

tricks as they did just last summer when they tried to get a \$50 billion tobacco tax credit put into the balanced budget agreement. As you know, we fought back, and we repealed that \$50 billion tax credit. But that episode is just an example of what we might expect when the tobacco settlement that is now under discussion comes before Congress this year.

It is obvious that stopping our children from buying cigarettes needs to be a part of the solution. But first we must have our merchants comply with the already existing age laws that in many States are already on the books. Thanks to people like Carol Wagner at the Mid-Bergen Health Center in Bergen County, New Jersey, Carol runs a sting operation with local teenagers. She and those teens are helping win this war. The local sting operations show that merchants in Bergen and Hudson Counties, two counties that I represent in New Jersey, have already reached the national goal for the year 2000 by reducing sales to minors by 80 percent.

So what then is an industrious kid to do when the stores that sell cigarettes over the counter check for age I.D.? Well, according to the U.S. Surgeon General, these young teenagers are 10 times more likely to then go to secret vending machines to buy their cigarettes, and they know which diners, hotels, bowling alleys, gas stations and restaurants in town have those cigarette vending machines.

Our towns have tried to fight back by banning cigarette machines everywhere in their communities, but the tobacco companies make 16½ million dollars on under-aged smoking in New Jersey alone. That is why they have spent millions of dollars to bottle up these local ordinances, in many cases frivolous and expensive lawsuits they know that our local towns cannot afford to contest.

The only way to save our towns from these lawsuits is to make it part of a Federal law that any American community, if they choose to, can ban cigarette vending machines from their community.

This week I am informally introducing the Stop Kids From Smoking Act, a bill to ban all cigarette vending machines in places where children under the age of 18 have access, and for the 10 towns in my district that already ban cigarette vending machines from any part of their towns, the bill will contain a provision that allows them to have this total ban of cigarette vending machines remain valid and effective in their communities as long as they choose to keep these bans alive.

The congressional hearings that began this month should focus more attention on the tobacco companies' marketing strategy to children beyond the R.J. Reynolds memo that was recently released. Once we have that information, Congress must not delay in passing a wide-ranging tobacco settlement that will protect our children.

My Stop Kids From Smoking bill will help. That is why I am encouraging all of my colleagues on the Democrat and Republican side of the aisles to cosponsor this important bill. We need to stop kids from buying cigarettes at local unattended vending machines, and we need to do it now.

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MOURNING THE PASSING OF A
DEAR FRIEND, FORMER CON-
GRESSMAN RICHARD WHITE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Richard C. White, former Congressman for the 16th District of Texas. Congressman White passed away last Wednesday, February 18, in El Paso, Texas. It is with deep sorrow and condolences to his family that we mark the passing of this dear friend, exceptional leader and fine human being.

During his 74 years of life, he exemplified the highest attributes that all of us here in Congress and back in our respective districts respect and admire, the attributes of leadership, vision, integrity, humility and public service.

Early in his life, Richard White showed a concern and a commitment to his community and his country. He entered military service as a marine in World War II and saw action in the Pacific theater. While fighting in the battles of Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima, he was wounded in action, and his service to his country was marked with honor and high decoration, receiving the Purple Heart.

Upon returning to the States, this veteran began advocating as an outstanding lawyer for the people of El Paso. In 1949, he heeded the call for even greater community service. Congressman White launched the beginning of a distinguished career as a public servant.

He served first in the Texas Legislature from 1955 to 1958. In the beginning, he worked hard to improve the quality of life along the border. Focusing on health care and environmental issues, he established a nursing school at the University of Texas at El Paso and created the Hueco Tanks State Park.

As a native Texan and a third generation El Pasoan, Congressman White remained close to his roots. After his successful terms in the State House, he returned to El Paso. He practiced law for a short time and served as a chairman of the El Paso Democratic Party prior to announcing his candidacy for the U.S. Congress in 1964.

Richard White then served in this body from 1965 to 1983. I know that during his years here in Washington he built many friendships. Many of you were his colleagues and remember his strong advocacy on behalf of his district and the well-being of this Nation. His work on the Committee on Armed Services reflected his strong commit-

ment to national security, and this was reflected in his unwavering support for El Paso's Fort Bliss Army Post, and in the drafting of the reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff language. In addition, he brought the needs of El Paso and the border to the forefront of Congress as he created the Chamizal Border Highway and the Chamizal National Memorial.

□ 1245

In addition, he served with distinction in the Interior and Insular Affairs Committees, the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, and the Science and Technology Committee.

Congressman White was a true citizen-legislator. During his 18 years representing El Paso, he served with distinction and determination. Moreover, his accomplishments were marked by a reputation as a person of the highest character and for always conducting himself as a gentleman.

Despite having attained seniority and earning the respect and admiration of his peers, he nevertheless left this Congress to return to his family in El Paso. The proud father of 7 children, he was devoted to spending more time with them.

Nonetheless, seeing the need to always contribute towards the betterment of El Paso and the citizens of El Paso, he remained active in numerous community affairs and lent his support to the 16th District as a mentor and a civic leader.

I can personally say that Congressman White was a long time friend to me and to my family. He inspired us with his leadership, and I appreciated his many insights and willingness to offer his continued assistance on behalf of our community.

Congressman White leaves an enormous legacy of concern for his constituents and a commitment to doing everything in his power to help those whom he served. Richard White personified the meaning of honorable public service. He made the most of his life by touching the lives of those around him. As Congressman, legislator, attorney, friend, citizen, husband and father, he led a life of dignity and unselfish commitment. He worked hard. As we mourn his passing, let us all remember that his many accomplishments will be a benchmark for those of us here in Washington today.

Mr. Speaker and fellow Members of Congress, I will soon introduce legislation to name the El Paso Federal Office Building in his honor. I will ask for your support in this endeavor as a permanent monument to his proud record of public service and fierce drive to help his community and to work for the greater good of this Nation.

I thank you, and I want to wish his wife, Katherine and all his children well, and God bless the White family.

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NATURAL DISASTER IN MAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1998, the gentleman from Maine

(Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to talk about probably the worst natural disaster ever to hit the State of Maine. But the ice storm we experienced early in January of this year did not affect Maine only; it also affected New York State, Vermont and New Hampshire, and we had never seen anything like it.

I want to use this opportunity to explain what happened in the State of Maine. Some of my colleagues, including Congressman BALDACCI from the Second District of Maine, are here. We expect others to join us in a little while. We are trying to convey a sense of what it was like, what happened, and why there remains a need for a supplemental appropriation to deal with the enormous costs of this particular disaster.

Today, those of us who went through this ice storm in Maine, we think of and our hearts are with those people in Florida and those people in California who have recently gone through a similar kind of natural disaster, those who are dealing with the issues of tornadoes in Florida and the floods and storms out in California.

The ice storm hit Maine on January 7, and the effects of it lasted for about two weeks. It was an unusual event, because in fact the storm itself did not last that long, but the ice stayed.

This photograph to my right will give you some sense of what the storm looked like. Here we have a utility pole, basically snapped off, the wires still attached, and all around are trees laden with ice.

This storm, of course, extended up into Canada. Many people saw some of those Hydro Quebec transmission poles, huge steel girders, simply bent over as if they were toothpicks. That is one photograph.

Here is a second photograph, the same kind of shot, showing a utility pole snapped off at the top, branches all around. Those of us who traveled throughout the State during the ice storm noticed that the hardwood trees all across a very broad band, about a 40 mile band running up through the State of Maine, the hardwood trees, many of them were snapped off within 25 to 30 feet of the top.

So this was a storm the effects of which came down. It was not a flood, it was not a landslide, but the effects came down from the top. As some people said, this was a storm designed by Mother Nature to take out the utility infrastructure in Maine, and that is what it did.

I have a number of experiences that I want to share. The people of Maine really pulled together in a very helpful and productive way. Like JOHN BALDACCI, I went to a great number of shelters. The shelters were put together sometimes by the Red Cross, sometimes just by local volunteers, but typically they would be set up in a

high school gymnasium or some large room.

I will never forget what I saw there, because on one end of the room there might be some older people, some of them perhaps on oxygen, who were simply trying to cope with the storm. At another end there would be smaller children being cared for by their parents. In the middle there might be a soccer game, and the kids who were between 6 and 13 might be playing soccer.

But what I will always remember are the faces of the teenagers. Many of them did not have school for two weeks, and they were there volunteering in a shelter, perhaps the first extended volunteer effort that they had ever made. They were cutting carrots, carrying blankets, setting up cots, making sure the elderly were taken care of, and they had a pride and enthusiasm in their faces that really said it all.

We people of Maine like to think of ourselves as independent people, as self-reliant people, but we needed each other during this ice storm, and we needed the rest of the country. That is why I will never look at television pictures of what happens in Florida or what happens in California again without understanding how important it is for people in this country to pull together when there is a natural disaster in one part of the country. We all need to help each other. It is part of what we do as members of this great national community.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I will yield to my good friend and colleague from the Second District of Maine, Congressman BALDACCI. I have the small district, and Congressman BALDACCI has the largest district in Maine, the largest district east of the Mississippi. He had more trees, but an equal number of people affected.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Congressman ALLEN for taking the leadership on this issue in terms of getting our Members here to speak to the other Members, and also to the people throughout the United States, so they have a better understanding as to what took place in Maine and why there is going to be a need for a supplemental appropriation.

I really appreciate the fact of the point that the gentleman raised in terms of what is going on in Florida and California, because our hearts certainly go out to those people, seeing the loss of lives, children suffering, and the homes going down the mountains, and furniture and everything going by the wayside, I think it really is something that the gentleman and I and many others in Maine and throughout the country certainly do have a lot of concern about, and our hearts are with those people.

I think that especially in our State, I know when the Vice President came, and the administrator, James Lee Witt, and also the people from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, we felt that there was a kinship there, and that we were not alone.

I think of the comments of building it brick by brick, and building it home by home and community by community, and letting the people of Maine and the country know as they go through these disasters that they are not doing it alone, and that the United States of America is standing there with us.

While there have been some concerns about aid or additional aid, I think to a lot of people in Maine, and I hope throughout the country, just knowing that they are there is a certain level of comfort. Because, as the gentleman pointed out earlier and many people know, Maine's citizens are hearty and well-prepared for winter storms. But nobody could have been prepared for the size and scope of the damage that ravaged our infrastructure starting on January 5.

The devastation in Maine was focused on our utilities, leaving many families without power for more than two weeks; trees and utility poles snapped like twigs under the weight of four inches of ice that accumulated from the mist and slow freezing rain that lasted for four days.

Travel was nearly impossible, not only because of the slick sheets of ice covering the road, but because of live wires, tree limbs and sometimes whole trees littering the ground. Someone said to me it looked like a helicopter had flown too low across the State, snapping off the tops of the trees in their rotors.

Mainers needing to stock up on provisions or seek shelter often found they could not leave their homes because the roads, as you see from this picture, which is very accurately portraying how impassable the roads were. Some did get out, but only by stopping frequently to cut away downed trees with chain saws and move them to the side of the road.

Thousands of Mainers gathered in emergency shelters throughout the State to get a hot meal and to stay warm. There were countless heartwarming stories of people who stood hour after hour in community kitchens, chopping and cooking to keep their neighbors fed.

I remember we were doing a dinner benefit for an individual who had bone marrow cancer surgery scheduled, and his health insurance had been tapped out, and his family and we pulled together in the community in Brewer, and we were putting on a benefit to help raise money for him and his family.

It was during the middle of this power outage, and the family felt that they could not go forward, worrying about themselves. Can you imagine, bone marrow cancer replacement surgery, but they wanted to not take proceeds, and to open it up to the entire community of greater Bangor and Brewer for those who did not have power, to welcome them to get a hot meal and find community and comradeship.

We ended up serving over 1,200 people that Sunday night, and I was just truly amazed. I should not be amazed, but we know that to be true of Maine people, that they set a good example for all of us in how they reach out to each other, even though they have problems of their own. So it really is something to be very proud of.

Congressman ALLEN and I were talking with our other representatives, and it is not often that people ask for additional assistance from Maine. You know when they are asking for it that they really do need it.

Even when we had the helicopter rides with James Lee Witt and the delegation, he was remarking that when he had flown in other states, the helicopters were carpeted, warm, and you had to take your coat and sweater off. When he was in the whirlybirds in Maine, the drafts were coming through and he had to hold his coat to make sure the drafts were not coming through. He remarked that you know you really need help when people are trying to pull together on their own and showing they are doing everything they possibly can do.

So I am very pleased and proud to join my colleague from Maine, Representative ALLEN, to seek not only support for Maine, but also New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Florida, California, and all of those areas that are afflicted by these disasters in this additional appropriation, which is going to be so dramatically needed.

As you know, in agriculture what has happened over the years is in the Stafford Act they separated out agriculture, because in some cases it may have had better programs to help livestock and agricultural crops, to be able to repair from the damage.

What happened then is that over the years, those dissipated. So what we found out is because of lack of definition and law and because of not having a particular program, that a lot of our dairy farmers and other farmers were actually negatively impacted, because they could not qualify for the SBA program that FEMA had put forward, because they were not defined as a small business. So they really get a double whammy. Not only do they lose their crops and income, but they are unable to get into these types of programs for any additional help or assistance.

That is one of the reasons why, working together with you and other Members, we need this additional supplemental appropriation, to help those that slipped through the crack and be able to address this storm of the century.

So those are a lot of the same concerns that I know the gentleman registered and other people have registered, and I really have to say I appreciate the photo, because that tells 1,000 stories.

□ 1300

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, the photograph

we have right here is another one that the Portland newspapers took. They did an excellent job of covering this storm. They put out a supplement titled "When Maine Froze Over."

This photograph says it all, in many ways. There are downed trees, downed power lines. There were people that the gentleman talked to and certainly that I talked to who could not get out of their homes for several days because there were downed power lines and downed branches.

As the gentleman knows, people in Maine, sometimes we live down little dirt roads, and off to the side, where you kind of like to be tucked away in the woods sometimes. The result was that when the whole electric grid went down, people were without power all through the State.

In fact, that is one thing that might be worth showing right now. We have talked about what it was like and how severe this storm was. But just to give an example, on January 8 this chart shows 275,000 households were without power. We have 1.2 million people in the State of Maine. At one time or another 600,000 people were without power. Some of these people were without power for up to 2 weeks.

I can tell the Members that from all I heard, that the first night or two in the shelter might have been kind of exciting. The seventh and eighth nights were not. People who were out of their homes for that length of time really, really suffered.

The other point I think I would make, the stories are wonderful. The gentleman heard and I heard stories of people who got generators and they put the generator on the back of a pickup truck and drove around from home to home, hooking the generator up and running it for about 3 hours to keep the home warm so that the pipes would not burst. That kind of action really prevented a much more severe reaction, because it was well below freezing, obviously, and we could have had major plumbing problems, in addition to all of these.

What this chart shows is how gradually, over a period of time, the number of customer outages were brought down. But the stunning thing about this chart is the number that you begin with, 275,000 households. Gradually it was brought down day by day until it was 2,000 on the 23rd of January, and then we got hit again, particularly along the coast, which had not been hit so hard before, and it jumped right back up to over 75,000. So this gives us some sense of the number of people who were affected.

I have to say this, one of the reasons that this number goes down the way it does is that we had help from all across the country, all across the country. We had new utility poles that were shipped to Maine from Oregon and Washington. We had electric crews coming to Maine from Delaware and Maryland and New Jersey and North Carolina and South Carolina, and Central Maine Power,

which normally has just under 100 utility crews available, at the peak of this storm had 1,000 crews out there clearing away the debris, the trees, repairing the wires, doing all of those things that they needed to do, 1,000 crews. Obviously, most of them came from outside of the State of Maine.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ALLEN. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I deeply appreciate his efforts in trying to provide this opportunity to help share with the American people a remarkable story, a remarkable story of crisis, and what we now see is I hope will be an equally remarkable story of recovery, and I would thank him for his efforts.

I, too, want to begin by adding my deepest words of condolence to those people in central Florida and on the coast of California that are now dealing with their tragedies, and certainly our collective hearts and thoughts and prayers are with them as they attempt to deal with that.

As the gentleman said, we are certainly anxious to work together with their Federal representatives to try to ensure that people across this country receive the kind of help, the kind of recovery assistance that they not only deserve but, frankly, they need.

I did not want to come down here and be totally redundant. As I listen to the two gentlemen recount their experiences, they sound very, very much like my own. Indeed, in my six-county district, about a 7,000 square mile area which most particularly was hit by the ice storm, more than 100,000 homes and businesses and public facilities were affected, totally without power.

As we know, they were not just without power, but in the dead of winter for each one of my six counties, as happened in the gentlemen's districts, they received a Federal declaration of disaster. What was rather interesting to us and made us perhaps somewhat unique, for some of my counties it was the third declaration of Federal disaster assistance in under 2 years. We feel we have done our part. By this time we are getting very good at responding to those, and we would like to take some time off before we meet that kind of challenge again.

It was a story of neighbor helping neighbor. I heard the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCIO) talk about how those of us who live in the northern climes are very proud of our ability to deal with winter. He is absolutely correct. I get amused when I come to this wonderful capital city and all it has to offer, where a mere prediction of an inch or two of snow could actually close facilities, close schools, and send people scurrying to the grocery store for provisions.

There was one time just last year where in my district in about 22 hours we received over 70 inches of snow. We

thought we had a North American record, but there was a dispute on measurement. But by any measure it was a significant amount of snow. That did slow us down a little bit, but we were able to overcome and to survive.

But we could not really imagine the difficulties that this ice storm, for all of our capabilities, all of our experience, could bring, and the challenges that it presented. It has been called the worst ice storm of the century. In spite of my gray hair I cannot attest to that personally, but I can say that in my lifetime I have never seen anything, absolutely nothing, that even begins to compare to this storm. The devastation was complete.

It is popular for people, particularly when they get their utility bills, to complain about power companies. Those of us who pay utilities understand that. But I think our hearts went out to those brave men and women who, as the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) said, came from literally all over the country and virtually every power company in the United States, sending people to give us a hand.

I remember one night, or one morning, actually, about 1:30 in the morning, I was leaving Plattsburgh, New York for what would normally be a 4½ hour drive back to my hometown in Pierrepont Manor, and I was passing through the middle of the Adirondack Mountains, and we were getting on top of the ice storm about 10 inches of new storm.

At 1:30 in the morning I drove by a number of power trucks lined up alongside the road, and on the printed panel were the words "Virginia Power Company." And I had to believe, as I saw those poor people up there in subzero temperatures, in a driving snowstorm, thinking about their old Virginia home, they must have thought they died and went someplace south of hell. But they never complained, they stood with us.

One of the more remarkable pictures I saw, and I believe it was taken in Maine, and yet I saw signs of similar natures throughout my district in response to those Virginia Power Company people, were the signs placed on lawns by grateful individuals that said, "Yes, Santa Claus, there is a Virginia," just saying thank you to the people of Virginia for sharing their recovery people.

Of course, those are stories that are not just particular to the power companies of Virginia, but all across this great Nation. It does, I think, reflect very, very remarkably upon Americans' ability and willingness to come together in times of challenge.

When the ice storm struck I was in Indonesia, which climatically could not be more opposite from my district. We were on a national security trip. I got the call about 2:30 Indonesian time about this storm. It was not quite clear yet the dimension of the challenge, although it became clear as the hours passed.

As I tried to make my way back home, which became an Odyssey of itself, I went to Australia to try to fly home. When I was there what they call a tropical cyclone hit. A community in Townsville, Australia, received some 20 inches of rain, was literally washed away, and was declared an Australian emergency disaster area. I was beginning to wonder if maybe it was me bringing all this bad luck.

On each stop we got calls as to what was happening. My staff and the people in the emergency management office were trying to describe to me the kind of devastation they had experienced. I thought I had a good idea. But as I got off the plane at Syracuse and drove north and got further into the eye of the storm, it really defied description. To see it still, with the cleanup, and to understand the challenges ahead, and the challenges are many.

The dairy community, who have particularly unique difficulties, because it was not always that the animals died, and they often did, but rather that their production capabilities had been severely hampered; that because of the inability to milk or the inability to store the milk properly, some 14 million pounds of milk had to be destroyed, money right out of the dairy farmers' pockets.

For the maple growers, as the gentlemen know well, in the Northeast, a vital part of the economy was destroyed, whole sugar bushes wiped out. The fact that it takes 40 years to raise a maple tree to maturity so it can be tapped again and become productive, all of these are unique circumstances that I know the gentlemen are anxious to work together with all of us to try to respond to.

We do have enormous challenges ahead of us. I do not want to leave on a negative note, because I think, for all of the difficulties, the old adage that every cloud has a silver lining holds here. That morning I woke up when there was more than 70 inches of snow. I asked myself a question that I suspect many of us ask, why did my ancestors stay, and why are we still here?

The ice storm asked that question again, but I think in a real way it answered it as well. We are here because in this remarkable part of the country people care more than they do in most places. They came together, as the gentleman said. They worked with the Federal and State agencies. But above all else, they worked and cared for each other.

I want to close on one little story that I think really encapsulates the spirit of the people across this entire Northeast region. We, as you gentlemen recounted, were visiting a number of shelters. This one was located in a volunteer fire company in not even a village, it was not big enough to be a village, it was a hamlet with a total population of less than several hundred.

The volunteer firemen and firewomen and womens' auxiliary of that commu-

nity had brought in cots from their own homes, had set up generators, and were feeding people. It was crowded and by most standards it was not very happy living conditions. There was one fellow there who, in spite of the effort being put forward by everyone else, I think was working harder than all of them combined. He was over here serving food, over here washing dishes. While I was there they brought in three people who had been overcome by carbon monoxide by a faulty kerosene heater in their home. He was helping administering first aid to them. Then he is back over cooking the next meal.

He finally stopped for a moment and we got to talking. And he started talking about the storm, and then another fellow told me, well, that man who had been working so hard to help everybody else, just 6 months ago had lost his son; and that very same man who was working so hard to help everybody else was on the verge of losing his prize horse, his breeding horse pair that he simply could not care for in this weather. That very same man who had lost his son, was about to lose his livelihood, had lost his home in a fire about 2 weeks previous to that. Yet this man was there.

When I asked him about that, he did not want to talk about it. He goes, well, these are the people that have it hard.

That is the spirit of the people of the north country, and through northern New York and Vermont and New Hampshire and Maine, that I think will carry us through, and how with all of our collective efforts we can put them back on the road to recovery. They need it, but I am darned sure they deserve it.

So I want to again thank the gentleman. I am pleased to join with my colleagues, and I see the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. BERNIE SANDERS), my neighbor from across Lake Champlain, and I am happy to carry a little of this message to the American people.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentleman from New York. That is a terrific story. It is that kind of spirit that the storm brought out in people all across this region.

Mr. Speaker, as the storm moved from New York, it went over to Vermont. I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman and my colleagues from Maine and New York for putting on this special order, and to say that we in Vermont intend to work with the gentlemen as hard as we can to try to help some of those people who have been hurt. I applaud the gentlemen for all of their efforts.

I think the stories that we heard from Maine and New York State and New Hampshire are certainly repeated in the State of Vermont. I have lived in Vermont for 30 years, and I do not recall seeing a weather disaster to the extent that we experienced in the northern part of our State.

The storm cut electric power to some 30,000 Vermont customers for as long as 10 days. As people know, it gets awfully cold in the State of Vermont. People had to make do as best they could without electricity. As the gentleman from New York indicated, this was an especial problem for our family farmers, who already have more than enough problems to try to contend with. This is just another problem on top of many others.

□ 1315

Without electricity to run their milking machines, many farmers obviously were unable to milk their cows. Because cows could not be milked regularly, there was widespread cases of mastitis developing, which is an inflammation of the udder. In some cases the cows died and had to be shipped for slaughter.

Farmers who did not have generators had no way to keep their milk cold and with roads impassable, it was not possible to ship the milk to producers. Thirty-seven dairy farms in Grand Isle County alone lost between 500,000 and 750,000 pounds of milk over the extended power outage.

In my State, and I am sure in upstate New York and in other regions of New Hampshire and Maine, family farmers are struggling very hard right now just to keep their heads above water and just to maintain their farms. This was a blow that they really did not need.

In terms of maple production, and obviously Vermont is well-known for maple syrup production, our maple producers were hit hard as well. Thousands of acres of sugar bushes were destroyed by severe icing. The storm is expected to cause a 10 percent drop in Vermont maple syrup production resulting in losses of millions of dollars to the State.

Farmers were not only hurt, but local communities were hurt. In the City of Burlington, we saw extensive damage to our trees. Burlington has a reputation of being one of the greenest cities in America and there has been substantial damage to our trees.

Utility losses due to down lines and poles total in excess of \$10 million, and the estimate is that farm losses totaled nearly that amount as well. But like the representatives from Maine and upstate New York and New Hampshire, Vermonters came together as we have not seen for many, many years, helping each other and doing the best they could to weather the storm.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues from Maine and the rest of the Northeast to make certain that we do everything that we can to try to help those people and those communities that were hurt. And I want to congratulate my colleagues from Maine for calling this special order.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) for his comments. We are back to this photograph that I had up

here before, just again to show the type of damage inflicted by the storm. I want to take just one minute to give people a sense of how different this ice storm was than anything that had ever hit the State of Maine in the past.

This chart shows the comparison of the ice storm of 1998 with Hurricane Bob in 1991 and Hurricane Gloria in 1985. Those are the two other major, major storms that took out electric power.

In phase one of the ice storm of 1998, 340,000 customers lost power. In phase two, it was 75,000. So we have a total of well over 400,000. Just about half that for the two prior hurricanes.

But look at the feet of cable that needed to be replaced. Two million feet of cable line needed to be replaced as a result of this storm, whereas only 52,000 feet of cable needed to be replaced with Hurricane Bob.

We had 2,600 telephone utility poles that had to be replaced. Telephone utility poles do not snap easily. That is pretty basic. We have never seen anything like this at all.

Transformers, 4,000 had to be replaced compared to 158 when Hurricane Bob struck in 1991.

The number of customers who reported an outage, here it was basically just about 650,000. We have 1.2 million people in the State of Maine. That was 649,000 customers or households. One hundred twenty thousand by comparison with Hurricane Bob.

There simply has been nothing like this in the past in Maine. And as I said at the beginning, this looked as if, it appears to be a storm designed by Mother Nature to take out the electric power grid.

One of the frustrations with the existing FEMA law and the existing resources are that the utility ratepayers in Maine may be looking at a substantial rate increase to pay for this storm because we have investor-owned utilities in the State of Maine and not community-owned electric utilities. And the result is that part of what we are asking for is some relief for those ratepayers.

We are not suggesting that investor-owned utilities should make a profit from an ice storm. They cannot. They will not. We will not let it happen. But it is fair when disaster relief would be available for certain kinds of customers from rate increases that it be available for customers in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York who are looking at significant rate increases simply to pay for a natural disaster that is unlike anything we have ever seen before.

That is really the reason why we are here talking about this storm, making sure that people all across this country understand that there is a great need for a supplemental appropriations bill to provide additional disaster relief, not just for Maine and New Hampshire and Vermont and New York, but also from what we can say on our television every day now in Florida and in California.

Mr. Speaker, with that, let me say one more thing. I just want to praise the media in Maine. The newspapers provided extensive coverage, but in addition to the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army doing everything they could, the radio and TV talk shows basically devoted substantial time, in a couple of cases around-the-clock coverage, so that people could call in and tell their stories and ask for help.

That was true of radio and TV talk shows. The Portland TV stations coordinated on a telethon to raise money for the Red Cross. There was a terrific response. And all across the State in Bangor and throughout the State, people really pulled together.

So we can be proud of Maine, but we also know that we need some assistance from the rest of the country. With that, I yield back to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCIO).

Mr. BALDACCIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) for his comments. As he has pointed out, in the stories that dealt with the media in particular, because our Maine emergency signal went down, our Maine Emergency Broadcasting Company was not able to televise and to give radio signals and broadcasts and it was the private enterprise radio stations, and particularly in central Maine and WABI radio and Voice of Maine, that were actually providing sort of Uncle Henry's Guide to what was available, where it was available, and pointing up the resources and matching up the resources.

So if somebody called in and needed a generator or somebody needed wood or needed some electrical help to do some work on the cables or whatever, somebody else would call in and say I can do that; I know who can do that.

We had so many, and it would take from here until the end of this legislative session to go through everybody, but particularly as the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) has mentioned, the media and private enterprise stepped forward in terms of making sure that our citizens got that information.

Particularly, I have to thank the Bangor Daily News, because they were continually putting on a scroll of the 800 numbers, the points of contact, and something that people needed, because they did not have television and in many cases there was no electricity, it was only radio that they had. But the daily newspaper was able to put out this information.

I kind of remarked earlier, the first night it can be kind of romantic without power. But after a while it wears thin. My son, who is used to looking at the TV and talking to me, actually had to look at me and talk to me. There were some benefits to not having the power. But after a while, it sort of wore thin.

People were melting snow to make showers. They were washing dishes that way. And as was mentioned, they were going around and the unfortunate

thing, again, as was pointed out, is that a lot of the Federal programs and resources are not set up to take care of the kind of ice storm that happened in Maine because of the way it hit and what it hit and because it was able to go into the heart of the transmission system and deny all of the citizens of the State of Maine power for up to 2 weeks.

We do not reimburse investor-owned utilities because we do not reimburse small businesses for their losses. We give them low-interest loans. But in this case we do not even give them low-interest loans. We say you do not qualify. The regulatory body says we are going to run it through the rate base so that people who are out of work, not able to get income, businesses who have lost income, dairy who has lost livestock and production and milk thrown out, now all of the sudden they get their electric bill and they are going to get an additional kick because it will be run through the rate base.

Mr. Speaker, that is just really not fair. And that is one of the reasons why we are working hard on a supplemental appropriation to pick up what slipped through the crack and to make sure that people have the opportunity, as the Federal program calls for it, rebuilding their lives so that we can stand together as a country and a community and as people.

I am so proud to be able to work with the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) and other Members in the Congress to bring this about. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we are able to do that before too much time and that we are able to bring that supplemental emergency assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for this time and I appreciate this opportunity.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues for being part of this special order. I want to end this with a small story about Bridgeton, Maine. I went up to Bridgeton, Maine, which was hit as hard as any other part of the State of Maine, and there was a woman there who owns a restaurant. She kept it open 24 hours a day for over a week to help feed the utility workers.

The utility workers, when I went and talked with them at CMP, the central main power station there, they came from New York and they came from North Carolina and South Carolina and Virginia and Delaware and Maryland, and the people of Maine were very grateful.

Maine people pulled together. We dealt with the worst natural disaster in our experience. We recognized that we are one community in our State and we pulled together and acted that way. But we also know that this country is one community, that we have to help each other and that that is why we will be asking for assistance through a supplemental appropriations bill.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Maine reserving this special

order so that we may speak about the devastating ice storm which swept through the northeast last month and paralyzed most of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Northern New York. It is ironic that as we speak today regarding our experiences from the storm which crippled our Congressional Districts, Florida has just endured a terrible tragedy with loss of life and California continues to be subjected to punishing El Nino storms. It is painfully obvious this winter's severe weather will test our abilities, patience and pocket-books.

In my New York 24th Congressional District alone, the storm toppled thousands of trees, grounded power wires, created flooding and left more than 100,000 homes, businesses, schools and other public and community facilities without power and communications in the dead of winter. The devastation was so severe that all six of my affected counties were declared federal disaster areas. For several of these counties, this was their third federal disaster declaration in less than two years.

For those of us privileged to represent the northeastern parts of the United States, we take a special pride in our ability to weather Mother Nature's onslaughts in the winter months. When a few inches of snow brings our nation's capital to a screeching halt, we collectively chuckle and boast that where we come from, it takes a lot more than a little snow to shut us down. Well, Mother Nature apparently felt it was time to bring us down a few pegs and so came the Ice Storm of '98.

When the ice storm struck, I was in Southeast Asia with some of my colleagues from the National Security Committee on an official trip. My staff quickly alerted me to the increasingly grave situation back home and the challenges the people of the North Country were facing. My first thought was to immediately get on a flight and return to the district. After extensive discussions with my staff, the twelve hour time difference forcing me to make calls well into the wee hours of the morning, I decided that initially I could do my constituents more good during those critical first hours of the recovery effort by working the telephone from Jakarta, Indonesia than spending the next 24 hours in the air. I immediately placed phone calls to our county emergency coordinators and several State legislators to find out where their needs were and what help they needed. I then placed a call to Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt to make him aware of the critical situation in the North Country. I also urged he act expeditiously on Governor George Pataki's forthcoming request for federal assistance. That phone call to Mr. Witt gave me some piece of mind because he assured me his people were already on the ground and would give the Governor's request for federal disaster assistance his strongest consideration. True to his word, President Clinton declared my six counties eligible for federal disaster assistance less than twelve hours after receiving Governor Pataki's request. This declaration freed up a number of federal resources for disaster assistance and recovery efforts for this we are very thankful.

I finally left Jakarta to return to New York, but had to make stops in three countries and wait out a monsoon before I was able to begin the long journey back. One local newspaper said I went from disaster to disaster. The devastating weather I encountered in Sydney,

Australia could not come close to the destruction I found when I go home.

It has been called the worst ice storm of the century. I am not sure if that is an accurate statement from a meteorological perspective, but I can tell you that in my lifetime in Northern New York State, there has been nothing, absolutely nothing, which can begin to remotely compare to this ice storm. The devastation wrought by this storm boggles the mind. Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation, the primary utility serving these six counties, saw its entire distribution system in the region destroyed. The company estimates it will cost approximately \$125 million for the clean up; the other utility serving the area, New York State Electric and Gas, estimates its storm-related costs at between \$35-40 million. These costs could ultimately be passed along to the consumer. Another legacy of the storm.

Ice, in some places four and five inches thick, coated trees and power lines. If the weight of the ice didn't bring the lines down, the falling branches did. Then, of course, the poles snapped. I witnessed destruction that can only be compared to that of a war zone. In fact, that military description was the most appropriate to describe the damage. It has been reported that when Vice President GORE toured Maine, he remarked that it looked like a reverse neutron bomb: the people are left standing but everything else is destroyed. In a matter of hours, all of Northern New York went black. For many people, it would be another two to three weeks before their power was restored.

In addition to the massive power outages, the fallen tree limbs, poles and utility lines, and ice covered roads, movement throughout the North Country came to a virtual standstill. Nothing moved and what ever did move, slid. The paralyzation of Northern New York was complete. With daytime temperatures rarely pushing past the freezing mark and nighttime temperatures occasionally dipping below zero, the discomfort level rocketed off the scale. A power outage which in the spring, summer or fall would have been a major disruption in lifestyles, in January became a matter of life or death. And for nine souls, it was a matter of death. Our hearts go out to their families at this most difficult time and we shall keep them in our prayers.

The loss of electric power had enormous repercussions simply beyond the inconvenience factor. As the third largest dairy producer in the nation, Northern New York is the state's largest dairy region. Without power, dairy farmers were unable to milk their herds. Those with generators—an instrument which, as the hours without power turned into days and then weeks, became one of the region's most sought-after and precious commodities—who were able to milk frequently had to dump their milk because the roads were impassable and the milk trucks were unable to get through to pick up their product. Those lucky enough to be able to milk and get their product to the producer were frequently confronted with the milk plant being without power. Although final figures are still being compiled, early estimates indicate approximately 14 million pounds of milk were dumped. In addition, because of their inability to milk the herds, or to milk on a normal schedule, many cows contracted mastitis, an illness which if not treated, can kill the cow. In many instances, the illness is treatable, but it will be many weeks, if not

months, before the cow is back on a regular production cycle. In the meantime, the farmer has lost critical production.

Our initial hope that the federal disaster declaration would speed assistance to our farmers was soon shattered as it became clear the Farm Service Agency's primary form of assistance was low interest loans. I was shocked. Federal programs to replace livestock losses or dairy production are either expired, do not apply to dairy farmers or non-existent. To these dairy farmers, many of whom are already operating on the margins due to a 20 year low in milk prices they are paid, the low interest loan program wasn't even an option. They simply can't afford it. Loans ain't gonna cut it for these folks.

The situation reminds me of a story of a guy who goes to see the doctor because he's not feeling very well. The doctor takes some tests and tells him to check back in a week. The guy goes back to see the doctor and the doctor tells him he has good news and he has bad news for him. The guy says, "Gosh, I guess I should have the good news first to prepare me for the bad news." The doctor says, "Okay, the good news is: you have three days to live." The guy says, "if that's the good news, then what on earth is the bad news." The doctor says, "the bad news is: I've been looking for you since yesterday to tell you." The story reminds me of the North Country right now because there hasn't been a lot of good news for the folks up there lately and what news there has been, hasn't been that good.

The maple syrup industry is also a critical component of the North Country's economy. The ice wreaked havoc on our maple trees causing either complete destruction or such severe damage the trees are effectively useless to the owner. Once again, final figures are still being compiled, but losses will run into the millions. I ask my colleagues to remember that it can take upwards of 40 years for a maple tree to reach maturity. In short, the North Country's maple syrup industry is crippled for the foreseeable future. To those who savor the simple pleasure of real maple syrup on your Sunday morning pancakes, get used to the imitation stuff.

The bushes which produce maple sugar, another important North Country commodity, were destroyed by the ice. In addition, Christmas tree farms and other tree farms sustained crippling damage. It will take years, if not decades, before the trees are restored and production reaches pre-ice storm levels. For these tree farmers, their livelihoods are as flattened and splintered as their trees.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on itemizing the destruction caused by this storm. Suffice it to say, it is widespread and long-term.

Further compounding the suffering many of my constituents have endured in the wake of this storm is the lack of Federal assistance programs available to many of our storm victims. Although the initial response to the disaster by the Federal government was swift, and at this point I should like to commend the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its New York State counterpart, the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), for their efforts, it has become evident there are significant gaps and shortfalls in assistance programs, especially those for dairy farmers and small businesses.

In cooperation with my colleagues from the three other states targeted by this storm, we

are identifying those areas most in need of assistance and working with Appropriations Committee staff to craft the appropriate language to meet those needs. Of top priority will be a dairy indemnity program to reimburse the farmers for the milk they lost. In addition, a livestock indemnity program is needed to help finance the loss of livestock from the storm, be it from weather or from illness caused by the power outages. Another priority will be a program to finance the replacement of trees destroyed by the storm. In the aftermath of this disaster, it is readily apparent that many Federal assistance programs are simply not adequate to meet their needs. I intend to work closely with the members of the three other state delegations and the appropriate committees to institute these changes.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to close these remarks on a note of doom, gloom and despair. I am immensely proud of the North Country's response to the storm. Once again, in the face of another adversity thrown at us by Mother Nature, and I must admit, this is starting to get old, the residents of the North Country pulled together and weathered the storm, figuratively and literally. In instance after instance, communities rallied together. Neighbors took care of neighbors, strangers came together and worked together as a team. Community and civic groups turned their posts or clubhouses into shelters or food pantries. Without being asked, these organizations took it upon themselves to come to their communities' assistance. Many incurred costs of several thousands of dollars in renting or operating generators or purchasing food. I am hopeful that all of these costs will ultimately be reimbursed. In short, it was a community effort and in a strange manner, it may well have been the North Country's finest hour.

Now that the immediate urgency of the crisis has passed, we must work together to ensure that all those who sustained losses from the storm are afforded the assistance necessary to begin the rebuilding process and be made as whole again as possible. The mission before us will be difficult, at times frustration, and certainly long, but I am hopeful that with the goodwill of the Members of this body, we will soon accomplish this task.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to once again thank the gentleman from Maine for this time and hope the lessons learned from this experience will better prepare us for nature's next challenge.

AMERICA'S MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE: SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. NEUMANN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to address the discussion that has been going on here on the floor so far. I think as we see the floods all across America and the ice storm certainly that hit up in Maine, I know the folks in our district are willing to lend a hand, as well as in a lot of the other parts of the country.

But as we begin this debate about a supplemental spending bill, that is spending outside the normal spending in Washington, I think it is very im-

portant that we do not just go and blow in the taxpayers' money; that we do not spend money without thinking where it is coming from.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleagues who are involved in this conversation that they find other areas of government that are less important and in order to provide the funds, the very needed funds there in Maine and in some of these other places across the country, I would like to encourage my colleagues to find other parts of the budget that are less important. And Lord knows, there is plenty of wasteful spending in this budget.

Find some of that wasteful spending, knock out the wasteful spending, and let us redirect those savings, the dollars we do not spend, into the programs that are necessary to help some of these people around the country. But for goodness sakes, let us not just go spend more money without knowing where it is coming from.

The only thing many folks like myself would ask is that we reprioritize our spending to take care of some of these areas that are in need of help in view of some of the floods that have occurred, whether it be California or Florida, or the ice storm up in Maine. Let us do what they need, but certainly let us find other programs where we do not have to spend the money in order to make up for it, as opposed to just going out and spending more of the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn our attention to what I think is the most important issue facing America today, or at least one of the most important issues, and that is Social Security. I would like to dedicate a good portion of this hour to Social Security, how it fits into the big budget, and where we might be going to solve some of these problems facing our Nation today as it relates to Social Security.

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First off, I think it is important that we understand the Social Security system and what is going on. For anybody out there in America or my colleagues, they are all paying taxes into the Social Security system. I think it is important that we understand how many dollars are coming into the Social Security system each year.

What I brought is a chart that shows the total revenues in the Social Security system this year is \$480 billion. The total amount that we are sending back out to our seniors in benefits is \$382 billion.

If you think about this like your checkbook and just for a second forget the billions on the end, if you have \$480 billion in your checkbook and you only spend \$382 billion or \$382, that works out pretty well. In fact, you still have money left in your checkbook.

The Social Security system today is working; that is, it is collecting more money than what it is actually paying back out to our senior citizens in benefits. The idea in this system is that