

is described as “more accurately delimiting the practical scope of the legislation.”

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today will correct this oversight in the current law. This important piece of legislation will amend the Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act to include the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. It will amend the definition of a State for the purpose of this Act to include all U.S. territories.

Again, I commend my good friends, the gentleman from North Carolina, as well as my friend from Virginia, for their extensive understanding and knowledge of this issue and the matter now before us. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from American Samoa, the leadership of the Judiciary Committee, and my friend from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) for bringing this measure to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COBLE. In closing, I want to thank Mr. SCOTT as well, and my good friend from American Samoa. ENI, I apologize for my having fractured the pronunciation of your name earlier. But folks, this is a good bill that addresses a formidable threat, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the bill and support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5934.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, November 14, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*The Speaker, H-232 U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on November 14, 2012, at 10:49 a.m.:

That the Senate agrees to House of Representatives amendment to the bill S. 743.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

#### EXTENDING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LADDERS TO SUCCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we're back, and America expects that we ought to be going back to work. And we have a heavy load ahead of us. We want to make sure that every American has the opportunity to climb up that economic and social ladder as high as they want to and can go. So we have to make sure that those ladders of opportunity are in place.

We also have to make sure that we are a compassionate Nation, that we're willing to reach out to those in our country who have been harmed by devastating natural disasters. We certainly saw this on the east coast, and I'd like to spend a good portion of this hour talking about how we, as a Nation, can respond to superstorm Sandy and the lessons that we should learn from this disaster.

□ 1320

It's not the first that has occurred in America, and it's certainly not going to be the last. In previous disasters, we learned a few lessons, but it seems as though we have yet to achieve the necessary wisdom from those occurrences to really put in place the policies that can protect Americans.

First, our sense of compassion drives Americans to reach out in many different ways to assist those on the east coast that were so severely harmed by this storm. Our condolences go out to the families of those who were killed in the storm. Our wallets open to the American Red Cross and other organizations that are providing assistance. We should do that and we should do more of that, but as a Congress there are things that we must also do.

Proposals have been made on this floor to reduce the effectiveness and the support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Not a good idea. It's very clear from the disaster on the east coast that a single city or State or even a region is unable to adequately address—whether in the lead-up to a disaster where there is warning or in the immediate aftermath of that—the necessary resources to assist and to recover. As a Nation, we need some mechanism to gather together all of the strength of this incredible country we call America and apply that strength to those who have been so severely harmed by that disaster. That's occurring. FEMA has clearly been significantly improved in the last 4 years and certainly since the tragedies of New Orleans, but there is much more that needs to be done.

As a Congress, as Representatives of the American people—people who may be in any part of this country and who at any moment could be affected by a disaster—we need to make sure that there is a national response capability in place that is ready to act with the sufficient resources. That's not just an organizational and administrative

issue. That is also the necessary funds available. Shortchanging that money that we set aside for those disasters can lead to a period of time in which inaction is inevitable.

So as we go about our budgeting, as we go about our appropriations process, we must make sure that we do not shortchange and that we provide enough money, that we set it aside and have it there, available for immediate response. It's not just the Federal response. It's those private companies and others that will be hired by the Federal Government or the States and cities to provide the necessary services.

There are many other lessons to be learned from superstorm Sandy and from previous disasters. Early warning systems are essential. Yet we have seen proposals here before the Congress, in the budgets and appropriations before the Congress, to diminish the ability of America to see ahead—to be able to predict storms or earthquakes or fires—by diminishing the money available for NASA in their satellite technology and other research capabilities that are out there by which we can learn well ahead of a disaster that it's coming so that we can then warn the citizens and take whatever precautions are necessary and implement whatever defensive systems may be required.

So it's not just the disaster. It's the preparation. It's the early warning—the ability to know what may be coming to harm the citizens of this Nation. As a Congress, we should be cognizant of the role that we play in providing the resources, the direction, and the authorization for those agencies that are able to have the technologies to perceive, to understand what may be coming to the citizens of this Nation and to those around the world.

Secondly, as individuals, it seems to me we ought to be paying attention, and when the authorities say it's time to leave, we really ought to do that. I was the insurance commissioner and Lieutenant Governor in California, and I often found myself in situations where I had responsibilities along these lines. All too often and all too tragically, the citizens who were warned early that they should leave because of a fire danger did not. Tragedy struck and they lost their lives. So we have individual responsibilities as well as community responsibilities.

There is another set of lessons to learn from superstorm Sandy and the drought in the Midwest and from other occurrences in the weather patterns of this Nation, which is that climate change is real. It is real. It is actually happening as we speak. We know that the great ice caps around this world are diminishing. We know that the ocean levels are rising. We know that there is a warming across the entire planet, and we know that this will have profound effects.

It was predicted back in the early nineties when I was working on this issue at the Department of the Interior as Deputy Secretary. We predicted that