workmanship. He would take pictures of these buildings and sculptures and loved to show them off.

He was a great fan of the Chicago Bulls and the Bears, and he never stopped praying that the Cubs would one day win another pennant.

Father Greeley wanted people to think of him as an honest and humble priest. But he was truly one of a kind. He touched and enriched so many lives.

I remember having lunch with him several years ago. He was just one of a kind—a Catholic priest who was part of the world and part of the world's conversation but still dedicated to his vocation.

I send my condolences to his sister Mary Jule Durkin, his five nieces and two nephews.

Father Greeley blessed us with his presence for many wonderful years. His passing is a great loss to the people of Chicago and to his friends and fans all over the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 12 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent to bring on to the floor and display a box of home keys, which I will explain in a moment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VITTER. Thank you, Mr. President.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, as is obvious, the people of South Louisiana have been through a whole lot in the last several years—Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita, many significant hurricanes since then, most recently Hurricane Isaac, and the BP oil disaster, to name just a few really trying tragedies.

But now, having survived all of that, having endured through all of that, many residents of South Louisiana think they face a challenge which is even greater and which is completely wholly manmade; that is, the challenge presented by new changes to the National Flood Insurance Program that many South Louisiana residents fear could make staying in their homes that they built, following all the rules every step of the way, unaffordable. That is a crying shame. We must avoid that happening at all costs.

First of all, let me underscore that I talk about the folks of South Louisiana because I represent them. They have been through so much. But this is a national concern which potentially affects tens of millions of residents all around the country, in every one of the 50 States. That too is a reason we must solve this problem.

Again, it is simple. When we reauthorized the National Flood Insurance Program last year, when we finally got past only renewing that program by fits and starts for a very short-term period, we put into the law several reforms that were supposed to make the program fiscally sound. However, as some of those reforms are beginning to be implemented, they threaten to produce sky-high flood insurance premiums that no one at the time we debated these changes—no one at FEMA, no one in private insurance, and no outside expert—forecasted.

These sky-high premiums, if they are allowed to happen, threaten two things: First of all, they threaten, as I said, many good, hard-working taxpayers, residents who have followed all of the rules every step of the way in building their homes, in renovating their homes, and buying flood insurance. They threaten their being able to stay in their homes. They threaten the affordability of living that big part of the American dream. Second, they threaten making the National Flood Insurance Program sound because if significant numbers of folks cannot stay in their homes, cannot afford flood insurance, cannot pay into the system and therefore leave the system, potentially turn over their keys to the bank, walk away, certainly leave the national flood insurance system, perhaps leave home ownership, that is a big defeat for the fiscal soundness of the National Flood Insurance Program as well.

About 2½ weeks ago I was in Bayou Gauche, which is a middle-class neighborhood in St. Charles Parish, LA, up the river from New Orleans. I stood in the driveway of a home owned by homeowners who are facing just this crisis, just this challenge. As I said a few minutes ago, they have survived a whole lot over the last several years: Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita to their west, many major hurricanes since then, including most recently Hurricane Isaac and the BP oilspill, the BP disaster. They have survived more than they ever imagined was possible in a lifetime. Yet now they are fearful that their greatest challenge is yet ahead. Their greatest challenge is completely manmade—the fact that some of these new changes to the National Flood Insurance Program could cost them their house, could make their staying in that solid middle-class neighborhood and in their house unaffordable.

When I was there, when we were talking about this challenge with many local residents and leaders, those homeowners presented me with this box of keys. It is pretty heavy, but I want the Presiding Officer and everyone on the floor to see it. These are hundreds of house keys that have been put in this box by homeowners who face the same threat, who say that if the right reforms and changes are not made, they are handing over these keys. They are handing them over to FEMA, they are handing them over to the Federal Government, they are handing them over to the bank because their homes will no longer be affordable. They have to have flood insurance if they have any mortgage. Virtually everybody has to have a mortgage to afford their house over time. If flood insurance rates go sky high and rates are really unaffordable, they will be handing over these keys for good.

They all know and expect that there are going to have to be changes to the program and some significant increases for the program to be fiscally sound and pay for itself. They are not arguing with that. I am not arguing with that. What we are arguing against is completely unaffordable premium increases, things that will literally drive middle-class families out of their homes and out of their neighborhoods and make their American dream completely unaffordable. That should not be allowed to happen. That should not be allowed to happen because it is wrong to give them that uncertainty and that future when they have followed the rules every step of the way as they existed under the National Flood Insurance Program, under their mortgage, under everything else. It should not be allowed to happen because it will mean we will never achieve fiscal sustainability if tens of thousands and potentially hundreds of thousands of people around the country exit the program as they are threatening to do.

We need to take action to be able to assure these homeowners that will not happen to them. With that goal in mind, I am pursuing several things.

First of all, some of this can and must be fixed administratively at FEMA. I have led several delegations to FEMA to talk about this, to demand that they do what they can under their authority—particularly under the so-called LAMP process—to make sure they get it right, particularly in drafting and issuing new flood maps. LAMP is the new process that is under way at FEMA under which they are supposed to take into account, in making new maps, all flood protections, all features that are there on the ground to provide homeowners under that terrain flood protection, even if it is less than a 100-year level of protection. FEMA is still in the midst of their LAMP process. They are not finished by a long shot. We have to make sure FEMA gets that right, builds all protection features into their new map before any of those new maps and any of those rates take effect. That is just the biggest example

of what FEMA needs to do to get it right, what they can do under their authority.

Part of this challenge is definitely administrative. That is why I have led those groups to FEMA and why FEMA needs to get it right. That is also why I will be presenting this box of home keys to FEMA later this week at the request of these Louisiana homeowners.

The other part of our challenge is that we get it right legislatively because, in addition to everything FEMA can and must do, there probably also needs to be changes to Biggert-Waters to ensure homeowners are not thrown out of their homes because flood insurance is now unaffordable. That is why I have teamed up with the senior Senator from Mississippi, THAD COCHRAN, in introducing the Vitter-Cochran measure to fix provisions in the National Flood Insurance Program. It will do several things, at least four that are significant:

First, it would ensure that communities that are developing new maps by the end of this year will be able to maintain the old grandfathered rates that are subject to change in section 207 of Biggert-Waters.

Second, the bill would allow a 5-year phase-in of actuarially sound rates for newly purchased homes to require a reasonable phase-in to those higher rates.

Third, the bill would authorize State and local governments flexibility to directly subsidize homeowners' flood-insured properties if that can be part of a solution as well.

Fourth, it would require that a minimum of 25 percent of mitigation funding go directly to homeowners in a given year for programs and help that directly impacts homeowners, such as home elevation.

I will be advancing that bill along with THAD COCHRAN and many other interested Members. We will also be looking for amendment opportunities to advance those ideas and those provisions as well. Certainly, I am joining with my other colleagues from Louisiana, from the Sandy-hit area in the Northeast, and from all parts of the country to advance these fixes.

Senator LANDRIEU has an amendment on the farm bill which is on the Senate floor now of which I am cosponsor, and I am certainly working with her and many other Members to get this fix, to get it done, to reassure these threatened homeowners that help is on the way. We need to do this. We need to preserve the American dream and treat these people right, not make their middle-class homes and middle-class neighborhoods all of a sudden, through no fault of their own, unaffordable. We need to do it for the very goal of putting the National Flood Insurance Program on fiscally sound footing because if we have tens or hundreds of thousands of residents exiting the program, turning their keys over, turning them in to FEMA, turning them in to the bank, the National Flood Insurance Program will never get to that fiscally sound basis. We will have people exiting the system, no longer able to pay premiums. We need to get it right for them. We need to get it right for the American dream.

I look forward to working with all of our colleagues in doing so because, again, I started at the beginning talking about what South Louisiana has been through—many hurricanes and the BP disaster and more. But this is not a parochial issue. It is not a Katrina issue. It is not a Sandy issue. It is far broader than this. This movie is coming to a theater near you. I urge Members to learn about that threatened impact on their constituents, on their homeowners, and to immediately join me and many others in this effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Texas.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I join others of our colleagues in mourning the passing of our friend and former colleague Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. Senator LAUTENBERG joined this body in 2003 for the second time. I was immensely struck by his tenacious work ethic and his deep-seated devotion to the people of his State, the State of New Jersey. These are attributes that would serve all of us well and served him well and are something to which we can all and should all aspire.

Senator LAUTENBERG's legacy will be forever woven in the fabric of America's history. His work on the new GI bill of rights has helped ensure that thousands of America's fighting men and women receive the support they need when they come home and the opportunity to become part of the next ''greatest generation.''

With his passing, the Senate has lost its final member of what we all know or have come to call, as Tom Brokaw did, the ''greatest generation,'' the World War II generation, the generation my dad served in as part of the Army Air Corps in flying B–17s in World War II, and my father-in-law, who landed on Utah Beach on the second day of the Normandy invasion. These were great Americans, and it is their sacrifice and the contribution they have made to our way of life that have made it possible for America to remain the envy of the world.

We are also reminded that our time in this Chamber is fleeting, and we should be humbled by that reminder.

There have been 43 new Senators who have come to the Senate since 2007 alone. The reason I counted is because that was the last time we took up immigration reform—a subject we are going to turn to perhaps next week. Forty-three new Senators since 2007. Perhaps we will have 44 by the time we turn to that topic next week. We are reminded it is our duty as Americans to ensure this Chamber will host future generations of great Americans as well.

As Senator LAUTENBERG goes to his rest, my prayer is that his loved ones can take solace in the fact that he played such an important part in the great American story with honor and integrity.

CULTURE OF INTIMIDATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the events of the last few weeks have thrown a spotlight on a culture in Washington which threatens the very fabric of what I just spoke about and that Senator LAUTENBERG fought for and contributed to, one that would hopefully instill confidence in the American people that what is happening here is in their best interest; that people realize we are the employees of the American people, here to serve their interests. That should be our primary focus.

Unfortunately, we have learned a culture of intimidation has arisen in Washington, and, unfortunately, it has become all too pervasive and threatens to become a cancer that cannot only destroy the public confidence in their Federal Government but also destroy the nature of our democracy itself.

We have learned that IRS agents—we don't know how many yet, but we do know that some—were deliberately targeting different political groups because of their political activities. Remember, this is activity protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. If it weren't for the political activity of the American people, we wouldn't have this great democracy which is the envy of the world. But we have learned the Internal Revenue Service was asking different groups inappropriate questions about their donors, their positions on various issues of the day, and the political affiliations of its officers and directors. We have learned these abuses went far beyond two rogue employees in the Cincinnati field office; that the IRS headquarters in Washington was involved as well.

Of course, the initial story that this was confined to a couple of self-starters and free agents in Cincinnati was laughable. We all know enough about bureaucracies to know that no one, particularly at a lower level to mid-level, instigates any sort of initiative as bold and as toxic as this without some sort of approval from on high, whether it is implicit or explicit.

We have now learned senior officials in the IRS knew about these abuses at least 2 years ago, yet failed to notify Congress or the public. We have learned that one conservative activist from Houston, TX, one of my constituents, Catherine Engelbrecht, was targeted by multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and OSHA.

We have also learned the Environmental Protection Agency is yet another agency that has discriminated