed upon or they are going to try to get out of this financial predicament that they are in by the beginning of November.

A $2.6 billion budget request has been made to offer a hand up to these people that rescued themselves, sheltered themselves, cooked for themselves, and gutted their own homes. Now is the time for America to offer a hand up, just like we have done in the past and just like we need to let other Americans know we are going to do for them in the event of a crisis like this.

Mr. Speaker, lastly I want to say this: This was somewhat unique in that the Federal interstate held 6 feet of water back, therefore, further inundating people. The Comite River project and other flood control projects, which the Federal Government failed to construct after 30 years, and coastal land loss also contributed to this flood disaster.

Now is the time for us to act. November, December timeframes are too late. This needs to be part of our negotiations right now to offer certainty and to assure Americans in the future that we are going to be there to offer them a hand up.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 29 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

You fulfill Your promises day by day and lead Your people to greatness. You are the One who asks each of us to live a life worthy of our calling.

By embracing the responsibilities of our station in life, each of us is to perform our duties with humility, meekness, and patience with the help of Your grace. By bearing with one another with understanding, we are to make every effort to preserve the unity we have been given by Your Divine Providence and seek peace at every turn of events.

On this day, bless the Members of this people's House with a surfeit of grace, that good policy might emerge to the benefit of our Nation. Also, on this day, comfort all who mourn the passing of one of our most beloved House staffers, Jacqui Ellis. May she rest in peace.

May all that is done today be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. ASHFORD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ASHFORD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING THE VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAYNE ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 25th anniversary of one of Florida's most beautiful communities, the Village of Key Biscayne.

Incorporated in 1991, this majestic barrier island paradise is located between the Atlantic Ocean and Biscayne Bay and is centered between two beautiful parks to the north and the south.