RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, July 29, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
Speaker of the House,  
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, today, the U.S. Senate voted to confirm me for the position of Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. As a result, I must submit to you herewith my resignation as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, effective as of 6 p.m. pdt on Tuesday, August 2, 2005. I have also written to Governor Schwarzenegger to advise him of my resignation.

Mr. Speaker, even more significant than the privilege of serving for 17 years in the House of Representatives has been the opportunity to serve with you in the elected Majority Leadership for the last 10 years. Thank you, again, for your friendship, your courage under fire, your wisdom, and your sterling example over so many years.

I very much look forward to continuing to work with you and serving the Nation in my new position.

Sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER COX,  
U.S. Representative.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, July 29, 2005.

Hon. ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER,  
Governor, State of California, State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA.

Mr. Speaker, today, I have been confirmed by the U.S. Senate for the position of Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Accordingly, I am writing to inform you that, effective as of 6 p.m. pdt on Tuesday, August 2, 2005, I will resign my seat as the Representative of the 48th District of California in the U.S. House of Representatives. I have also written to House Speaker Hastert to inform him of the timing of my resignation.

For the past 17 years, I have had the great privilege and honor of representing the people of Orange County, California in the House of Representatives. My service in the Congress has been a truly rewarding experience, and I am grateful to Orange County’s citizens for putting their trust and faith in me. As a member of the elected Majority Leadership and Chairman of three House committees, I have been especially privileged to have had the opportunity to work closely with you and our other elected California leaders on so many shared priorities.

Thank you, again, for your friendship and support. I look forward to continuing to work with you, and to serve California and the Nation in my new position.

Sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER COX,  
U.S. Representative.

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, July 29, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

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 July 29, 2005 at 6:50 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3512.

With best wishes, I am sincerely,
JEFF TRANDAHL,  
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to Clause 4 of rule I, the Speaker signed the following enrolled bill on Friday, July 29, 2005:

H.R. 3512, to provide an extension of authority for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes;

and Speaker pro tempore TOM DAVIS of Virginia signed the following enrolled bills on Wednesday, August 3, 2005:

H.R. 6, to ensure jobs for our future with secure, affordable, and reliable energy;

H.R. 1132, to provide for the establishment of a controlled substance monitoring program in each State.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS ARISING FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HURRICANE KATRINA, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it lie in order that, without intervention of any point of order to consider H.R. 3645 in the House; the bill shall be considered as read; the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage will have intervening motion on except: (1) 10 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit; clause 10 of rule XX shall not apply to the question of passage of the bill; and all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill and that I may include tabular and exer. Such the SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object, but I think it would be helpful for Members to understand that if this proposal is agreed to, and I expect it to be, that there will be 5 minutes of debate on each side of the issue, and then any Member who wishes to comment on an amendment must be made.

Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object, but I think it would be helpful for Members to understand that if this proposal is agreed to, and I expect it to be, that there will be 5 minutes of debate on each side of the issue, and then any Member who wishes to comment on an amendment must be made.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, we know the Members want to be heard so there will be a Special Order following the passage of the bill so that we can move forward with the paperwork and make sure the President gets this on his desk as quickly as possible.

Mr. OBEY. Continuing under my reservation, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that if this motion is agreed to, I do think that the situation in the Gulf Coast is serious enough that it warrants more than a dog and pony show and that it warrants some thoughtful discussion of how problems like this might be avoided in the future. I would simply say under my reservation that I have been horrified watching my television set over the past few days as I moved around my district in Wisconsin and seeing the absolute inadequacy of the Federal response to what has occurred. I would hope that the magnitude of the disaster which we have seen would make

H.R. 1332, to provide for the establishment of a controlled substance monitoring program in each State.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object, but I think it would be helpful for Members to understand that if this proposal is agreed to, and I expect it to be, that there will be 5 minutes of debate on each side of the issue, and then any Member who wishes to comment on an amendment must be made.

Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object, but I think it would be helpful for Members to understand that if this proposal is agreed to, and I expect it to be, that there will be 5 minutes of debate on each side of the issue, and then any Member who wishes to comment on an amendment must be made.

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Mr. Speaker, this legislation obviously has to pass, but I hope this represents just the beginning of some new thinking so that we do not wind up 3 or 4 years from now facing yet another problem as unprepared as we apparently were for this unfortunate and heart-rending incident.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not object, I want to say that I appreciate the fact that there will be a Special Order after this bill is debated where Members can say how we feel about it, but I think it is a futile debate. I think that there should be substantial debate on this bill itself, not that we want to slow down any kind of funding, but frankly we fiddled and faddled for days and days, and now we are told that we are only 3 or 5 days to pass the bill. I think it is wrong. I think Members of Congress who have rushed back here, who want to help, who want to make sure that the people of the Gulf are given their due and the money that they have the right to debate this bill now. We watch TV and we see the looters and much has been made about the looters who are coming and looting in New Orleans. I think quite frankly with the prices of gas rising, these real looters are the big oil companies. They are looting the American people. It is unconscionable that we have had a spike of 30 to 50 cents in gasoline prices 2 days after this disaster happened. There is no way that that could have been reflected at the pump so quickly. So it is looting the American public, and I think these are the issues that Congress should debate. I am glad that our Energy and Commerce Committee is having a hearing on this on Wednesday, but the American people ought to hear Congress debating this. What are we going to do to bring relief to our people with these huge and unconscionable gas price increases? We are doing nothing. We are fiddling while Rome is burning. So while I say that it is very important that we are passing this legislation quickly today and we should be doing this, I wish that we had had hours of debate on this, yesterday or today. It should not be the case where we have 10 minutes of debate because we quickly have to get the bill to the President. We need to get the bill to the President as quickly as possible but Congress needs to debate the issues of the day.

While I will not object because we have to get the relief to the people of the Gulf, the fact is that Congress needs to debate the issue of high gas prices. Our constituents all across America are suffering. Huge companies are making record profits. Frankly, they ought to turn some of those profits back to the American people to try to keep the price of gasoline down. This is all tied in, and how dare they do anything like that. We should not have this tragedy to loot the American people and to spike the prices of gasoline higher and higher.
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We have come together today, for all of us in the House of Representatives, know that words are not adequate to begin to deal with this horrendous natural disaster that has beset all Americans but particularly those people in the region of the Gulf.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak extensively here today but to say that the bill is designed to make sure that all of us understand that America will respond to this tragedy. Money is not going to make the difference in this. This bill provides for $10 billion to make sure that FEMA has enough flexibility and adequate dollars will be available to flow in the very near term as we really assess the cost moving forward. This will not be the last time we discuss this issue, this financial strain and also the horrid strain it is placing upon those Americans who are directly affected. The bill beyond that provides $500 million that will also be available for the Department of Defense to, in a flexible fashion, be of further assistance in this tragic disaster.

With that, I hope that the Members will participate in the Special Order that will follow this very brief debate in order to make sure that there is a complete airing as the House would seek its will.

Mr. Speaker, words cannot begin to describe the toll Mother Nature has taken on the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The levels of desperation and human suffering in the region are unlike anything we have seen in our country. I do not intend to take much time today for the need in the affected region is so great. This is not a time for words or political rhetoric. It is a time for action. We need to move quickly, to save lives, and help the people of the region get back on their feet. The President has promised an unprecedented level of immediate aid. Congress is backing that promise.

The destruction that has overtaken New Orleans and the Gulf Coast will require months, and even years, of intense effort to recover and rebuild. It will take nothing less than a domestic Marshall Plan to rebuild new roads, homes, and businesses. On this point, let me be very clear: Rebuild, we must. Rebuild, we will. Congress and the Bush administration is one-hundred percent committed to the rebuilding process and today’s action is the first step.

I am certain, being used for procurement, personal. They will eventually wind up, I am certain, being used for procurements, their checkbooks to organizations like the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. I encourage my colleagues and our citizens to do the same in the days and weeks ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, by way of explanation, this bill provides $10.5 billion, $10 billion of which will go to FEMA, half a billion dollars to DOD. It provides for relief efforts for the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane. The funds to DOD will go to the operation and maintenance account with broad transfer authority. They will eventually wind up in being used for procurement for housing and matters like that. The funds for FEMA may be used for any traditional purpose under the FEMA legislation, including public assistance, shelter, food, etcetera.

Let me simply say that I hope that we recognize this is just the initial downpayment in the costs that are going to be associated with this incredible disaster. I would also hope that we would recognize that we have for a long time been making inadequate investments in activities that would even lessen the impact of disasters such as this, and I would hope we would recognize that values such as preventing this
Mr. Speaker, I would urge support of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. Pelosi), the minority leader.

Mr. Lewis, who knows firsthand as do the gentleman from California (Mr. Lewis) understood at the time and said, Last night there was an emergency center to help people get help. The list goes on. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. Jefferson) saw his whole city practically get wiped out. But I am sure that everyone on each side of the aisle has stories that they know firsthand. The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. Thompson), the ranking Democrat on our Committee on Homeland Security who knows full well what our capability is as a country and what an attack this is of nature and therefore what more we need to do to get this all done. The list goes on. There are many heroes in this.

So when I hear my distinguished colleagues and the gentleman from California (Mr. Lewis), say that we cannot have a full debate on this, we will just do it as a Special Order because we have got to get this to the President right away, there is a false assump- tion to have this special session of Congress much earlier this week, because it was clear that although we did not have all of the facts, we knew that people were hurting very badly in our country, that there was a need for additional resources, and it was important to bring the considerable talent on both sides of the aisle together in Washington, DC to make a judgment about the facts and to allocate the resources.

Just a couple of days ago it was thought that there was enough money to cover until next week, until we came back. So what? As it turns out, that was not a correct assessment. But even if it had been, why should we not have been here to give hope, to give in- spiration if we are capable of that, but at least to remove all doubt in every- one’s mind that this is the first order of business for us and that is to protect our people and try to make them whole in time of disaster.

But we are here, and what we need to do and what we need people to hear is the strongest bipartisan cooperation, whatever the timing, on how we ad- dress their needs. Their needs have been referenced in terms of energy. En- ergy is important, not just at the pump, although let me say about that, pos on those who would price gouge at the pump to our people in our country who are already suffering from debili- tating prices at the pump that enable some to get to work, and now in this tragic time we do not want matters made worse with price gouging and there will be a price to pay for that. But energy for many reasons. Energy to get product, ply- wood, whatever it is, to where it is needed, to rebuild in the Gulf States, energy to keep the lights on, too. Such a high percentage of people, there are just 5 million, people without electricity as we gather here today. Two million homes, 5 million people without electricity as we gather here.

Energy, and I know others will ad- dress it more specifically, is a very im- portant part of this, and especially since the Gulf States are such an important source of production and transport of energy to the rest of the country.

Our children. Think about the chil- dren. Right now they are supposed to be starting school. Instead, they are starting to wonder where their homes are, where their loved ones are, if their parents have jobs and if indeed they even have a school to go to. We have an enormous task ahead of us. Our children will forever be marked by the traumas of this hurricane. But we quickly take them to a place that says, there was a tragedy, people responded, you were considered a priority. Hope- fully, they will get through. My own grandchildren who live in Houston and see these children coming into the Houston area, Mr. Speaker, your area, they are becoming afraid of rain. If it rains, will our house be washed away? Just after 9/11 when kids were saying if a plane goes overhead, should we be afraid of that? We must reassure our children and eliminate the traumatic effect on top of the physical displace- ment that they are suffering here.

So whatever the allocation of these resources are, I hope it is enough. And if it is not, again with the facts as our friends, we must allocate the resources to make sure these children are in school.

I was telling some of the leaders yes- terday in a conference call that when I visited Macedonia, at a place in the Balkans, when these children were displaced and they did not have any classroom situation, it compounded the terrible experience that they had until a school situation was created for them. Think of what this is going to mean with people who have been sent to other States. How are those schools going to absorb all of these children even within their own States, but in two different school districts. In the al- location of our resources, we must allocate the resources to make sure these children are in school.

That takes us to the significant pub- lic health issues that we are facing there. Dead bodies floating in the water, some say that is not a danger. I do not know. It sounds dangerous to me. The chemicals that are in the water. There are so many things that we do need the facts on. So it is not a question of speculation. What are the facts? What is the public health chal- lenge? How do we allocate the resources to stop that imme- diately, because if our children are sick and they see death around them, much
of the rest that we do is not going to seem as relevant.

We know that the list goes on. Shelter, people losing everything. I can tell you from my earthquake experience, and this is a little discouraging, you really are never made whole. The history of your family, the photographs, the sentimental attachment that you may have, some of that is just now to be forgotten. But if we cannot make them all right in the same way, we certainly have to give people hope in a new way that the life that they will lead will be something that not only replaces, but enhances, their experience, because they have been through a lot and in our perfect union we embrace each other as people of America, we have to do so in a way that honors the social compact between the people and the government.

That is the way people. It does not mean people who have the wherewithal to get away to a second or third home. It does not mean people who can get helicoptered out, and God bless them for their success in being able to do that, but we cannot promise them for taking that route. But it does mean that if people are left behind because of their economic status, then that is wrong. That is wrong and that is not something that this $10 billion should support.

We must, if this is not enough, do more. It is all an investment. It will cause an economic growth in the region as we rebuild, creating jobs, giving hope, bringing people home that I think will more than return to the Treasury, and in our perfect union we embrace each other as people of America, we have to do so in a way that honors the social compact between the people and the government.

Let me say that there are many heroes in all of this. I named some of our colleagues, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON), the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), those whose experiences I know firsthand. The list goes on and on. Again, others will speak from their firsthand experience about it. But the biggest heroes of course are the people on the front lines all the time working very hard. I would hope that as we did in our earthquake situation, and forgive me for keeping returning to it, but it is an experience that we thought was the most desperate until we saw what we are seeing now, and this goes beyond anything I think that anyone can imagine, that the disaster assistance centers must be established, that people have to know what they have a right to in terms of their assistance and that what people have a right to in terms of recovery, in terms of SBA loans and the rest of that.

There are some things in place that can help people right away if we can get FEMA in place to help them. But again we must remove all doubt that we are there for all people. It cannot be viewed as for those who will receive assistance, that we will support, and by the wayside. This issue of social justice, of economic justice, of the economic life of a city, of a State that rests on the fullest participation of all of its people must respond in the fullest way to all people.

I will say once again that I regret we could not have come here sooner with fuller participation of Members who have, again on both sides of the aisle, enormous experience in public health and energy issues and housing issues and education issues and the rest; but let us say that we get this running start now, and I have asked the Speaker that when we come back next week with the full participation of our membership that we establish a hurricane task force that would include the ranking members, the chairmen of the committees of jurisdiction relevant to this emergency relief and recovery and that that task force will immediately move forward in an expedited manner and not be slowed by usual business as usual, but instead again give hope to these people.

Again, I associate myself with what the gentleman from Wisconsin said. Even 4 years later after 9/11, there are still many things that have not been done, that have been clearly indicated are necessary. We have the resources to do it. It is just a question of priorities. That takes us to what this is about, what our priorities are as a country. How we allocate our resources is a statement of our values. As we leave here today and we go forward in the weeks ahead, we must make sure that everyone understands that a statement of our values is to form a more perfect Union by all of its people and not having half a loaf when they are all Americans and entitled to full recovery.

If we can spend $20 billion on reconstruction in Iraq, we can certainly use that as a start on reconstruction in America. I say that with the fullest appreciation for the importance of the reconstruction of Iraq. I respect that is important to stability there, I respect that it is important to stability here, for us to do that. Again, I wish we were here sooner. We are not. Let us go forward. Let us do it in a bipartisan way. I think the last thing that the American people need to see is any kind of partisan bickering about how we go forward, but nonetheless we have to have a strong commitment to these people.

In the Bible, Isaiah tells us that to minister to the needs of God’s creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the one who made us. Let us make the work that we do here an act of worship to the God who made us and an act of respect for the people who sent us here.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the distinguished majority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. We are dealing with perhaps the most natural disaster in our nation’s history. Residents of the Gulf Coast States affected by the hurricane have lost loved ones, have lost homes, have been displaced from their communities, not just by the thousands or the tens of thousands, but by the hundreds of thousands and by the millions.

I am committed and I hope we all are to making sure that we have the full support of the Federal Government, that they have the full support of the Federal Government to get the responses they need to begin to recover and rebuild from this catastrophe.

I also understand that the Federal Government is only part of the answer. The severity of this tragedy demands something from each of us. We must answer the call to personally give to those most in need. The American people are generous, and we know that Americans will come to the aid of those in need. While our thoughts go out to those who are suffering in the loss of this catastrophe, it is also true that we will respond in an organized manner, addressing the most urgent needs first.

It has been said in the last few minutes that we should have had this session earlier this week. But being here yesterday, I believe at 4 o’clock yesterday afternoon, the number that we decided we needed today was bigger than it was at 12 o’clock yesterday. We were hopeful that of course we could go until Tuesday based on funding that was available and come back and deal with these problems as they need to be dealt with.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, you and others have directed the committee chairmen to do everything they can to move forward on every front, to look at where their committee might make the best recommendations to this body. That is why today we are passing this supplemental to get FEMA through the process of next week.

We all need to be committed to making sure that the people affected will have the full support of the Federal Government. We need to look at what has happened to States whose revenue base has been decimated. We need to look at what is happening to our economy. We need to do our job. We need to do it in a manner that is not partisan, and we need to move forward to take this first step today.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close the debate on this measure and in doing so suggest that those who are looking with interest that one of the great things that has happened in recent years is that we often televised
Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, our country is once again devastated by a tragedy and our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and families of those who have been affected by this storm. I would like to wish the best to the Members of this House and their staffs from the affected areas; our prayers are with you and your families as well. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize and praise my constituents in El Paso, Texas, like many other citizens, who have begun to organize efforts to send relief to those in need. Just yesterday, I helped kick off an initiative being called “48 Hours of Giving”, a joint effort by the El Paso Sheriffs Department, the El Paso chapter of the American Red Cross, the El Paso Salvation Army, and Bassett Place to raise money to help victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The El Paso County Sheriff’s Department has also offered to send their Search and Rescue team to the area to provide assistance and the El Paso chapter of the American Red Cross has offered to help with the care of the victims. The site for the emergency shelter has been set up at the El Paso County Coliseum and the Salvation Army is working with members of the military to provide assistance. The site is expected to be open within 24 hours. The American Red Cross has set up an emergency shelter at the El Paso County Coliseum and is providing assistance to those who have been affected by the storm. The Salvation Army has also set up an emergency shelter at the El Paso County Coliseum and is providing assistance to those who have been affected by the storm. The site is expected to be open within 24 hours.

We have many good reasons for concern about the response to this crisis. First, the Speaker should immediately create a Task Force or Special Committee to help ensure that the hundreds of billions of dollars that will be spent in the coming weeks and months will be spent wisely and efficiently.

Second, Congress should provide additional resources to the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to help ensure that the hundreds of billions of dollars that will be spent in the coming weeks and months will be spent wisely and efficiently. We have detailed instance after instance of contractor deficiencies, fraud, waste, or fraud, lax oversight and management, procurement shortcomings, blurred lines of accountability. Pentagon investigators found over one quarter of a billion dollars in unacceptable or unsupported charges by Halliburton with little oversight or accountability. Pentagon investigators found over one quarter of a billion dollars in unacceptable or unsupported charges by Halliburton with little oversight or accountability. Pentagon investigators found over one quarter of a billion dollars in unacceptable or unsupported charges by Halliburton with little oversight or accountability. Pentagon investigators found over one quarter of a billion dollars in unacceptable or unsupported charges by Halliburton with little oversight or accountability.

In addition, the case of the U.S. government spending in Iraq is instructive in what we don't want to do in the hurricane areas. While I agree that it is important to provide for the welfare of our own people. It is unconscionable that we are not taking care of our own, and that there are still Americans who have not been fed or sheltered or reunited with their families for five days now. It is embarrassing that this mighty nation that sends relief around the world has failed its own people so miserably.

I hope that this House and this government can rebuild our own devastated areas with the same enthusiasm and resources dedicated to rebuilding governments and nations abroad. As the President and Mr. Speaker state, Hurricane Katrina is the largest natural disaster in the United States in decades, impacting large parts of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. There has been enormous damage to homes and businesses in the Gulf Coast region, as well as a significant loss of human life. Both the mayor of New Orleans and the governor of Louisiana now estimate that the number dead in New Orleans alone could be in the thousands. That estimate, if correct, would make Katrina the nation’s deadliest natural disaster since the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, which killed up to 4,000 people.

As co-chair of the Congressional Hazards Caucus, I unfortunately know firsthand how damaging natural disasters can be. While I am devastated by the enormity of this tragedy, I know that our faith, tenacity, and determination ensure that we will work, as a Nation, to do all that we can to stem the crisis and help those in desperate need. Therefore, I rise today in full support of Congress’s initial payment for disaster relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

This supplemental appropriations bill contains $10 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and $500 million...
for the Department of Defense, for a total of $10.5 billion in relief aid. This funding is desper-
ately needed. Currently, FEMA is spending $500 million a day to aid victims. If this supple-
mental spending bill is passed, the $10 bil-
lion allotted to FEMA will enable it to assist the people affected by the Hurricane Katrina and its re-
sultant flooding. The funds will focus on critical areas, including public health and sanitation,
public safety, housing, energy supplies, na-
tional transportation infrastructure, commerce,
and the safety and adequacy of food supplies.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina and are turn-
ing to their elected representatives for as-
sistance. We must do all we can to ensure an immediate and thorough response to these needs, and I fully support the $10.5 billion supplemental appropriation for disaster relief.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speak-
er, “National Preparedness Month,” an initia-
tive of the Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross to “encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools,” was proclaimed by the President on September 1st. As Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I serve as the Honorary Congressional Co-Chair.

I was filled with sadness and disbelief when a press release from the Department came across my desk on Saturday announcing the initiative, saying that it would help Americans take simple steps such as “get a kit, make a plan, be informed, and get involved.” The release seemed hollow and inappropriate in light of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and my home State of Mississippi.

My message to the Department and others in government is simple: we will need more than a few emergency kits and press releases to ensure that our Nation is adequately prepared to respond to a natural disaster or ter-
rorist attack.

Hurricane Katrina was an unprecedented natural disaster, but to government officials tasked with protecting our Nation’s commu-
nities, it should not have been a surprise.

Risk assessment reports long told us that the Gulf Coast was in danger. The New Orleans Times-Picayune did a series of articles as early as 2002 about the risks to New Orleans from a hurricane. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created re-
ports and conducted exercises on Gulf Coast preparedness and response issues. Yet, it pains me that here we are a week after the hurricane struck with potentially thousands of deaths, communities razed, a city underwater and under siege, and gasoline shortages and price gouging across the Nation.

From what I am seeing here in Mississippi, our government failed in both its preparedness and its response to this disaster. I also believe that if terrorists, rather than a hurricane, had attacked the Gulf Coast—the result would have been no different.

It appears our preparedness plans did not anticipate that thousands of people would be stranded in a stadium or convention center. Or that citizens would be roaming the streets begging for food and water and seeking shel-
bter wherever they can find dry spots—as they’re doing in Mississippi. This is whatbara

Instead of a well-prepared plan, victims have had to rely on ad hoc charity from cities with big hearts such as Houston that are opening up venues to house now-homeless evacuees.

I have even heard that people are being put on two-day bus rides to Washington, DC, for shelter. While Washington should be com-
mented for opening the DC Armory to victims, I wonder if they’re doing anything to put evacuees who have lost everything on buses for several days so far from what might be left, if anything, of their communities.

How will families and friends of these evacu-
es know how to find them? The same could be asked of those who are being turned away from the Astrodome and moved on to Dallas or San Antonio.

I also wonder how an electrical outage could take down such critical infrastructure as two oil and gas pipelines servicing a large section of the country? In 1998, President Clinton issued a presidential directive that re-
quired the government to look at pipeline and electrical grid security. In December 2003, President Bush issued a homeland security di-
rective that repackaged the government’s ef-
forts.

The last several years in Congress, we have continually heard that the administration and private sector are working to secure our critical infrastructure. Yet, a power outage managed to cripple the pipelines, resulting in skyrocketing gas prices across the Nation. And overnight, gasoline prices saw gas prices rise 40 cents, others $2.00.

What message does this send to terrorists if our petroleum systems are so vulnerable? I also wonder what extra steps the Federal Government and the energy sector are taking today to ensure that these facilities are bol-
stered against attack from terrorists who might try to exploit the current situation.

Despite the increasing threat of hurricanes, especially this year, our government continued to cut the funding of the Army Corps of Engi-
neers, thereby cutting the funding for flood control projects. In 2005, President Bush only requested $3.9 million for the floor projects in New Orleans, although the Army Corps of En-
gineers said it would be able to spend $20 million if the funds were only provided. Con-
gress increased the funding to $5.5 million, which still was insufficient to fund new con-
struction contracts to secure the levees. For Fiscal Year 2006, the President has asked for even less, requesting only $3 million. Allowing dams and levees to remain vulnerable to dis-
aster and attack simply is unacceptable.

The administration must focus on the very real threats to our communities, towns, and cities if we are to secure our Nation. Pre-
paredness is our prime defense against nat-
ural disasters and terrorist attacks. What Americans want to know is what hap-
pens when our government fails to prepare. Natural disaster or terrorist attack—our gov-
ernment must do better. We all deserve better.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States is facing one of the most dif-
cult challenges in its history, and I applaud the Congress for acting swiftly to introduce and pass H.R. 3645, a bill that will provide $10 billion in relief money to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to bring relief to the victims of Hur-
ricane Katrina. As the Representative of the Tenth Congressional District of Harris Har-
riss County, the local government that has given the most support to the displaced resi-
dents of New Orleans, LA, Alabama, and Mis-
sissippi, this supplemental appropriation has tremendous meaning and value.

The Washington Post called the effect of Katrina “[t]he largest displacement of Ameri-
cans since the Civil War reverberated across the country from its starting point in New Orle-
as and Louisiana. At least 1.5 million people uprooted by Hurricane Katrina sought shelter, sustenance and the semblance of new lives.” Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this ap-
propriation because it is a very important first step to other very necessary steps to address the direct effects on Florida, Alabama, Mis-
sissippi, and Louisiana and the indirect effects on local governments that have stepped up to provide solace, safe haven, and hope such as my District of Houston, Texas and Harris County. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the City of Houston, its teams of first responders, and the compas-
sionate taxpayers who exhibited leadership in spiritual, physical, and economic assistance to their brothers and sisters from Louisiana.

I am disheartened by my colleagues among us who ask the question of what sense it makes to spend billions of dollars to rebuild a city that lies six feet below sea level. As leaders of the legislative branch of the federal gov-
ernment and as the people responsible for making policy, we must not to show insensitivity or the semblance of arro-
gance since our own family members or close friends are not among the sufferers of this his-
toric tragedy. Today’s Houston Chronicle reads “Weary refugees grateful to arrive at resting place: The next step for many is an up-
family members.” “[1] Thousands of dis-
placed persons—this time not in the context of Sudanese refugees but American refugees, have been bused and helicoptered from New Orleans to Houston’s Reliant Astrodome where some are now abused, raped, and as-
saulted because many of these individuals no longer have hope. Ten billion dollars is hardly enough to restore lives that have been lost, medical records that float in what used to be New Orleans, or homes where memories were created.

As a member of the Committee on Home-
land Security, I am pleased that, through the lessons learned from the attacks on 9/11, this Nation is at least well-versed on centralizing resources and manpower to respond as quick-
ly and strongly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I support this very critical leg-
islation, and I hope that my colleagues will show their compassion by joining in this sup-
port.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to provide $10 billion in emergency supplemental appro-
priations for the relief effort in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Without question, this ap-
propriations bill is only part of the funding needs along the Gulf Coast and will most likely be only the first installment of fed-
eral funds dedicated to this devastated region.

As Houstonians learned in June 2001 during Tropical Storm Allison, it takes quite a while to assess the damage and determine just how much is needed to repair that dam-
age after a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina. We remember all too well the flooding and destruction that Houstonians endured dur-
ing Tropical Storm Allison. The memory of our pain and frustration during that time puts Houston in a unique position to empathize with and help our neighbors in Louisiana, Mis-
sissippi, and Alabama.
Houstonians are selflessly rising to the occasion and helping hurricane victims in need. Our hospitals within the Texas Medical Center are using their resources to evacuate the critically ill in Louisiana’s hospitals and have done an admirable job of reunifying evacuated patients to their homes. The good Samaritans and members of our community are coming out in droves to volunteer, to help in any way they can. And our schools are opening their doors to the children of Hurricane Katrina, so that the devastating events of the past week will not threaten their education and the bright future that lies ahead of them.

As we applaud the overwhelming generosity of the people of the Houston area—as well as communities all across the country who are coming together to provide much-needed help—it is critical to remember that the responsibility for relief ultimately lies with the federal government. There is no question that the federal government was unprepared for the kind of devastation that has ravaged Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. As we support the local governments who have, without hesitation, stepped in and played a tremendous role in the relief effort, we must ensure that the generosity of these communities is met with a federal commitment to reimburse them for the expenses they’ve incurred as good Samaritans.

Across our country, American hearts ache as we witness the extreme suffering of our fellow Americans in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. I am proud to support this $10 billion disaster relief bill, which will be the first step in helping our brothers and sisters to rebuild their lives. Yet as we sympathize with their plight, it is impossible to deny that a majority of Katrina’s victims fell through the cracks of our country’s safety net long before the hurricane hit land. The faces of Hurricane Katrina will long be branded in our memory. Let us not forget those faces as we address future issues facing our country’s safety net—a safety net that we know all too well can mean life or death for the disadvantaged in our country.

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, the ongoing scenes of devastation and despair caused by Hurricane Katrina are heart-wrenching and unprecedented in our Nation’s history. We must and will unite in a national effort to assist our fellow citizens in these hours of overwhelming need.

Our condolences and prayers go out to all individuals who have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina, especially those who have lost loved ones in this horrific tragedy. Passage of this legislation makes it clear that all members of Congress, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike, are indeed united in our prayers for and commitment to the victims of this devastating event. We are also united in our admiration of the military and emergency services personnel who are working tirelessly to save lives and maintain order. Their heroic efforts, matched with the outpouring of support from the American people, are a testament to the character and compassion of our people.

While the days, weeks, and months ahead will be long and difficult, our Nation will meet this unprecedented challenge with unwavering determination, compassion, and courage. May God watch over the victims of this tragedy during this time of tremendous loss and suffering.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, my deepest condolences go to the victims of Hurricane Katrina who have lost their lives, their homes and their livelihoods. For many, it did not have to be this way.

I represent south Florida, an area with a great deal of experience with hurricanes. Frankly, the planning and response efforts I have observed in the past have taught me that the Federal Government leaves my confidence in our ability to respond to any kind of domestic disaster shaken and makes me fear for my constituents should a hurricane, or other disaster of this magnitude strike south Florida.

If there are some serious questions to be asked: Why with several days’ notice about this storm, were more people not evacuated? Where was the plan to evacuate people who did not have the money or ability to evacuate themselves? When the size and strength of the storm was known, why wasn’t a response team in place to go into affected areas immediately? Why was Federal funding to reinforce the levee system cut when it would have saved thousands of lives and billions of dollars? And, given that this disaster was the first large scale test of the new Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, does this new structure improve or hamper disaster prevention, response and relief?

Yesterday morning, President Bush went onto NBC’s Today Show and made the following statement about the lives of the people of south Florida. ‘‘President Bush’s statement shows a complete lack of understanding of, and insensitivity to, the plight faced by so many of the grandparents and toddlers, or why those families died or are now suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The United States Census Bureau reports that in 2004 over 23 percent of the population of the city of New Orleans was living at or below the poverty level. The poverty level is $12,334 a year for a family of two, or $19,307 a year for a family of four. Mr. President, when a husband and wife only make $12,334 they very likely do not have a car, or money for gasoline, or even money for a bus fare to get out of town. It was not a matter of wealth rather than the President, a mistake on your part that you did not have a plan to evacuate these families from the path of imminent danger.

One thing is very clear; poor planning, and a slow response to an imminent disaster has cost hundreds of people their lives and hundreds more will die if the Government does not significantly increase its response. Even today, there are over 200,000 National Guard troops that have not been called up to help in the relief efforts. Even today, the Navy’s Hospital ship Comfort remains in Baltimore Harbor, and will not sail until Saturday and will not set sail for the Gulf until Saturday and will not reach the Gulf for a week after that.

Our government must be better prepared to plan and respond to disasters of every kind in this country. But for right now, we must mobilize the increased resources of the Federal Government and respond to this crisis in a manner that recognizes that people are dying as we speak because not enough has been done to help them.

Ms. MILLER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 225 and ask for its immediate adoption so that the people of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama can get the relief they sorely need through funding from the Federal Government.

I offer my prayers to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and my thoughts and condolences are with the many families who have lost loved ones and family members.

As a member of the Ocean Floor Minerals Act of 2002, I have witnessed the generosity of great Americans from across our country who have come to the aid of their fellow citizens. Now is the time those citizens of the Gulf Coast communities need our help. In my home State of California, those citizens who in recent years have suffered through devastating earthquakes, mudslides and brushfires know firsthand how natural disasters can dramatically impact their lives and how challenging it can be to rebuild homes, communities and families. Already the people in southern California and in my district are hard at work donating both time and resources to the many victims in the impacted Gulf Coast communities.

We Californians have a long tradition of helping our neighbors through devastating tragedies and disasters. And in that spirit, I call on all Americans to join the relief efforts. Tens of thousands of citizens are still stranded in shelters and we have not been able to evacuate them to safer areas; and tens of thousands of citizens of the Gulf Coast communities all across the country who are hard at work donating both time and resources to the many victims in the impacted Gulf Coast communities.

I applaud the leadership of Congress in convening this special session today to ensure that funding will be made available to help rebuild the lives of the families affected and the communities in which they live.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say that our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have suffered through the catastrophic event of Hurricane Katrina. I also rise today in support of the $10 billion disaster relief bill to help deal with the ravages left in its wake. This category 4 Hurricane has laid waste to our Gulf Coast region, including the city of New Orleans. Today, I am outraged, outraged at the failure of our Federal Government to have planned for and adequately responded to a disaster we all knew could happen.

I join millions of Americans who have been stunned by the television coverage showing the desperation of thousands and thousands of citizens and their families, and the Federal Government to provide them with essential services—food, water, medical care, and sanitary conditions.

Today, I want to talk about the situation in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast and the immense suffering and desperation that the people there are experiencing. It has been 5 days since Hurricane Katrina slammed into the region and yet tens of thousands of Americans are without food and water. Lawlessness has settled in New Orleans and we have not provided the support needed to stabilize the region. Tens of thousands of citizens are still stranded in shelters and we have not been able to evacuate them to safer areas; and thousands of residents of New Orleans are in need of rescue from their flood-filled homes and we have not mobilized the personnel necessary to search for them and bring them to safety.

Today, as thousands of residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region face the possibility of death, I am outraged that the Federal Government failed to adequately plan for the hurricane as it approached this very vulnerable region. Last Friday, the hurricane’s potential danger was clear, yet we did a poor job of getting resources in place.
The hurricane struck, we did not activate the full resources of the Federal Government to assist the region. Instead, we relied on local and State governments, entities that were clearly overwhelmed and did not have the necessary resources to deal with a catastrophe of this magnitude.

Today, I am outraged at the failure of government to protect our citizens. Last year, James Lee Witt, former head of FEMA, testified before a congressional hearing, saying: “I am extremely concerned that the ability of our Nation—preparing for and responding to disasters that have been sharply eroded. I hear from the emergency managers, local and State leaders and first responders nearly every day that the FEMA they knew and worked well with has now disappeared.”

Today, we must bring the full weight of the Federal Government to bear in this crisis. I call on the Federal Government to send in the necessary personnel to rescue those in need and to restore order to the region. I also call on the Federal Government to open its facilities in the burden of providing temporary housing for those who have been displaced.

We deal with the human tragedy that is now taking place. I call for congressional hearings that will examine what went wrong. Why our most vulnerable citizens were left to fend for themselves and why an entire region was not prepared for such a catastrophic event. I also call for congressional hearings to investigate the gas gouging that has spread across the Nation—taking advantage of human tragedy to make a profit. Hurricane Katrina has inflicted grievous pain on our country. I want to be sure that in the future we are prepared to deal effectively and competently with any catastrophic event that should occur.

Mr. DREIER of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of such a grave humanitarian catastrophe, one of the worst in our Nation’s history, our thoughts and prayers are with those touched by tragedy and coping with loss.

Relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina are being carried out unabated in the face of great destruction, and much more needs to be done. Relief workers are locating survivors, evacuating those in harm’s way, finding temporary shelter, and providing food, water and clean up debris. Over 20,000 National Guard troops and thousands of local law enforcement are working hard to maintain order and keep victims safe.

For this massive undertaking to continue and improve, it is essential that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has the funds needed to carry relief efforts through these crucial early days, as well as the long weeks ahead. Congress stands united with the President and with those affected in Gulf Coast States. The speaker has used his emergency powers to call us back to Washington to appropriate a supplemental $10.5 billion to FEMA and the Department of Defense. As the scope and scale of this tragedy become clearer, we will continue to take additional action.

Under desperate and trying conditions, the soul of the South remains strong. In large measure, the people of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, as well as Florida, are coping with lost lives, flattened houses and flooded businesses with great dignity and perseverance.

The Gulf Coast and the Port of New Orleans are vital to our economy and home to many important industries. Oil refineries, grain shipments, tourism and international trade are all affected by this natural disaster. While we urgently cope with the suffering of our fellow Americans, Congress is also mindful of the hurricane’s economic fallout. We are committed to minimizing the adverse national and international effects of Katrina.

The lesson of past national tragedies, most recently September 11, 2001, is that when this country faces calamity, the American people and their elected representatives respond with overwhelming generosity, compassion and action. We also saw this response to the December 2004 Asian tsunami. So to those who are still in dire need of help, I can say with confidence that help is on the way. And help will not end with the rooftop rescue or the evacuation to another city. Congress, the President and FEMA will see this effort through until the very end.

There is still much hardship, loss and grief to endure, and the road to reconstructing lives, communities and jobs will be difficult. But, as we have before, this country will come together to aid those now suffering. We will give relief on the ground so the Gulf Coast region can begin rebuilding from the ground up.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this necessary and important appropriations measure.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, nothing tears at our hearts or bruises us emotionally as much as the pain and suffering of people trapped by the horrific natural disaster in our southern Gulf States this week.

Each of us watches helplessly from our living rooms, with the faces of young and old, and we hear the voices, all bearing witness to the basic needs of life, water, food, shelter, and safety.

These images and sounds fill us with pain, frustration and dismay. Our voices blend with the cries of those in need of help: “Do something.”

Like every other American, I wanted to load up my car with food and water and drive to New Orleans or one of the other cities so badly damaged and be there not only to give them sustenance, but also to tell them that we care about them and what has and is happening to them.

But the truth is that if we all did what we wanted to do, we would just magnify the problems.

And so we do what we can: we send donations of money and supplies, we send our National Guard and local law enforcement and emergency workers. And we yell at the government because we believe that in America, we ought to be better equipped to deal with such emergencies.

You know what? We should be better prepared. That is an issue we will deal with in the weeks and months ahead. The victims of Hurricane Katrina need us today, and our initial focus should be to meet their needs. Congress, by approving this major financial aid package, is responding with the rest of America to the immediate need.

Our first priority is saving lives and making sure these American citizens have their basic needs met. Once that occurs, we can move forward with long-range planning for these citizens who lost so much, and communities struggling with recovery.

Mr. Speaker, there is a time for campaigning and a time for governing, a time for leadership and compassion and a time for congressional hearings. Today is a time that we pull together with love of our neighbors and the love of our Nation to bring relief, safety and security to our fellow Americans in need.

Mr. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my condolences to the families who have lost loved ones in the natural disaster we have witnessed over the last 5 days. Our hearts go out to them and we are working desperately to address this desperate situation.

I pay tribute to Democratic Leader PELOSI for giving this effort to provide for supplemental funding relief for the hurricane victims in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida the priority attention and urgency it deserves. Because of her forward thinking and sensitivity to the scope of this disaster, we are here today in this special session of Congress doing what we should do: responding to the needs of the thousands of victims of this natural disaster to make sure the money is available for food; water; emergency supplies; medical care; food; shelter; and communications networks; public safety; public health and sanitation; and other forms of emergency assistance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for according to the gentleman’s call to convene the House to pass the $10 billion package. Today, we demonstrate that partisan politics stop when it comes to responding to the needs of thousands of Americans who find their very lives imperiled by Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. We are showing that Congress can lead and provide a rapid response when misfortune strikes.

This is not the time for recriminations. There will be plenty of time for that when Congress reconvenes next week to review the slowness and inadequacy of the response and consequence management efforts of the natural disaster that struck our Gulf Coast. The experience of my congressional office in trying to contact responsible Federal agencies involved with the effort shows that communications between congressional offices, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and other responding Federal agencies has not improved since 9/11.

What shocks us as Americans is that we are witnessing human tragedies on our television screens on a scale we do not expect to see in America. It is hard for us to accept a human tragedy like we see in the third world happen on our own shores. It is even harder for us to accept that our response to this human tragedy is no better than what we see by lesser and undeveloped countries. The lack of an effective response and plan of action has all in shock.

While no class has escaped the human tragedy, the disproportionate numbers of victims are black, poor, aged, disabled or otherwise physically debilitated. These are the people who are the lowest priority in emergency evacuation plans because we do not know how to address their fundamental needs. They are the first who depend on the Government for services, the first at the mercy of the elements but the last on civic emergency action plans.

Our hearts go out to those who are stranded and disposed. We need leadership to address their needs. The private sector like the hotel industry and the civic community
must step up to offer assistance. The city of Detroit has offered to transport 500 families to Detroit to shelter them and meet their basic human needs. The Mayor of Detroit, the Honorable Kwame Kilpatrick, has worked with FEMA, local hotels and food manufacturers to provide temporary shelter for an estimated 500 families. He has gained the cooperation of the city of Detroit School District to accommodate the children of displaced families. We need more State and civic leaders to step up. I also want to acknowledge the offers of assistance our government has received from the international community. Contributions from other countries have offered their expertise in airlifting residents and in other humanitarian response recovery techniques in our time of need. I hope we are big enough to accept these offers where there is a need.

Again, I thank Democratic Leader Pelosi and the Speaker for seeing that Congress does its part to respond quickly. To all the victims, their families and loved ones, please know we stand with you in our actions and prayers.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, this amount of money is only a fraction of what is needed and everyone here knows it. Let it go forward quickly with heart-felt thanks to those who are helping to save lives with necessary food, water, shelter, medical care and security. Congress must also demand accountability with the appropriations. Because until there are basic changes in the direction of this government, this tragedy will multiply to apocalyptic proportions.

The administration yesterday said that no one anticipated the breach of the levees. Did the administration not see or care about the 2001 FEMA warning about the risk of a devastating hurricane hitting the people of New Orleans? Did it not know or care that civil and Army engineers were warning for years about the consequences of failure to strengthen the flood control system? Was it aware or did it care that the very same administration, which has warned for years about the dangers of climate change, now says it is in fact only a warning. Our government has not prepared for the consequences of failure to strengthen levees, roads, bridges, libraries, schools, colleges and universities and to rebuild all public institutions, including hospitals. Medicare ought to be extended to everyone, so every person can get the physical and mental health care they might need as a result of the disaster.

The time is now to plan massive public works, with jobs going to the people of the Gulf Coast States, to build new levees, new roads, bridges, libraries, schools, colleges and universities and to rebuild all public institutions, including hospitals. Medicare ought to be extended to everyone, so every person can get the physical and mental health care they might need as a result of the disaster.

The time is now for Federal resources, including closed Army bases, to be used for temporary shelter for all those who have been displaced by the hurricane.

The time is now to plan massive public works, with jobs going to the people of the Gulf Coast States, to build new levees, new roads, bridges, libraries, schools, colleges and universities and to rebuild all public institutions, including hospitals.

As bad as this catastrophe will prove to be, it is in fact only a warning. Our government must get off the path of war and seek the peace with our neighbors.

The recovery from the Hurricane Katrina disaster will be long and difficult. I commend all the brave first responders, FEMA employees and volunteers with the Red Cross and other charitable agencies as they work to provide relief to the hurricane victims. People’s lives have been changed forever, and the American people have responded with their time, money and prayers to help our neighbors.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the bipartisan leadership—both for the whole House and for the Appropriations Committee—for this urgent response to our neighbors and families in the Gulf Coast region.

The notion of refugees in America is a foreign concept for us, but I know the American family will respond fully and completely in reeling the people who have fled the Gulf region; and who must now necessarily migrate north and make temporary lives somewhere else for at least the next few months.

I want to note something interesting to my colleagues. Just last week before the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, BRAC, I pointed out to the commissioners that the Gulf of Mexico has serious security needs.

With the BRAC recommended closures of Naval Station Ingleside and Ellington Air Field, and the closure of NS Pascagoula in Mississippi, we were leaving the Gulf of Mexico vulnerable to an attack that could disrupt our oil supplies—both the wells in the Gulf and the refineries along our southern coast—and our vital trade routes. Post-BRAC, we will have not a single surface Navy ship in the Gulf of Mexico.

Mother Nature painted a very vivid picture for all of us of how a major disruption in the Gulf can affect our Nation and our economy.

I will be talking to DOD officials and my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee to pursue a Center of Excellence for Homeland Defense and Security in the western Gulf of Mexico.

Again, I thank the House for this rapid attention. The dire need for such action in our neighbors in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. I support the bill, and urge swift passage.

We must come to grips now with the fact that this is just our first drop in the bucket; this ongoing rescue and relief effort will be monumental and long term. It will be years before New Orleans and the Gulf Coast can be rebuilt. It will take our money, it will take our energy, and it will take all our hearts.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this emergency supplemental for the millions of Americans affected by the devastation stemming from Hurricane Katrina.

It is important that the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Defense, and all other federal agencies involved have all the monies necessary to do the recovery and reconstruction effort the right way.

This supplemental is a down payment to ensure that the recovery effort is not halted due to a lack of money. But, it is only a down payment. We must work for months and years to make sure that Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and all the other states dramatically affected by Hurricane Katrina are rebuilt and that the survivors are given the means necessary to begin their recovery.

I ask Americans all across this great country to open their hearts and donate to the effort to help their fellow citizens in their time of need.

The recovery effort demands that public business, private charities, private citizens, and the government come together to help those in their time of crisis.

I applaud Leader Pelosi and Speaker Hastert for bringing the House back into session today to pass this supplemental. It is one small way we in the Congress can ensure that the money from the treasury remain flowing so our first responders can do the work that needs to be done to help the survivors of this terrible disaster.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time for all Americans to come together and help themselves. It is time to get the survivors safety, provide them with food, water, and shelter, and to ensure that their basic needs for survival are taken care of.
I rise in strong support of this supplemental and ask for all Americans to help their fellow citizens in their time of need.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the Members of this body—Republican and Democrat, liberal and conservative—about this week’s tragedy in New Orleans, black, white and brown—in support of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill for Hurricane Katrina. Just as all of you were there for my constituents last year after an unprecedented four hurricanes devastated my home state of Florida, I stand here today with you to offer support for all of those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

On the eve of August 25, 2005, Katrina first made landfall in South Florida. Broward and Miami-Dade Counties were the first to witness the strength of this devastating storm. As a result, the city of Fort Lauderdale was the first to receive Federal assistance. But Federal assistance is only a temporary solution. It does not matter if 1 or 100 homes are destroyed because of a natural disaster. Federal emergency disaster assistance exists to help those in need when they have no one but the Federal Government to turn to. It is beyond irresponsible for FEMA to neglect the needs of my constituents simply because the extent of the damage does not reach some artificial and fluid threshold.

My thoughts and prayers remain with the residents of Florida who have been affected by the storm, as well as the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. As this great body convenes today, I am deeply troubled by the pictures that I see on television and in the press. Our fellow citizens are in a battle not only with the elements of Mother Nature but also homelessness, disease, starvation, and dehydration.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that this body is heeding the call of the Democratic Leader and meeting today to pass this emergency supplemental. But I am shocked that the Federal Government to turn to. It is beyond irresponsible for FEMA to neglect the needs of my constituents simply because the extent of the damage does not reach some artificial and fluid threshold.

We have known that the levees in New Orleans could not withstand the most severe storms. Former Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt recently stated that in the 1990s, planning for a New Orleans nightmare scenario included the pre-deploying of nearby ships and ships with pumps to remove water from the below-sea-level city. We have to ask—why was this not done? Was it incompetence, a lack of leadership or has the deployment of National Guard troops to Iraq slowed recovery efforts? Are we to assume that in the past few years, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been unable to communicate with the Federal Government?

In addition, there appears to be a massive disconnect between the information the government has issued on the aid of the environment and what individuals on the ground have experienced. We have to make sure that aid gets to those in need immediately—right now, too many still lack basic necessities and that is simply unacceptable.

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I know that this compassion will continue and I encourage all Americans to do what ever they can to help our fellow citizens in their most desperate time of need. However, I am troubled to see instances of greed in this time of desperate need. I have heard already from numerous constituents who feel the price of gas skyrocket. I, along with other Members of Congress, will be looking into any instances of price gouging. In such a time of despair for so many, price gouging can not be tolerated.

Once again, I want to express my condolences to those who have lost loved ones in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and to share my prayers of hope for those who remain in despair. I know that much remains to be done and I am hopeful that the funding we are providing today will go a long way to meeting the desperate needs of those in the Gulf Coast. The full story of this disaster remains to be told, but I am confident that out of dark moments of this tragedy will come beacons of light for those affected and a serious discussion and action on our national priorities.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with the families and individuals devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Reports that displaced residents in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast are not able to receive medical attention and basic supplies are truly horrible. This is an unacceptable situation for the wealthiest country in the world. The conditions are desperate and the full force of the Federal Government must be turned towards helping those in need.

The Federal Government is prepared to provide an unprecedented level of disaster assistance, starting today with a $10.5 billion emergency aid package.

The recovery effort has raised several issues that must be addressed. First, once the immediate need for medical assistance, food and other resources is met, the massive job of providing housing in different communities throughout the country for the thousands of displaced victims must be undertaken. This will require an unprecedented level of coordination between federal, state and local governments and the private sector. Also, decisions must be made in terms of the reconstruction of the areas most devastated, in a manner that ensures that a tragedy of this magnitude will not repeat itself.

Second, the alleged unwillingness of the federal personnel assigned to the disaster to use the resources available to them in a timely fashion must be investigated. The fact that there was one instance of a military helicopter being fired upon is not an excuse for helicopters not to land or buses not to transport people. Questions with regard to class, race and discriminatory attitudes must be addressed in a candid and constructive manner.

Third, the personnel and agencies responsible for responding to this disaster are the same as the nation would call on in the event of a terrorist attack. Their present response, in the President’s words, has been unacceptable and inadequate. We must ensure that future responses are dramatically different.

In the coming days and weeks ahead, I encourage every American to consider volunteering to help our fellow citizens in this time of great need. My office has received hundreds of phone calls from constituents who are eager to help in anyway possible, and this will allow the generosity of the human spirit to prevail.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the bill is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment of the bill.

Mr. LEWIS. The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following privileged Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 51) providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate, and a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The Clerk read the Senate concurrent resolution, as follows:

S. Con. Res. 51

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives, concurrence.

That when the Senate receives or adjourns at the close of business on Thursday, September 1, or on Friday, September 2, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 12 noon on Tuesday, September 6, 2005, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Friday, September 2, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, September 6, 2005, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

Sec. 2. The Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, or their respective designees, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the Senate and House, respectively, to reassemble at such place and time as they may designate whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Senate concurrent resolution is concurred in.

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to show compassion and readiness to work to help our neighbors who are in crisis. I represent a State, West Virginia, that has had numerous flooding disasters and collectively we will do everything that we can to help those in this devastating situation.

The number one priority right now is the welfare of the families and children in their time of need. The photos from the area are gut-wrenching and we have only just begun to hear the heart breaking stories of the destruction of lives and properties.

Our response must be quicker and stronger. The time to reach out to those in despair, I know that our compassion as a nation is incredible and we are frustrated by the enormity of the crisis. The funding we provide today will be significant but will only take us so far.

In recent disasters around this Nation we have seen the worst of destruction that can come from both man and from nature: the best of society. We have seen the power of this Nation when it comes together to assist those in need. In the coming hours and days, we have got to press forward to help in every way we can.

As West Virginians, we have been helped and again. Like those affected in this disaster, we are hardworking, country-loving, patriotic, respectful citizens. We now wish to return our compassion in your hour of need. Our State has started fund drives, deployed utility professionals, sent our National Guard and other means of help. We will continue. Our hearts are joined in prayers to give those in need the strength and willpower to rebuild and go on.

To that end, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army need our support to continue their efforts on the ground. We are grateful to those who are on the ground from all emergency organizations in the Gulf Coast area to assist those who have been affected.

We will stand together to recover and rebuild the lives and cities. This is the nature of our country and its people.

HURRICANE KATRINA

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