

environmental protections, undermine education programs, or eviscerate Wall Street reform, including taking down the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Think about that.

The Republican Party is trying to make it harder for the American people to know how much money is being poured into the efforts that hurt consumers. In the past weeks alone, Wells Fargo perpetuated a huge scam on their customers, costing account holders millions of dollars and creating over 2 million fraudulent accounts. It was the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that was instrumental in uncovering the scam and levying the largest fine in history.

So here we are just 2 weeks later sticking in riders to hide dark money from shareholders. That is exactly the type of dark money that attacks the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the American people deserve to know who is funding those attacks.

The significance of this should not be understated. Ultimately, this is about silencing the voice of hard-working American families in favor of amplifying the speech and magnifying the influence of corporations. Unfortunately, it is all too emblematic of my Republican colleagues' approach to lawmaking. When corporations ask Republicans to jump, they say: How high? When big banks ask Republicans to roll back critical Wall Street reforms, they say: How far? When the oil industry asks Republicans for a tax subsidy, they say: How much? It is shameless. Clearly, my Republican colleagues are defiantly turning their backs on consumers.

We cannot continue down this obstructionist path paved with the shattered remains of our long-held willingness to help each other in times of crisis. If we continue down this path when Republicans are in charge, no assistance would be provided if the east coast suffered another superstorm because those are blue States. It would mean that a slow-moving infrastructure crisis in an inner city would be ignored as "other people's grief." It would mean that when Democrats are in charge, no relief would be provided for tornadoes in Oklahoma or floods in Kentucky because those are red States. That is not what we Democrats would do, and it is not, at the end of the day, the way to govern. We need to stop dividing our country into us versus them when it comes to fundamental human needs.

In this election season, let's remember that, above all, we are all Americans with common votes and shared values. Let's focus on doing right by the American people, rather than telling them we can solve all of our problems if we just turn the clock back to a better time and blame someone else—those people, the others—for our problems. That is not good politics, it is not good government, and it is not who we are as a nation or as a people.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I voted to move forward with a continuing resolution because I believe it is a fundamental responsibility of Congress to keep the government open. I am deeply frustrated, however, that, among the policies included in the amendment, the authors have failed to provide funding to address the Flint lead crisis or to allow the Export-Import Bank to operate at full capacity. As this body continues to work to develop a plan to keep the government operating, I strongly encourage both the majority leader and my colleagues to address these commonsense priorities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NATIONAL RICE MONTH

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, famously known as the Natural State, my home State of Arkansas holds the proud distinction as the Nation's leader in rice production.

Last year, Arkansas produced more than 50 percent of the total rice grown in the country. On average, farmers in Arkansas grow rice on 1.5 million acres each year. Ninety-six percent of those farms are family owned and operated. As the No. 1 producer of this crop, Arkansas has a unique role in the industry. That is why I am proud to recognize the 26th anniversary of National Rice Month.

I am pleased to promote policies that enable our farmers to manage risk and ensure that high-quality U.S. rice remains a staple on tables across the globe.

This industry is not only contributing to a nutritious and balanced diet, it is also an economic engine in rural America. Nationwide, the rice industry accounts for 125,000 jobs and contributes more than \$34 billion to the U.S. economy. In Arkansas, rice contributes more than \$1.8 billion to our State's economy and provides thousands of jobs. We can increase both of these numbers even more if we open additional markets for our rice producers to compete in.

Rice farmers all across America would benefit from a changing policy with Cuba because rice is a staple of the Cuban diet. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that U.S. rice exports could increase by \$365 million per year if financing and travel restrictions were lifted. Arkansas' agricultural secretary has said that the economic impact on the State's rice industry could be about \$30 million.

Rice production is efficient. More rice is being produced on less land, using less water and energy than 20 years ago. As great stewards of the land, rice farmers are committed to protecting and preserving our natural resources. I am proud to celebrate 26 years of National Rice Month and honor the more than 100,000 Americans involved in the rice industry.

Additionally, I wish to make a comment about the devastating floods that northeastern Arkansas experienced in

August. The recent floods caused serious damage to crop production, including rice. Many of these crops were near harvest stage.

The University of Arkansas estimates that the State suffered \$50 million in crop losses due to the recent flooding. This damage has largely flown under the radar, and the final damages may be more than this preliminary estimate. The Governor of Arkansas has requested disaster assistance from the USDA, and last week the Arkansas congressional delegation wrote a letter in support of the Governor's request. Secretary Vilsack committed to me that he would expedite this request as quickly as possible, and I encourage him to do so.

Agriculture accounts for nearly one-quarter of Arkansas' economic activity. One out of every six jobs in Arkansas is tied to agriculture. Rice production is a vital part of agriculture's contribution to Arkansas' economy. I am committed to helping our rice producers succeed in today's global economy.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECENT EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to bring the Senate's attention to the Ethiopian Government's brutal crackdown on protestors over the past 9 months. According to Human Rights Watch, more than 500 people have been killed by Ethiopian security forces in antigovernment demonstrations since November 2015, including over 100 gunned down in early August of this year alone.

These protests by the country's two largest ethnic groups, the Oromos and Amharas, reflect enduring tensions brought on by the Ethiopian Government's longstanding marginalization and persecution of these communities. But such grievances are shared by even broader segments of Ethiopian society, including from other communities that have been forcibly evicted from their land in the name of development and the journalists, civil society activists, and countless other political prisoners sitting in Ethiopian jails for speaking out against the government's repressive rule.

The international community, including the United States, has paid too little attention to the Ethiopian Government's repressive policies, focusing instead on the country's rapid development gains and the government's cooperation on regional security. But it is time for the Ethiopian Government to acknowledge that grievances stemming from marginalization, abuse, and