HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the work that we have to complete in the waning days of this session is significant and difficult, and nothing we do in the days ahead can be more important than helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina get back on their feet. They are counting on us. It is their time of need. We owe it to them to give them everything we are capable of giving them.

The most terrible tragedies routinely bring out the best in America and Americans. We have seen that again in the aftermath of Katrina, one of the most horrible natural disasters in the history of this Nation.

Americans are coming together and giving their time and money to the millions of victims. They are putting their personal concerns aside so they can put Americans in need first. Now they expect America’s Government to do the same.

There are dozens of steps the Senate can take in order to get immediate relief to the victims of the gulf coast—steps we can take to make sure Medicaid is easily and readily available to those who need it, to get families the housing assistance they badly need, and to get resources to the school districts all over the country so displaced children do not lose a precious day of this school year. These items must be our top priority.

I commend the majority leader for clearing the Senate Calendar of the estate tax so we can focus on Katrina. We can do better. Families in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida are counting on us to do that. They are suffering, and they have nowhere else to turn. We owe it to them to make their safety and survival our top priority, and we should give them nothing less.

RECESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess prior to the hour that was chosen, just a couple of minutes early.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:26 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reconvened when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. Voinovich).

Mr. LEAHY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the entire Nation continues to be focused on the millions of Americans who have been devastated and displaced by hurricane Katrina. My heart and prayers go out to the individuals and the families who have had to endure so much over the last 8 days; first, the natural disaster of Katrina and then the unnatural disaster of the delayed and deeply flawed relief effort.

Last week, as this tragedy was unfolding, I was on a congressional delegation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, among other things, meeting with members of the Iowa National Guard who are training units of the new Afghan Army. I will have more to report about that trip in coming days. While this tragedy was unfolding, most of the time I was in Pakistan watching. No matter where we went, it was on television, whether we were going to meet the President of Pakistan or whether we were going out to a small village to visit some schools we have helped to fund in the past in poor villages. Everyone had eyes on it.

As I was there watching it unfold, I had this terrible feeling of helplessness; also, I must add, a feeling of embarrassment and being ashamed that our Government is responding more forcefully to this disaster.

I will take advantage of this first opportunity to be back in the Senate to speak publicly about the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. There is no question, FEMA has failed and, more broadly, the Federal Government has failed the people of the gulf coast. In other parts of the country that are vulnerable to similar natural disasters or terrorist attacks, Americans are saying: They are not going to let that be us.

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

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

Indeed, in recent days, my staff has been meeting with Senator Landrieu’s staff to share the experience and the expertise we gained in the wake of our widespread flooding in Iowa back in 1993. Some of the visual images, especially around New Orleans, of the other towns along the gulf coast totally flooded with water, brought back memories of the flood of 1993 in Iowa, when whole towns were wiped out, some never to be rebuilt. People lost their homes, lives, testimonies, such as pictures and family albums, the things that mean so much in our lives.

I remember 1993 and those floods in Iowa. At that time, we cochaired a task force, along with Senator Krt Bond of Missouri, whose State was also devastated by the same flooding, to identify the types of assistance that would be needed, as well as the best way to implement the response, to give the victims as well as in the executive branch. I am hopeful our past experience can provide a roadmap for officials responding to this latest disaster.

We need the needed assistance is obvious, beginning, of course, with food. We must make sure these people have been displaced to other States get adequate food and nutrition, and shelter, of course. It is so wonderful to see so many people opening their homes, their communities, their facilities, to take care of people who have been displaced from their own homes and communities. But we need to provide shelter in the longer term. Where is that going to come from? People cannot live for 6 months, 9 months, 2 years, in the Astrodome or in any other public facility which is housing these people now.

We have to find adequate shelter.

Many of the people who have been displaced are, of course, from the last 8 days; first, the natural disasters; and I also worked together after the flood of 1993, to help them move back, to get a start, to buy simple things like a bed, a stove, a refrigerator.

Loans will be needed to small businesses to get them back on their feet. Think of all the small Main Street businesses wiped out. They are going to need help to get back on their feet, which has been flooded numerous times need to be relocated. We did that very effectively in both Iowa and in Missouri.
We need funding for community redevelopment. Much more will have to be done down the pike.

This Congress must step up to the plate and do it. If we can spend between $5 billion and $6 billion a month in Iraq, surely we cannot shirk our responsibility to our own citizens in this country.

As we learned back in 1993 in the Iowa floods, there are other less obvious forms of assistance that are also critically important. I add here, psychosocial counseling—psychological help for people who have lost loved ones or were traumatized by the disaster, especially young people and kids.

I salute Governor Tom Vilsack, of my State of Iowa, for leading a robust response to this disaster. He has ordered our State Government to prepare for the potential relocation of up to 5,000 people from the Gulf coast region. They will be given shelter and assistance in communities all across our State. People are coming in. They have room to take in one, two, or three people. They are opening their homes. The churches across our State are saying they will do whatever they can to help find housing and accommodations for people. Governor Vilsack has also directed the Iowa Department of Public Health to deploy a 30-member team of doctors, nurses, and other health officials to southeast Louisiana.

I say to my fellow Iowans and to all my fellow Americans, our prayers for the victims are important, but as President Kennedy once reminded us, here on Earth, God’s work must truly be our own. Each and every one of us can make a difference to the victims of this disaster. There are dozens of organizations, including the Red Cross and Salvation Army, in urgent need of donations and assistance.

So it is at times like this we are reminded we truly are one American family. Families look out for one another. I have no doubt people all across this country will continue to open their hearts and be as generous as possible in the days and weeks and months ahead.

Likewise, I am hopeful this Congress and this White House will also be generous. We will do whatever it takes to help the people of New Orleans and the Gulf coast put their lives and communities back.

As we gathered here today, thousands of people throughout the South are struggling to recover from one of this Nation’s greatest natural disasters. Really, if you think about it, it is a disaster that continues to unfold. With the public health issues, the sustenance-of-human-life issues, the needs that need to be met on a daily basis, this disaster, the full extent of it, is not yet even known.

As we all know, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf coast on Monday, August 29, leaving in its wake destruction and devastation. The loss of life is incalculable at this time. The city of New Orleans lies in ruin, and residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida have lost their most basic needs—shelter, food, clean water, and medical care.

This Congress has appropriated, on an emergency basis, more than $10 billion to help meet the most immediate needs of these victims of this disaster. But, obviously, there is more that needs to be done.

Thousands of Americans now face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives. I am proud to report the people of my State of Iowa are doing their part, welcoming literally almost a quarter of a million people with open arms. While some Texans are providing resources to meet evacuees’ immediate needs, others are facilitating longer term needs for victims being rehoused. Federal, State and local government agencies are coordinating efforts on the ground and countless volunteers—from churches, synagogues, mosques, other faith-based organizations, and just good people in the State of Texas—shelters, are coordinating efforts on the ground to help them on a round-the-clock basis to ensure our neighbors’ needs are being met.

On the ground, nearly 2,000 soldiers and airmen from the Texas Air National Guard are continuing to provide assistance with Hurricane Katrina relief and security efforts. An additional 350 members of the Texas State Guard have also joined them. Texas National Guard aviation has moved more than 6,050 meals, 2,377 gallons of milk, and almost 40,000 bottles of water, and supplied more than a million pounds of material to help repair the breach in New Orleans’ levees.

Even as Texas leaders have notified FEMA and Louisiana officials that we are nearing capacity, people across the State continue to open their homes to their neighbors in need and to reach out to help them in any way they can. In the shelters, one of the most important efforts is to locate a place for displaced residents to actually live on a temporary basis. The Red Cross in Dallas is doing everything it can to register evacuees or those who have been victimized by Katrina. This will help facilitate the reuniting of these victims with their families and loved ones. This effort is being duplicated at all other shelters.

The city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County have partnered to provide the best possible care for victims. The local government has taken full responsibility for this situation and is managing these shelters in an efficient and professional manner.

In Houston, 20,000 people are being housed and cared for at the Astrodome. Another 4,000 are being sheltered at the Reliant Center. And 3,000 more are being housed at the George R. Brown Convention Center. It is estimated that up to 100,000 more are in hotels and motels throughout the Houston area, with around 200,000 to 250,000 victims of Katrina in Texas.

Mr. President, 20,000 volunteers in Houston alone have been working to accommodate the enormous manpower needs to put all of these efforts in place.

A lot of credit is due not only at the highest levels of State government, to Governor Perry and his team, but also to local leaders such as Harris County Judge Robert Eckels and Mayor Bill White of Houston who have done an excellent job working to mobilize the major county and city efforts to offer immediate shelter to these victims.

Both the judge and the mayor have asked that we send assistance to the greater Houston area to ask for immediate help and have been met with generous offers of assistance. Shelter volunteers are working, also, to make sure the medical needs of these evacuees are being met. The Department of Dallas County Health and Human Services has stated that physicians are taking extra precautions to prevent the outbreak of communicable diseases at the shelters. The Mental Health and Mental Retardation Department, our social workers and psychiatrists to shelters to help deal with the mental trauma associated with this disaster.

But in addition to the immediate needs for food, clothing, water, and medical care, there are long-term needs that need to be addressed as well. We must also ensure that these long-term needs are met by this same team effort of Federal, State, and local officials, as well as nongovernmental and faith-based organizations. Federal agencies have stepped up and have given information to evacuees on how to receive Social Security and other Government benefits while they are temporarily displaced.

The Post Office has stopped mail according to ZIP Codes so mail will not be lost and can ultimately be delivered. Local district clerks have given information regarding how to apply for child support payments. And I recently was in communication with district judge Charles Baxa of Harris County, who is working with attorney general Gregg Abbott to make sure child support payments are delivered on time to those who are entitled to them.

Congress is also considering waivers so the Department of Housing and Urban Development can give out vouchers for housing.

My office has joined with the rest of the congressional delegation to facilitate the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s ability to provide services and assisting HUD to provide housing as quickly as possible to such an enormous number of people. Likewise,
communities have joined together, and many good people are personally even housing in their home those who have nowhere else to turn.

So I am gratified, but not surprised, by the big heart of the people in the State of Texas toward those who are in need. We know there are stories that are heartwarming on a personal level as well as on a larger level as to the way people are responding, which is in a way that we would all hope that if the shoe were on the other foot we would respond.

While we have heard there have been episodes of lawlessness, looting, and other acts of desperation, it is important to remember there have been innumerable acts of kindness from those expressing charity and goodwill which I believe truly embodies the American spirit and the Texas spirit. These are some of the stories on which I would like to close.

I was told an expectant couple from Louisiana was so appreciative of the warm welcome they received when they arrived in Dallas that they named their newest arrival, their baby girl, “Dallas”.

After a 23-hour drive to Texas, one woman gave birth to her new son and named him after the hospital where he was born in gratitude for the money, gift certificates, clothes, and other necessities that the hospital staff collected for her.

Louisiana resident Bernell Royal was rescued from his rooftop with nothing more than a bag of clothes—no identity, no personal documents or effects. He is now being housed at a shelter in Austin, TX. Although he believes everything he owned is now gone, he told one reporter:

“I feel like in Austin I’ve found a new sense of respect, dignity and honor. I would love to stay in Austin, get a job, and start a new life.”

We hope he will.

In Lubbock, Darwin German II and his family wanted to help hurricane victims, so they decided to give away what they had—free apartments at the Candlelight Park Apartments. Move-in costs will be covered, as well as 4 months of free rent.

Dallas school officials over the weekend prepared to enroll approximately 500 student evacuees who were expected to start school today. The Dallas Morning News reports that Melissa Farria said her children were registered for school.

These people are amazing... When they were saying they were registering students, I couldn’t believe it.

And the University of Texas is likewise opening its doors to Texas students who were on their way to Louisiana universities. It has been reported that 134 undergraduates and 60 law students have now been enrolled at the University of Texas and will be able to continue their programs of study.

The Dallas Morning News is offering free classified advertisements for businesses and individuals offering free goods or services to evacuees from areas struck by Hurricane Katrina.

These are just some of the stories of goodwill and charity and big hearts that we found in response to this terrible disaster. I know the temptation is perhaps almost irresistible, particularly here in Congress, to point the finger of blame at mistakes made, plans that were not executed the way we hoped they might have been. Believe me, there will be plenty of time for that. But I now realize that they represent a distraction from the job we ought to be about, as exemplified by these wonderful Good Samaritans I have described this afternoon.

We ought to be about making sure people have food, shelter, and clean water; that they have medical care; that their children are allowed to go to school; and that we help them get on with their lives and leave the blame game and the finger-pointing for later on. I know the Senate will undertake a series of hearings— and, in fact, this afternoon—looking at gasoline prices. We should and we will deal with that issue appropriately. We also ought to look at the mistakes that were made to determine what could be done better. I am confident the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will, in due course, have hearings and make sure we learn from those mistakes and we do better next time.

But I think more than anything else this is a time for Americans to pull together. I wanted to take a few minutes to express my gratitude to the big-hearted people of Texas for taking in these nearly quarter of a million evacuees from Hurricane Katrina who had nowhere else to turn and who were looking for the milk of human kindness, which they found in the great State of Texas.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, millions of Americans on the Gulf Coast have endured an almost unspoken tragedy over the past 10 days. Thousands are likely dead. Hundreds of thousands had their lives upended and wondered so rightly why their Government seemed to have abandoned them. Millions of Americans across the country are asking themselves when the suffering will end.

We cannot undo what has happened, but there is one thing we can do to redeem ourselves and to live up to our greatest American ideals.

We can commit that there will not stop, that we will not rest, until these communities are back and stronger than before, until families have been reunited, and until the survivors of this catastrophe are restored into the full measure of American life.

If we fail, we are still referring to American citizens as refugees, if we are content that American families are hole up without jobs, without homes, without security, then we will have failed and failed miserably.

Our response to date has not been worthy of our Nation, and we will have to examine why it wasn’t until last Friday that our brave and committed National Guard forces were deployed to deliver supplies to the starving, suffering Americans stranded at the New Orleans Convention Center.

Time will also to determine why the mandatory evacuation order wasn’t implemented effectively and why the Army Corps of Engineers wasn’t given the resources long ago to prevent the collapse of the levees that caused most of the loss of life, especially when FEMA had called such a hurricane one of the “likeliest, most catastrophic disasters facing the country.”

Clearly, mistakes were made that cost lives, displaced thousands, and left one of America’s most unique and treasured cities under water and abandoned. There will come a time to hold accountable the responsible officials who allowed this disaster to become even more catastrophic.

But our first priority now is to do everything we can to meet the needs of our fellow citizens and to provide a helping hand to the countless generous Americans throughout the Nation who have opened their homes, their schools, and their communities to our displaced fellow citizens. Today our job is to meet the great, daunting, and unprecedented challenge of rebuilding the nation.

Our obligation is to guarantee that the Americans thrust into the darkness of despair and homelessness last week emerge with a restored faith in their fellow citizens and a renewed belief that this is a land of opportunity.

This is a challenge for all of us—as individuals, as public officials, and as members of religious and charitable organizations.

But above all it is the job of our national Government, which alone has the resources, the manpower, and the authority to lead this enormous effort.

The eyes of the world are upon us—watching to see how we take care of our own.

The $10.5 billion Congress passed last week was an initial gesture, but it’s just a small fraction of the amount needed to address the unprecedented challenges this entire region faces. It’s only the beginning, and we need to recognize that.

We should move quickly, for example, to address the health needs of these citizens. The disaster area is a public health hazard as well. The floodwaters are potentially disease ridden. Countless people have been injured or taken ill as a result of the disaster. The physical and mental health needs of thousands must be met as they try to cope with the horror that they’ve endured.

We also need to ensure that the elderly and disabled who rely on supplemental assistance to live continue to
get it, even though they've been dislocated.

We must do all we can to see that school children and college students don't miss a year of their education. There are approximately 70,000 children who have moved to, which children have gone where. The layoffs for all of the school administrators have effectively been lost. We don't know where those schoolchildren have moved to, which children have gone where. The layoffs for all of the school administrators have effectively been lost. We know that what I just mentioned for New Orleans has been replicated in school district after school district throughout the whole Gulf area.

School districts across the country are taking in children from the disaster area. Thirty-five cities as far north as Detroit have come forward to date, and understand, with Houston working to accept 8,000 students, Dallas-Fort Worth making room for 5,000. These school districts are doing our Nation a great service. We need to make sure they have the support they need as they step forward.

In the State of Massachusetts, a number of colleges have offered to take the graduate students that were studying at law schools such as Tulane and other students who were studying at the great universities in Louisiana and along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This is something we should follow up on, the challenges, to make sure that the students, whether it is K-12, whether it is in college, or whether it is in graduate schools, we reach out to try to assist students in the educational area.

Colleges are volunteering to admit displaced students from the region. We must offer them additional aid for generously admitting these students and must assure that adequate student aid is available to those who temporarily attend a new college.

The hundreds of thousands of workers who now have no jobs need an income to help them overcome the delay in finding new employment. We must amend our disaster unemployment assistance laws to enable these men and women to qualify for help. For example, under the emergency unemployment provisions, you to have wait 30 days in order to be eligible to be a recipient. That is obviously a rule that has to be adjusted if we are going to use that particular mechanism to get income to these needy families.

We need to rebuild the public health infrastructure which is under increasing strain as the number of uninsured continues to climb. Sadly, Hurricane Katrina has only made this crisis worse.

These are but a few of the actions we must take—and take now—to deal with the immediate needs of those displaced by Katrina and of the communities that have so generously taken them in.

In the longer term, I believe we should establish a New Orleans and Gulf Coast Redevelopment Authority, with cabinet rank, to coordinate planning and funding needed to restore the infrastructure of that battered region—the electricity, water, gas, roads, railroad, and bridges, and, especially, the hospitals and health facilities. These actions are beyond the ability of any single community, city, and State to handle on their own. It is a national responsibility, and we need a capable authority to work with State and local officials and local citizens to rebuild the future.

The scope of this national crisis exceeds anything since the Great Depression. It's the first time a major U.S. city has been leveled since the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. It will likely exceed the cost in human lives of the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, where more than 8,000 persons are thought to have perished.

It's the kind of disaster we no longer thought possible in an age of instantaneous global communications, rapid transportation, highly accurate weather forecasts, and advanced engineering. It was most certainly the kind of suffering that should not be tolerated by a modern society with so many tools at its disposal.

In the weeks, months, and even years ahead, the recovery from this disaster—the complete, total, and unambiguous recovery—must become a primary focus of our national government.

As elected officials we cannot allow this work to be sidetracked by lesser priorities. If we don't get this right for our fellow Americans, little else can matter.

For our political leadership in Washington, in the White House and here on Capitol Hill, this is a test of wills, a test of leadership, a test of vision and compassion.

It will require singular focus and an unyielding commitment.

The most immediate task is still to save lives. Over 1.5 million have been evacuated from the devastated area, but many still remain, particularly in outlying rural areas cut off the most from the outside world.

Local authorities, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard are still trying to reach and rescue men, women, and children from the ravaged areas. It's a race against time before waterborne disease, dehydration, and neglect take their toll. They are working around the clock and they deserve all the resources they need.

For the hundreds of thousands of Americans thrust into homeless shelters as a result of the tragedy, we need to make sure they are getting the care, nutrition, and counseling they so desperately need.

But the urgency is not limited to these immediate and enormous humanitarian tasks. It extends to the rebuilding effort because the more rapidly we can revitalize the great city of New Orleans, and so many other communities, the sooner we can help people rebuild their lives.

These cities and towns are not just bricks and mortar. They are communities and economies of countless families, neighbors, and business owners, desperate for a return to normalcy.

It's said that nearly 80,000 jobs in New Orleans alone are provided by the tourism industry. How many more of those jobs can we save—how many more families can have stability again—if we get the city back on its feet in 6 months as opposed to 1 year? Two years? Three years? How much human misery and suffering can we still prevent?

I'm impressed with the way the Army Corps of Engineers is working to rebuild the levees and begin to drain away the water. It's such a critical step in locating the missing and beginning the process of recovery.

The Army Corps now estimates that perhaps within 30 days, New Orleans and the surrounding areas will finally be dry.

The question for Congress and the administration is will we be ready on Day 31? Will we be ready to start cleaning the streets and homes and removing the ghastly evidence of this most unbearable tragedy?

We owe it to the living to be ready. We owe it to the charitable organizations that are filling in the gaps and helping the displaced to get back on their feet. We owe it to the first responders who are giving so much of themselves to ease the suffering.

We owe it to the millions of Americans who are opening their hearts and checkbooks to their fellow citizens.

History is watching us now, and it will judge our actions. We can't undo the failures in planning over many years or the failures in the immediate response over the last 10 days.

But we can resolve to dedicate all of our energies and resources, and our resolve from this point forward to resolutely bring about the complete and total recovery for the entire Gulf Coast area, and the men and women and children who've endured more than any of us can possibly imagine in this massive tragedy.

To the Gulf Coast region we need to be like Aaron and Hur who held up Moses' tired arms in battle.

Today, we need to be just as dedicated to the Gulf Coast region if we are going to lead our fellow Americans out of this time of darkness to a better and stronger future.

The Katrina disaster also shines a bright light on another challenge facing our country—the glaring economic disparities facing our citizens. Those with means were able to escape the disaster. Those without could not.

Those with means can slowly and painfully rebuild their lives. Those without means have nothing to let them rebuild.

As a nation, we must be sensitive to this inequality—sensitive as we respond to Katrina, and sensitive, too, as we select new Justices for the Supreme Court. That's a critical question for
Mr. President, this is just unacceptable. This failure of Government to be able to respond quickly and more effectively shows that the people in these States have been doubly victimized. They were victimized by the natural disaster, Hurricane Katrina, and now by the response of their own Government.

It did not have to be this way. It did not have to be this way. In 2000, a tip-top FEMA was turned to the Bush administration appointed head, Michael Brown. I raised Joe Allbaugh to be head of FEMA. We kept the legacy of reform that had begun under President Bush I and had started with Andrew Card and myself working on a reform of FEMA. This reform left FEMA in top condition to respond to a crisis of a natural disaster in an American community.

I want to recall this to my colleagues. Back in the 1990s, I chaired an appropriations subcommittee called VA-HUD and Independent Agencies. One of the independent agencies was FEMA. We saw its lackluster performance. But when Andrew hit Florida it was a disaster. It was a disaster of proportions from the hurricane and then again the ineptitude of FEMA. We worked on a bipartisan basis, reform FEMA we did. We took it from an agency that was focused on the Cold War, was riddled with cronyism back at the National Security Council. There was a tradition that because FEMA was only a domestic agency, it is an all-hazards independent agency. FEMA. We saw its lackluster performance. It was of the Cold War, but again, working on a bipartisan basis to help not only Florida but the other states that were affected. We kept the legacy of reform that had begun under President Bush I and had started with Andrew Card and myself working on a reform of FEMA. This reform left FEMA in a very strong condition to respond to a crisis of a natural disaster in an American community.

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And No. 3, we need to look ahead.

FEMA. No. 2, we need to reform FEMA. No. 1, we need new leadership at the top. We need to identify who you are, see where you are, to make sure you are connected with your family and begin to see if we can’t connect you with a home and with a job. We need to be able to do that. But in order to do that, No. 1, we need new leadership at FEMA. No. 2, we need to reform FEMA. And No. 3, we need to look ahead.

There are those who say: Well, Senator MIKULSKI, FEMA went under Homeland Security because of a global war against terrorism. We know that, and I was one who voted to put them there. Well, I will tell you, would you trust FEMA now if a dirty bomb hit a city? Would you trust FEMA now to be able to respond to a chemical or biological weapon? The answer is no, no, no.

Much needs to be done. First of all, we need to support those communities that are helping other communities. We need to also salute that which is working. Three cheers for the Coast Guard, who are first on the scene to support the private sector, America’s corporations that are both paying their employees and sending in incredible donations. We need to support the nonprofits that are also helping. But most of all we need to support each other.

I want to, once again, as I did at the time of Hurricane Andrew, reach across the aisle to an American President to say let’s stop using the term “refugee.” Let’s start using the term “citizens.” Let’s start acknowledging that we are all one people under God, indivisible. Let’s work to reform FEMA. Let’s get in the right leadership. And then let’s work with the right resources, and let’s do it in a spirit of cooperation. We had that spirit after 9/11. That is what somebody did to us. Now, we are hurting and you need help. We have six men, a bobcat, and a front-end loader. How can we help? I said: Can you clear the road, where we could get through there because the traffic in that area is horrendous. And there is a little retired schoolteacher living back over there. We have not been able to get into her house. The debris was 6 or 8 feet up against her doors. It was 12 feet above sea level. It was 8 inches above the area. This house was 150 years old. Everything was destroyed except special. The point though is, for 150 years, this house had been able to withstand everything Mother Nature could throw at it, but it did not have enough fuel to get there, but somehow or another she begged, borrowed, wound up in the disaster area handing out materials, supplies. Nobody paid for it. Nobody asked for it. She loaded up and went to the sound of the cannon, and she made a difference.

Yesterday, when I flew in a Black Hawk helicopter to Poplarville, MS, one of the areas off the Gulf Coast that one does not hear a lot about, to make sure people in rural and small towns know that help is on the way there, too, I was escorted by our delegation. We had a Mississippi Black Hawk and three New York National Guard Black Hawk helicopters. Some of the first National Guardsmen who arrived were from Michigan. You name it, I can tell a story about every State.

On Wednesday, when I was digging through the rubble of my own neighborhood, some guys walked up from Bert, FL, and said: We know a little bit about hurricanes. We are hurting and you need help. We have six men, a bobcat, and a front-end loader. How can we help? I said: Can you clear the road, where we could get through there because the traffic in that area is horrendous. And there is a little retired schoolteacher living back over there. We have not been able to get into her house. The debris was 6 or 8 feet up against her doors. We were afraid she was in there, but she showed up in the afternoon, and she got into her house. I do know those guys. They were from Bert, FL. If they are listening, if they ever hear this, I want to thank them for loading up and coming to help.

Now, I have been dealing with disasters in Mississippi and in our region for 37 years, going back when I was a staff member for a Democratic Member in the House. So I have dealt with hurricanes. I was there for Camille, and I promised the Good Lord, if he would let me make it through the one, I would not stay for another one. I have not stayed for any more. I leave, and then when the wind slows down, I go back and I take down the boards and I pull the debris, with my neighbors and my friends and my family. This time we could not even pull the debris. There was too much of it. But I have seen hurricanes of all kinds, and I have seen tornadoes and the devastation from ice storms and floods. We have had everything in about hurricanes. We know you. You know them to show up real soon. This is a disaster of biblical proportions. I want the people to understand that.

My house is irrelevant, in the bigger picture of what happened, except for one thing. This house was 150 years old. It was 12 feet above sea level. It was 8 feet off the ground. Senator MCCONNELL slept in that house. It was nothing special, but everything in there was special. The point though is, for 150 years, this house had been able to withstand everything Mother Nature could throw at it, but it did not have enough fuel to get there, but somehow or another she begged, borrowed, wound up in the disaster area handing out materials, supplies. Nobody paid for it. Nobody asked for it. She loaded up and went to the sound of the cannon, and she made a difference.

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I met yesterday with elected officials from 33 counties in my State, mayors, supervisors, clerks, sheriffs, police chiefs. And by the way, I cannot give enough accolades for what they have done. I told them: Look, I do not want to hear about the problems of yesterday. I want to hear what your problem is today. Tomorrow is another day, and we will fix it before the sun goes down.

I want to give some idea of what is happening. The loss of life is just, one cannot believe what people are dealing with. Of course, similar to everything else in life, when you have a disaster such as this, it is bad on everybody. The poor people and the people in low-lying areas, they are hit harder than anybody, and we have to make sure we help them.

I want to specifically thank a few people. It is not a long list and I am going to miss some and I will be back to get to the rest of them. The first responders saved a lot of lives, even the second responders became everyone’s hero. National Guard, Coast Guard, military in general, they are working now, the Seabees, the Corps of Engineers, the Navy. For the first time in history, we are moving Navy flat-bottom troop carriers in to house people so that emergency workers will have a place to sleep at night and get a warm meal. Once again, we saw that the military is not only for Iraq. We need the military for here.

You know when they got order in New Orleans? When the 82nd Airborne pulled in, the shooting stopped. They brought in a tough general that came off the plane cushioning. Within 6 hours, things were under control. So I want to thank them all. Policemen, firemen, stories I have heard, people I have seen, emergency rescuers, ambulance, all of those first responders. Local and State officials do not get enough credit.

In my State of Mississippi, one reason things are a little better than we have in the past or than some other areas is we have the best quality of elected officials, men and women, mayors, supervisors. Our Governor, Haley Barbour, and our Lieutenant Governor, Amy Tuck, they have all been pulling together, and they deserve a lot of credit. Federal officials, there are so many things that have happened I cannot list them all. Cabinet Secretaries and agency people, individuals, FEMA people, everybody, getting hammered the most, and we will have to think about whether they are set up in the right way, but there will be time for that.

Right now we want to know what can we do to help them do a better job. In my own State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Emergency Management Administration has been criticized. I was about ready to express myself in a very profound way yesterday about the fact that we do not have emergency housing already set up. To think that the Mississippi Emergency Management Administration had not requested the trailers. So I got to where a MEMA official was and asked: Did you request the trailers?

Yes, 20,000, 2 or 3 days ago.

What is the problem?

He said: I do not know. I have made them request. So the trail from FEMA was: Well, we have not been told where to put them. Excuse me? The whole area is slick. Park them anywhere. There are no parking limits. We are a parking lot. That is ridiculous. So there is bureaucratic nonsense going on, but we are getting there. We have that problem resolved. We have FEMA talking to MEMA, talking to the people who have the trailers. Three hundred arrived this morning; 20,000 more are coming. We will get through that.

I want to thank the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, all the other charities, individuals, and churches. My wife, yesterday, worked all afternoon loading an 18 wheeler at Christ United Methodist Church, Jackson, MS, where Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and Jews were all working together, all kinds of backgrounds, loading those 18 wheelers. Nobody asked to pay for it. Nobody told them where to send it. They said: We are loading them, and we are sending them to the First Baptist Church, Pascagoula, the First Presbyterian Church, Pascagoula, and to the Episcopal Church at Ocean Springs, MS. They are there this morning with things such as Clorox—never stop to think you need that—cleaning materials.

I saw the Red Cross riding around. They did not wait for people to come to them because people could not get there. The Red Cross people went into the communities and said: Here is a Styrofoam plate of warm food. Some people had not seen warm food for days. Some people had not eaten for days. And they are out there handing out water on the frontline. The Salvation Army never asks questions; they provide help. So all of those are doing a great job.

I want to do something else too. Well, before I get to that, volunteers, boy, they have been great—people showing up saying: Where do I go? That is one thing we do need is leaders. You have to have somebody who will be willing to take charge and get people coordinated. That takes a little time.

I also want to put a list in the record. It is a long list, but nobody asks questions; they provide help. So all of those are doing a great job.

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stocked with flashlights and blankets for disbursement. Have several truckloads of supplies heading to the area. Giving funds to displaced employees for housing, food and basic needs.

**Home Depot**
On phone with Governor’s office to see where the below is needed most.
Have more than 800 trucks staged in the area for deployment.

**Directing generators, flashlights, batteries, tarps, plywood, etc. to areas hit by Katrina.** Partnering with Super Value to deliver non-perishable food items like beef jerky, peanut butter, bottled water, diapers, etc. Planning six sites for “tent stores” that will be staffed and supplied in the following days.

**Have generators on the way to Northrop Grumman for their use, per Pickering’s request, according to Beth.**

**FedEx**
Flying a plane of relief supplies into New Orleans.

Donating $500,000 to the Red Cross plus $500,000 for shipping costs in addition to the $250,000 annual donation and annual $500,000 shipping.

**Giving logistical support to the Emergency Command Center established in Louisiana.** A chartered flight today from Newark will carry 90,000 pounds of cots and hygiene kits to evacuees located in the Houston Astrodome.

**Ashley Furniture**
Donating $500,000 to the Red Cross plus employee and individual store donations.

**Willing to sell furniture to FEMA below showroom costs for storm victims.**

**SmartNest**
Accepting donations of clothing and other items to be taken and distributed to evacuees in Jackson area shelters.

**FOOD RETAILERS**

**Altria (Kraft)**
Sending 4 truckloads of Fruit20 and 2 truckloads of snacks, cookies and Capri Sun to the Red Cross.

Sending 1 truckload of Fruit20 and 1 truckload of Planter’s Nuts to Americas.

**Quinstro’s**
Trying to coordinate food shipments from their Jackson store to the Coast.

**Mar’s**
Working on getting truckloads of snack food into the Gulf Coast.

**TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY**

**Nissan**
Donating $500,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee contributions up to $250,000.

Leased 50 trucks and SUVs to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

**Ford**
Organizing blood, clothing and monetary drives to benefit the Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Donated approximately 165 SUVs, heavy-duty trucks and vans for relief efforts.

**Deterring car payments for 90 days to those in the affected areas.**

**Toyota**
Donating $5,000,000 to the American Red Cross and other hurricane-related relief efforts.

**Northwest Airlines**
Making planes available to fly relief into the affected areas.

**BNSF**
Donating $1,000,000 to the Red Cross.

Offering rail transportation to aid in the relief effort to the Governor’s of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama.

**Honeywell**
Donated planes and crews to help transport relief related cargo.

**ASTAR Air Cargo & A7A**
Helping with air lift operations.

**Koch Industries**
Donating $1,000,000 to the Red Cross and $250,000 to the Salvation Army.

Matching employee donations to either or organization up to $1,000,000.

**General Electric**
Gave $6,000,000 to the Red Cross and employees have given an additional $1,000,000 that GE matched—making a total of $7,000,000 from GE and an additional $1,000,000 from their employees.

Sending at least $10 million in medical services, power generation equipment, water purification and other goods and services as identified by Federal relief authorities.

**BANKS & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Citigroup**
Making a direct donation of $1,000,000 to the Red Cross and employee matching for up to $2,000,000—possibly more if contributions exceed this amount.

Suspending credit card payments, fees and interest charges for customers in the disaster areas. Also working on a case-by-case basis to help with house mortgage payments for those customers.

**JP Morgan Chase**
Donating $1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations up to $1,000,000.

Working with their 1.5 million customers in Mississippi to quickly process checks and loans.

**BankPlus**
Established an account for donations to the Red Cross. They are matching donations up to $250,000.

**PHONE COMPANIES, MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS**

**Bell South**
Have two “tent cities” set up in Gulfport and Lyman with supplies for employees and retirees. Another tent is being set up in Hattiesburg.

**Cingular**
Sending trailers of meals, ice and other personal items to Ocean Springs.

Sending text messages to customers asking them to donate to the Red Cross.

Setting up a tent city for their employees and working to ensure those employees affected get paychecks.

**MOVING ATMs and health clinics in these tent cities by this weekend.**

**Verizon**
Encouraging customers to donate by sending text messages to a central number (2HELP or 24357). Their donation to the Red Cross will be added onto their bill. The first message will add $5.00 and a second will add $2.50.

**Nextel**
Have 11 satellite trucks in the area and giving out free phones to victims of the hurricane.

**ABC/Disney/ESPN**
Running free PSAs for the Salvation Army.

Donated $2,500,000 divided into the following categories: $1,000,000 to the Red Cross, $1,000,000 to various children’s charities and $500,000 to help supply volunteer shelters.

**Given toys and videos to the Red Cross for children.**

Trying to get portable TVs in the affected areas.

**DirectTV**
Dedicated a channel to FEMA alerts, Red Cross announcements, press conferences and local shelter information. This channel will also be available for public officials to communicate with the shelters. They are working with the Red Cross to provide this service to approximately 250 shelters across the area.

**Established a Hurricane Katrina text message and e-mail message line for people trying to connect with loved ones. They leave a message with their name, location, who they’re trying to reach and the message. Messages are then transcribed and scrolled on Hurricane Channel mentioned above.**

**New Skies Satellite**
Donating satellite capacity to the FCC and FEMA to help facilitate communication via satellite phones and Internet access.

**Offering the service of their engineers to area communications companies to help them get back online.**

**OIL COMPANIES**

**Chevron**
Donated $5,000,000 to the Red Cross.

Donated approximately 1600 pounds of goods to Mississippi by their 1,500 employees and their families.

**ExxonMobil**
Committed $7,000,000 to the Red Cross and other national or local charities.

**Shell**
Donating $2,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations up to $1,000,000.

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

**Health and Human Services**
Sending 10,000 beds and supplies to local hospitals.

**Department of Education**
Examining ways to redirect existing funds toward relief efforts.

**Student loan borrowers living in affected areas may delay payments on their loans without penalty.**

**On a case-specific basis the Department will relax certain reporting provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act for affected states.**

**Department of Justice**
Donated $5,000,000 to help fund emergency law enforcement. Mississippi will receive $879,056 of that.

**Housing and Urban Development**
Established a toll-free number (866-641-8102) for the public to get information on housing needs.

**Identifying vacant multi-family housing, public housing units and HUD-owned homes in a 500-mile radius of the affected areas that could be used as temporary housing.**

**Disaster voucher assistance for any family rendered homeless—$200 million available with authority from Congress.**

**Vouchers for replacement units for displaced public housing families or displaced residents living in other HUD multifamily projects—$50 million available.**

**Indian Community Development Block Grant funding—up to $300,000 per grantee—funds disaster relief for Indian housing and Tribal areas.**

**ASSOCIATIONS & CHARITIES**

**American Trucking Association**
Making a $10,000 donation to the Red Cross.

**The Gulf Coast Relief 5K Run**
James Dolan and Mary Matalin, Pacers Running Stores, Mizuno USA and Great Harvest Bread Company are hosting a 5K on...
September 17th in Old Town Alexandria. Entry fees will go to help those affected by the storm.

**John Grisham/Rebuild the Coast Fund Organization**

Grisham has established an account at BancorpSouth with a $5,000,000 donation. The bank is handling the money. The account is open for other individuals to contribute.

Contributions can be made at any BancorpSouth branch; or by sending a check or money order to BancorpSouth, c/o Rebuild the Coast Fund Inc., P.O. Box 789, Tupelo, MS 38802 or Rebuild the Coast Fund, P.O. Box 4500, Tupelo MS 38803. Make checks payable to: Rebuild the Coast Fund Inc.

**Knights of Columbus**

They have pledged $2,500,000 to charities broken into the following groups: $250,000 for Catholic Charities, $1,250,000 to assist evacuees and those left homeless, and the final $1,000,000 will be dedicated to rebuilding Catholic churches and schools.

**Retail Industry Leader’s Association**

Creating a DHS “Wish-List” to be distributed to member stores.

**National Air Transportation Association**

Coordinating members volunteering to fly food, supplies, generators, etc. to the area.

**PHARMACEUTICALS**

Accenture

Donated $100,000 to the Red Cross in relief supplies and are matching employee contributions up to $100,000.

**Abbott**

Pledged $2,000,000 in cash donations. Working to provide $2,000,000 in nutritional and medical supplies.

**Agen**

Cash donation of $2,500,000 million and matching employee donations.

**Amylin**

Donated $100,000 to the Red Cross and will match employee donations to an additional $100,000.

Donated $50,000 to the Pennington Medical Center at LSID to establish an emergency diabetes clinic.

**Astellas**

Donating $50,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee contributions up to $50,000. Working to send needed antibiotics to the area.

**Astrazeneca**

Initial cash donation of $1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations dollar-for-dollar.

Working with local disaster relief organizations to provide direct aid and medication.

**Bayer**

Donated $2,000,000 to the Red Cross And will match employee donations dollar-for-dollar.

**BMS**

Initial donation of $1,000,000 to the Red Cross and are matching employee donations.

Shipping infant formula to the federal government to help with the health crisis. We know it is coming. Procter & Gamble has given cash and supplies. Foreign aid, Sri Lanka has offered us money, $25,000. Well, it might as well as be $25 billion. Australia, Taiwan, countries all over the world. This is an incredible list and it is just a short list of people who are doing their part and I wanted that to be in the RECORD.

Even writers such as John Grisham, the writer of the great books from Mississippi, personally donated $5 million to the effort. Pharmaceutical companies have helped us get pharmaceuticals pre-positioned, ready for the health crisis. We know it is coming. Procter & Gamble has given cash and supplies. Foreign aid, Sri Lanka has offered us money, $25,000. Well, it might as well as be $25 billion. Australia, Taiwan, countries all over the world. This is an incredible list and it is just a short list of people who are doing their part and I wanted that to be in the RECORD.

Most of all, I want to thank the people of my State. I cannot speak for people in other States, but I know the people in my State. I have been there with

**Genzyme**


**GlaxoSmithKline**

Giving a $1,000,000 cash donation to be divided among the Red Cross, Mississippi Hurricane Fund and Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation.

Giving $2,000,000 in products and consumer goods.

Matching employee contributions. Donating medicines and health products as needed.

**Johnson & Johnson**

Working with disaster relief organizations to provide needed medicine products.

Donated $250,000 in disaster relief products. Matching employee and retirees’ donations.

**Merck**

Donated $1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations.

Working with states to provide needed medicines and vaccines.

Replacement prescription medicines for victims, hospitals and clinics in flooded areas.

**Millennium**

Allowing employees make donations to AmeriCares and the Red Cross via direct payroll deductions.

**Medical Planning Resources**

Waiting for HHS to approve a proposal for up to 40 fully-equipped 150 bed medical facilities, more than 1,000 medical providers, two TBs for patient transport and addition medical equipment and supplies.

**Novartis**

Matching employee contributions to the Novartis Hurricane Katrina Relief Gift Program. Working with local officials to ship supplies to shelters, AmeriCares, and the Red Cross.

**Organon**

Working on making a cash donation and matching employee donations in addition to independently raising money for relief efforts.

**Otsuka**

Donating $3,000,000 to the Red Cross and making additional donations to area victims.

**Pfizer**

Donating $1,000,000 to help rebuild hospitals and healthcare center.

Donating $1,000,000 divided among Red Cross, Salvation Army and the United Way. Donation medicines, consumer and animal health products.

**Procter & Gamble**

Initially donating $700,000 in cash and products. Working with the Red Cross to assess additional needs.

**Purdue Pharma**

Matching employee donations to the Red Cross and AmeriCares up to $50,000. Working with AmeriCares to provide medications.

**Roche**

Matching employee donations to the Red Cross.

Evaluating needs for products and supplies.

**Sanofi-Aventis**

Making product donations.

Evaluating needs for products and supplies.

**Sepracor**

Offering a matching gift program.

**Solovay**

Already shipped 75,000 respirators. Sending $1,000,000 in safety, medical and cleaning products.

Matching employee donations up to $500,000.

**Valeant**

Match employee donations.

Donating necessary medicines to relief efforts.

Providing support for any affected employees.

Allowing time off for employee who are assisting with the relief efforts.

**Wyeth**

Donating $1,000,000 to be distributed to the Red Cross and the Children’s Health Fund as well as matching employee donations to the Red Cross.

**PhRMA**

Matching employee donations.

**FOREIGN AID**

Australia has given a $10,000,000 to the Red Cross.

Israel is sending search and rescue units specialized in extraction from collapsed buildings.

Taiwan gave $2,000,000 to the federal government to help with recovery efforts.

**Mr. LOTT.** These are donations and assistance from private companies. I am not going to list them all now because I will exclude somebody, but Wal-Mart has been unbelievable. They donated $15 million to jump start the national relief effort. They gave $1 million to the Red Cross. Home Depot, 800 trucks staged in the area of deployment. They took food, water, flashlights, batteries, and tarps; FedEx; food retailers have been out there; automobile dealers, Nissan, Ford, Toyota; Northwest Airlines, making planes available to fly relief in; railroads, major companies, Honeywell, financial institutions, Citigroup, JPMorgan, Cingular, Verizon; oil companies, Chevron gave $5 million to the Red Cross; ExxonMobil committed $7 million to the Red Cross; American Trucking Association made a contribution and helped us resolve a technical problem we had.

Even writers such as John Grisham, the writer of the great books from Mississippi, personally donated $5 million to the effort. Pharmaceutical companies have helped us get pharmaceuticals pre-positioned, ready for the health crisis. We know it is coming. Procter & Gamble has given cash and supplies. Foreign aid, Sri Lanka has offered us money, $25,000. Well, it might as well as be $25 billion. Australia, Taiwan, countries all over the world. This is an incredible list and it is just a short list of people who are doing their part and I wanted that to be in the RECORD.

Most of all, I want to thank the people of my State. I cannot speak for people in other States, but I know the people in my State. I have been there with
them in Pascagoula and Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Poplarville, Jackson and points south. What an incredible spirit. We have been hammered, and they are on their knees. This very morning, as my staff called and tried to talk to counties, and mayors, and regional governments, counties said: Look, we need MRVs—that is food—and we could always use more fuel and we have some problems, but do not waste your time on us. Go help somebody else that needs it worse.

What we need to do is get the infrastructure back if you can’t get it for us now, but, more important, for the American people to know. People from all over America are calling and crying, saying: How can I help? You can help. What we need right now are still basics. Food is still a problem, getting it there, getting it distributed. We have now got to one place where we need to go, and the Republicans lost everything they had. We had doctors Saturday, in my hometown, wearing the same clothes they wore Sunday the week before, because they didn’t have any and they didn’t have a place to get a shower or any of that.

So we need food, clothes, gas. If you can get there with some fuel, in some of those red containers, we need that. Baby supplies—I have been amazed how quickly you need diapers and baby wipes and baby formula. We could use that. Cleaning supplies. Plywood, if you have some plywood laying around, load it and bring it down. Equipment of all types—chain saws, brooms, the basic stuff.

I believe there are people in Missouri and people in Georgia, when they know that, who will load up and they will bring it to us and they will distribute it on their own.

Yes, we need money. We don’t need cash, but we need you to contribute to the Red Cross and Salvation Army so they can pay the expenses. Now we are beginning to have a problem with the need for oxygen tanks. We have to find a way to get those and get them where people need them.

We need manpower. If you are in Oklahoma and you are retired at 65 and you want to help, get in your truck and drive on down. Don’t ask where to go and don’t worry about what to do when you get there. When you get there, look around. You will see plenty you can do. Anybody in America who wants to go there and help us, come on down. We aren’t blocking anybody.

We have opened our cities because we may have an impending health problem. I fear people are going to begin to have heart attacks and mental depression and emotional problems. If you cut your foot in Gulfport, MS, you could be exposed to some bad infections and bad diseases, so we have to be careful.

We do need more action. We get back down to what Senator Mikulski was saying. We need leaders, men and women, everywhere, who can make a fast decision, be flexible when they make that decision, think innovatively when they make a decision, and use a very difficult thing—common sense. Use common sense.

Some of the people have been denied access to fuel or told you can’t do that. It is insane. I am getting ready to leave my hometown on Wednesday night and I want to turn left, and the policeman says you can’t turn left. I said, Why not? And the policeman says, Well, I am not from here but I am told you can’t turn left. So I went down to the next interchange, made a left turn and turned right. It didn’t make any sense. No common sense. We have to do that.

I also have already reached out to one of what I think are some of the best thinkers in America and some of the people who dealt with this, and I told them that if you want to do this, you have to do it bigger, quicker, and when we build back we will be more secure and we will be able to survive maybe because of the way we build. I wanted to know how did California get Interstate 10 bridges and overpasses back in operation in 2 months? For sure it would take 2 years. What was it they had?

I found out the Governor had the authority to waive everything. He waived hearings, he waived environmental considerations. They awarded a contract under expedited procedure. They gave the contractor huge incentives to finish ahead of schedule and under the money and great penalties if they didn’t. And guess what, a 2-year project completed in 2 months and 2 days and the contractor made more off the incentive payment than he did off the basic price. OK. We need to replicate that.

I also think the Federal Government needs to think innovatively. If you look at the situation in Bay St. Louis, MS, or New Orleans, LA, what do we want to do to avoid this sort of problem in the future, and how can we do whatever we do better than we have done it?

We need a very aggressive, entrepreneurial proposal for the dramatic, bold rebuilding of the Gulf Coast. We want to rebuild, but we don’t want to build it the way it was. We want to build it bigger and stronger, maybe a little further back, maybe with the help of some incentives we haven’t had before, like tax credits. We need to help people rebuild now. They don’t need a refund next year, they need money and assistance now.

These are the times that try men’s souls, the worst I have ever seen. But I do believe we will persevere and, with God’s help and with the help of my colleagues in this great body, and with our President—who has been there, has cried with us and sweated with us, and I have looked at him and I have watched him show his compassion, and I have seen him give orders to do a better job—we will get through this.

I want to tell everybody. I am going to do something unusual, too. There are exceptions, but even the news media have been helpful. The news media in my home State don’t just tell the bad stories. We had a wedding for some evacuees. This young couple had to get married, so the people in Jackson, MS, gave the lady a wedding dress and a wedding cake, and they gave them a wedding.

They told us good stories and they told us many times when we needed to be there where the problems are. Yes, there is some criticism and pessimism to go around, but there is a lot of positive out there, too, and I am making
sure we build on that side of this equa-
tion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN), The majority whip.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, first let me say I know on behalf of ev-
everyone here how relieved we are that our colleague TRENT LOTT and his wife are safe. We all thank him for his inspiring observations about the ex-
périences of the past week, the reac-
tions of the people, the response of peo-
ple to this tragedy.

I say to our friend from Mississippi how grateful we are he is safe and sound and back among us. We will be working with him to make sure we deal with the immediate needs and make whatever adjustments we can for the future, to try to make sure the next time, God forbid something like this happens to our country, we will be even better organized to respond.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Sen-
ator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to join with my colleagues today to talk about the devastation in Lou-
исiana, Mississippi, and Alabama as a result of Hurricane Katrina. While Sen-
ator from Michigan, I wish to give my personal condolences to him and his family and all those who have suf-
fered in Mississippi as well as the other States involved.

My personal, deepest sympathies, and those from the people of Michigan as well as our prayers, go out to the fami-
lies grieving the loss of their loved ones and to the survivors who are struggling to cope and to find shelter, food, and medical care in the wake of this horrendous, this terrible disaster.

My heart goes out to all of our col-
leagues—Senator LANDRIEU, Senator VITTER, Senator LOTT, Senator COCH-
RAN, Senator SELBY, and Senator SES-
sions. Their constituents are suffering. So are particular Senator LANDRIEU and Senator LOTT, who have lost their family homes to this vicious storm. All of America is hurting with the victims and their families. We are finding ways to help and reach out and make a difference in these critical times following the hurricane.

Americans are donating record amounts of money, time, and supplies to help those who are displaced by the hurricane. The most important thing right now is to make sure we are sav-
ing lives and that we are providing food and shelter and medical care for the people affected by this tragedy.

As has happened with many other States, two jetliners arrived in Michi-
gan yesterday with the first group of 289 hurricane evacuees. Troops and vol-
unteers at our Battle Creek Air Na-
tional Guard base will provide clean shelter and food and clothing to them. They are the first of many evacuees we plan to take in Michigan, and I know this is true of the States my colleagues all over the country as peo-
ple open their hearts, open their homes, and open their pocketbooks to

share with those who have been af-
fected. Michigan’s Department of Nat-
ural Resources has loaded 25 boats and trailers with supplies and sent them to the Gulf Coast. We also have several Michigan State Police teams moving south to assist with the emergency re-
sponse.

Michigan’s Department of Transpor-
tation has fuel trucks headed south and is making arrangements for alter-
native flight operators to pick up evac-
uees, if necessary, for those needing evac-
uation.

There are so many individual stories of heroism and generosity rising from the depths of this catastrophe, both in the States affected by the hurricane and in communities all across our country. I have heard stories about indi-
viduals in New Orleans who stayed after helping their families escape to safety. They stayed to help rescue their neighbors. Two men from Simmesport took their airboat through New Orleans and transported by them-
selves and by helicopter an estimated 1,000 people to safety in the first day after the hurricane. When a news crew from North Carolina tried to interview them about their hero-
efforts, they declined, saying they had too much work to do and no time to stop.

We have all heard the heartbreaking stories of sacrifice—of the wife who let go of her husband’s hand as he clung to the wreckage of their home, giving her own life so her husband would be able to be rescued. We salute each and every one of those her-
roes, these people who put others be-
fore themselves, who made sacrifices so others could be brought to safety.

There are stories about people all across our great Nation who are an-
swering the call to help fellow Ameri-
cans. In Michigan, families and busi-
nesses are working together to help victims and families. My alma mater, Michi-
gan State University, and the University of Michigan, are collecting donations for the Red Cross at their football games. On Saturday, the Uni-
versity of Michigan fans put $40,000 into buckets as they entered the sta-
dium. One anonymous donor put in a wad of five $100 bills. Some donations are big, some are small, but they all count and the donations are coming in from all kinds of venues. Nine-year-old Rochester Hills resident Megan and her five-year-old sister Lauren set up a booth to sell lemonade, chocolate oranges, and the like to raise $300 to send to the Red Cross. The girls raised $80, and their parents promised to match it.

These are the stories that matter right now, both in the States affected and all across our country: saving lives, finding shelter, food, medical care, and raising funds to help the hur-
ricane victims.

But there is also another story to tell. It is about what has happened in the last 3 years since the President and I offered that amendment to fully respond to that re-
port now for 3 different years. I hope we are going to be able to get that done.

How much are we to invest in main-
taining the flood control projects of our Corps of Engineers? Clearly, the cur-
rent level is not enough, and people have said that it wasn’t enough. In 2002, Mike Parker, former Assistant Secretary for the Army for Civil Works, testified before the Senate Budget Committee, of which I am a member, that funding cuts to the Corps’ budget would have a negative impact on the national interest.

Are we extending our National Guard troops too thin? Thirty-five per-
cent of Louisiana’s National Guard troops—3,000 soldiers—are in Baghdad. Is that too many? Spokesman LT Andy Thaggard of the Mississippi National Guard, which has a brigade of more than 2,000 troops in central Iraq, said this about the hurricane response: “We need our people.”

Are we heeding the scientific advice that overwhelmingly points to global warming as a possible cause for in-
creased hurricanes?

We have important questions to an-
swer—serious questions for which we all need to work together to take re-
sponsibility—about how the Federal Government could have better handled the events that resulted of this catastrophe called Hurricane Katrina. We need to make sure that we are responding quickly, not only to help those in need today but, Heaven forbid, that something happens tomor-
row. We have to be ready. We have to learn from this catastrophe, from the mistakes and the lack of adequate re-
spose, and quickly fix it. That is our job.

It is absolutely critical that local communities have the tools they need to communicate, to coordinate, and to respond effectively when disasters hit. They didn’t have that in New Orleans—where the police department and three
Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank you. A few moments ago, Senator TREVOR S. LOTT of Mississippi spoke on the floor of the Senate about the pastor from my State of Illinois who just got into her truck and drove to Mississippi to see what she could do to help. There are people like her all over my State and all over this Nation.

Illinois far had received 500 Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Another 250 will arrive at the Rockford Airport today. The number could rise into the thousands.

Thirty families so far have asked to enroll their children in Illinois schools, and more are on their way.

America’s Second Harvest, based in Chicago, and the American Red Cross, filled a United Airlines flight with 200,000 items of critically needed relief supplies and sent it just a few days from Chicago to New Orleans.

I got a call while I was traveling the State last week from a Pepsi Cola distributor in Quincy, IL. He said:

"Senator, I want to send 33,000 cases of water to Louisiana, because we have been working with them ever since.

Six-hundred Illinois firefighters traveled to Baton Rouge. Personnel from the Scott Air Force Base near Belleville, IL, have been busy flying airlift missions to the disaster area.

Mr. President, 328 members of the Illinois National Guard are providing some of the big trucks they desperately need to transport people and material to the areas hard hit by Katrina. Another 500 members of the Illinois National Guard are expected to ship out to the gulf coast by tomorrow. By the end of the week, nearly one-tenth of the entire Illinois National Guard could be serving on the gulf coast.

Mr. President, 400 doctors and nurses from the Rush University Medical Center, the University of Illinois, and Cook County Hospital are ready to be deployed as soon as they get the call.

The American people, as they always do, are rising to the challenge and the heroes in this disaster, and our prayers are with the victims.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minutes are as read.
The economic aftershocks are being felt across the country. Just ask anybody who is filling up a gas tank anywhere in America.

In Illinois, our farmers, who have had a tough year with the drought and a short corn crop, now worry about getting their crops to market. Their futures are on the line as their crops sit in the fields. In Mississippi, and down the Illinois to market with the Port of New Orleans damaged.

Let us put it into some perspective for a moment.

President Kennedy said:

"To those whom much is given, much is required."

Sadly, the agenda of the Senate in the past has not reflected what I consider to be the core value and truth of America.

Last week, while the mayor of New Orleans was issuing a desperate SOS for help to rescue tens of thousands of people who were trapped in the city and in danger of dying without food, water, medical care, or shelter, the Port of New Orleans sent out his own SOS. It said:

"Call your Senators and tell them to vote this week to give a $1 trillion tax break—to the wealthiest people in America.

It is hard to understand how that could be happening in the midst of this national disaster. At a time when thousands are dispossessed, homeless, hungry, and desperate to know what their futures will be, how can we focus on tax breaks and tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America?

Majority leader Bill Frist did the right thing. He pulled the estate tax issue from the agenda. A trillion-dollar tax break for millionaires should be the last thing on our minds. We have Americans in distress. Let us not worry about making it more comfortable for those who live in the lap of luxury already.

Never in our history have we cut taxes for the wealthy during a war—which we are engaged in now in Iraq and Afghanistan—and never should we cut taxes on those in America who are well enough during a national crisis such as Hurricane Katrina. We need to put first things first.

At a time when the American family is in pain, when our neighbors are homeless in Katrina's wake, when we are losing our children in Iraq, when our hard-working friends can't afford health insurance and gas, for their cars and the basics for their kids, when the blessings of prosperity reach a few and not the many, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle must feel the hurt and understand the heart of America.

Americans will always rise to the call for shared sacrifice and unity. During World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt made a speech. This is what he said.

"Not all of us can have the privilege of fighting our enemies in distant parts of the world. Not all of us can have the privilege of working in a munitions factory or a shipyard, or on the farms or in oil fields or mines, producing the weapons or the raw materials that are needed by our Armed Forces. But there is one front, and one battle, where everybody—all of us, man, woman, and child—is in action, and will be privileged to remain in action throughout this war. That front is right here at home in our daily lives, in our daily tasks..."

FDR said:

"Here at home everyone will have the privilege of making whatever self-denial is necessary, not only to supply our fighting men, but to keep the economic structure of our country fortified and secure during the war and after the war. We will require, of course, the abandonment not only of luxuries, but of many other creature comforts."

Franklin Roosevelt was appealing to the best in America, a sense of unity and a sense of sacrifice in a time of great national need. Can anyone recall a time recently, other than September 11, when we have felt that same sense of need in this country?

President Roosevelt went on to say:

"Every loyal American is aware of his individual responsibility. Whenever I hear anyone saying, "The American people are complacent—they need to be aroused," I feel like asking them to step out of the mail that floods into the White House and into all departments of this government. The one question that recurs throughout all these thousands of letters and messages is, "What more can I do to help my country in winning this war?"

Those are the words of Franklin Roosevelt, appealing to a core American value, appealing to the American family to stand together.

After September 11, a new generation of Americans asked the same question: What can we do to help this country win this war on terrorism? Many of them, the best of them, are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 2,000 members of our military, including 77 from my home State of Illinois, have paid the ultimate price, have given up their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Four Illinoisans died in Iraq during the first 10 days in August than in any full month during the entire war. Many thousands more have suffered serious injuries. I have met some of them at Walter Reed Hospital and other veterans facilities. They are making enormous sacrifices.

After September 11, Americans answered the call for shared sacrifice at home, too. What an enormous outpouring of sentiment and generosity, including the blood banks with people standing in line, the charities with people making their contributions, the outpouring of sentiment and hope and prayers for the victims of September 11. Even people living on small fixed incomes in America asked: How can I help? They each gave what they could. Some of the same units that served in the Persian Gulf, those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, are now helping other victims at home. That is the spirit of America.

This week, as we prepare to mark the fourth anniversary of the September 11 attacks, we see the same spirit on the rise in America. The extraordinary way our country reaches out with its wallets, its hearts, opening its home to the victims of Hurricane Katrina shows us once again that the spirit of shared sacrifice is strong. That spirit must not only guide us in our conversation with America, it should guide us with our agenda in Congress.

We are all in this together, in times of war and in times of national catastrophe. It is not enough that we protect the wealthy that protect America and make us strong. What sees us through hard times has always been our belief in America, our shared commitment to one another, and our willingness to accept our fair share of sacrifice.

We have all learned a lot in the last few weeks. Sadly, many believed our homeland security was up to the challenge and the task. It did not work in many parts of the Gulf coast, certainly did not work in New Orleans. This hurricane, leading to a breach of a levee, has resulted in the loss of thousands of innocent lives.

Many felt if we faced that kind of catastrophe, whether it be a natural disaster or some terrorist attack involving biological or chemical weapon, we were ready to evacuate innocent people, to move folks out of hospitals so they could be taken care of in safer places. But we know now from what happened just a few days ago that we are not prepared. We are not ready. We are not as safe and secure as we should be in this time of danger in the world, danger from terrorist attack, danger from natural disaster.

We need to do more. We need to focus on making America safe. We need to focus on thanking those who are giving so much every minute of every day to help those in need. And we need to focus on our prayers and thoughts directed to the victims of this terrible tragedy.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Martinez). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to speak, as my colleagues have before me, about the terrible tragedy in the Gulf Coast. As the rescue and recovery in the Gulf Coast continues, as we pray for each life, my thoughts, for instance, always go back to 9/11, the tragedy that befell our city and State.

It is sort of a horrible thing to say, in a certain sense, about the number of people who died, but people thought the number of deaths in our State and our city would be much greater than it was. I think about a week after the planes hit the Twin Towers, most people were talking about over 10,000 people dying. As I said, I feel awkward
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saying this, but it is a true thought we all have, that only 3,000 were found to have passed. Still, it is an awful number, and the families miss those people every single day. I knew some of them myself. I miss them and think of them. But we hope and pray this happens in Louisiana. We have heard—well, the number of deaths are significantly lower.

One other thought I want to mention about New York, before getting into the specifics, is that this morning I was privileged to attend a groundbreaking for the new New York/New Jersey rail station to be built at Ground Zero. It will be a beautiful and sweeping station. The architect, the world-famous Mr. Calatrava, got the idea of a child releasing a dove at the station. At least by the designs and pictures I have seen, it will be a soaring and sweeping station.

At that memorial I thought about the whole people of the Gulf. I said to them that a week after the planes hit the Twin Towers, we were filled with despair, anguish, anger, and thought there would never be any hope after something that horrible happened. Then condition is a remarkable one. And, of course, hope is always with us, as the Greek mythological story of Pandora’s box shows.

The groundbreaking that Senators Clinton and Lautenberg and Corzine and I attended this morning makes it clear that Governors of New York and New Jersey shows us there is always hope. This station—a beautiful, sweeping, soaring station—will rise like a phoenix out of the ashes of 9/11. I say to my colleagues who represent the Gulf States, as well as to all the people in the Gulf States: Hope will return. It is hard to see now, with so much devastation and so much anguish and so much sadness, but it will return. Just remember that we are rebuilding ourselves, hopefully to be bigger and better and stronger than we were before 9/11, I know that, too, will happen with the people in the gulf region. So my thoughts are with them. All of our thoughts are with them.

Because of the devastation of Katrina, we confront one of the most extraordinary challenges this Nation has ever faced: To feed, to clothe, to house, to help an estimated 1 million Americans who were displaced and who now will never return to their homes.

The disaster area is some 90,000 square miles. That is almost double the entire State of New York. It is an area nearly as large as the United Kingdom. The amount of damage to the homes, the businesses, the schools, the infrastructure, the roads, the bridges is in the tens of billions of dollars, most certainly. It is already estimated, for instance, that Louisiana alone has lost at least 110,000 businesses. And that number is likely to climb as we calculate the full extent of the damage.

The images on TV are devastating. They are of hungry, weeping children, of families returning to the destroyed remains of their neighborhoods, discovering they have lost everything they have owned, from precious family keepsakes to their homes and cars and livelihoods. The pictures of angry, frightened people, with nowhere to go, searching for their children, to them and their loved ones rings a deep chord in every one of our hearts. And there are the deaths of so many. The psychological toll of this tragedy will be heavy indeed, especially, of course, for those who learned after 9/11 is to pay particular attention to the children. Sometimes it took them, in New York, over a year to speak about what they had seen.

When my city faced a devastating attack, America stood with us in our time of need. I want to assure the people of the Gulf region that New Yorkers—I think I can say probably just about every one of the 19 million New Yorkers—will stand with you, the people of the Gulf region, as you stood with us in the dark days immediately following 9/11.

The love and support New Yorkers received from the rest of the country after 9/11 meant so much in the wake of those attacks and the long, difficult road to recovery. I want the people of New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast to know we will support them, too, no matter how long, no matter how difficult their recovery may be. The funds we will make available every day to help now, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, and on into the future.

We took the first step last week when Congress provided $10.5 billion in desperately needed disaster relief funds to the devastated region. But as I learned in the aftermath of 9/11, money is only the first step. The next step is to ensure that bureaucratic rules and regulations do not prevent the money from being known where it is most needed. We discovered after 9/11 that the rules governing how Federal dollars can be spent and benefits accessed—from HUD to the Department of Transportation to the IRS—became insurmountable obstacles for so many of our citizens in need. And many of the problems faced after 9/11 will be faced a thousandfold for Hurricane Katrina because there are so many more people and businesses that were hurt.

It is essential that Congress take action as quickly as possible on as many fronts as possible. Every day makes a difference for those seeking a place to live, a way to get their children back to school, to get health care, to get a job. So many jobs are gone. Furthermore, after 9/11, Congress tackled many of the problems facing Hurricane Katrina victims and has a template to work with. And Senator Reid, working with our committee leaders, has already compiled a list of action items Congress should address this week.

Before I get into those action items, I want to say one thing. We do need the most competent people running the agencies that are in charge of this recovery effort. And I heard, an hour or so ago on the floor, our colleague, Senator Mikulski, speak on that issue. We all know Senator Mikulski is somebody who knows FEMA and the agencies involved with recovery extremely well because as chairperson and as ranking Democrat on the relevant appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, she knows that she is a temperate person in the sense that she does not regularly get up and demand that people step down. But when she spoke on the floor an hour ago and said that the FEMA head, Brown, should either step down or be forced to step down, I think all of us should listen to her. These are serious times, and fingers of blame should not be pointed at any one place. But to make sure we have the most competent people in charge as the rescue effort is very important. So again I want to urge my colleagues to listen to what Senator Mikulski had to say because I think it is extremely important to us.

Now, getting back to the list that Senator Reid, working with some of our committee leaders, has compiled, it is a list of action items, and I hope Congress will address it this week. The list includes providing Medicaid, housing vouchers, and emergency cash for all displaced victims, waiving deadlines, and expediting applications where necessary, and waiving the requirements to prove residency or asset levels or to provide other paperwork which, of course, so many of those who have lost everything in their lives no longer have. The Reid package also proposes tax incentives for families who take in victims, and identifying Federal facilities that will accommodate them.

The proposal also focuses on helping the tens of thousands of children who need to get enrolled quickly into schools around the country by providing those schools with financial assistance and waiving bureaucratic requirements for enrollment. I believe this must be one of our highest priorities. Since the hurricane occurred right at the beginning of the school year, there is not a day to waste. We cannot let our children simply hang out there without providing for their education, which, Katrina or not, means their future.

My heart grieves at the sight of so many of these children sitting around the Astrodome and other shelters with no place to go. It is September. Let us pledge to get all those children, who have faced so much trauma already, into school by the end of the month. We must provide the Federal dollars needed to bolster those schools that are opening their hearts and doors to these children, from Houston to San Francisco to Vermont. We must also see that these children are well fed—food and shelter and school supplies—to keep their education on track.
We must also make sure our brave National Guard personnel, who are on the front lines abroad in Iraq and now here at home, receive all the assistance they need, from debt and student loan relief to allowing them to qualify for Federal health care and retirement benefits. Our support of these American heroes nothing less.

Finally, the Reid proposal addresses what may ultimately be our most pressing challenge—finding employment for the victims of Katrina, by making eligible to receive the Work Opportunity Tax Credit of up to $2,400 per worker they hire. We need to do this and much more. With so many businesses and so much infrastructure destroyed, we will need both the Federal Government and the private sector to step to the plate and get people back to work.

Congress can and should tackle right away in these few weeks the problems that have been mentioned above. We should start with what we were able to do after 9/11 for New York. With a million people in need of assistance, it is inexcusable that we would delay. Let us move this package this week, not next week or the week after.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleagues and I have spoken about the almost unbelievable disaster that has occurred in the Gulf region. Only now are we fully beginning to understand the lives lost and the complete devastation of the region. I know there will be a lot of time, perhaps, to evaluate what kind of emergency preparedness existed or why proper preparedness did not exist. This is the moment and the time for all of us to concentrate on finding the survivors.

There are so many victims. We know that many of those who have died in this disaster have not yet been found. We know there are survivors who have not yet been found. We are nearly certain of that. This is an important time to marshal the resources of this country, to effectively organize the resources to search for survivors, and then to help those who have been made victims by this devastating hurricane.

Many of us have suffered disasters. In North Dakota, in 1997, there were the Red River Valley floods, when the entire city of Grand Forks was evacuated. It was an enormous evacuation of people. Thank God at that point we did not lose lives. We lost a great deal of property and people suffered and had very tough times, but there was not loss of life with respect to those floods. But an entire city of over 50,000 people was evacuated from those floods. I recall President Clinton flying into Grand Forks on Air Force One and meeting with a large number of people who had been evacuated to a hangar at Air Force base. I remember what President Clinton said to them that day. He said very simply: You are not alone.

That is the message that our country must give to all of those who are victims of Hurricane Katrina: You are not alone. This country doesn’t move ahead by leaving some behind. This country knows your plight, knows the despair of having lost what you have worked so hard for, the loss of lives, and extends a hand to say we want to help you during these difficult times.

There are so many needs and so many things that have to be done: food and shelter, jobs, education, short-term spending money to get on your feet if you have lost everything. Those are the things that, in a package of assistance by the Congress, need to be addressed quickly.

I know there are some who tend to believe that Government ought not exist. They think Government is the problem. But when something like this happens, we together, through our Government, work to extend a helping hand. This Congress cannot be reticent about arriving at that point to extend a helping hand to provide for the needs of people who have been displaced, who have suffered and are victims of this devastating hurricane.

My thoughts and prayers are with all of the victims of this devastating hurricane that has displaced, some say, 1 million people and caused massive loss of life. While there are public policy issues that should discuss and will discuss in the coming days and months, all of us, as a country, will pray for those poor people who have suffered immensely in recent days. We hope the searches to find survivors continue to move forward and that we find additional survivors. And we hope in every possible way those who have been the victims of this hurricane understand this is a great country and this country extends its hand to say to them: You are not alone. Actions by this Congress will manifest that we ought to do that quickly and urgently.

GASOLINE PRICES AND WINDFALL PROFITS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I also wish to speak about a subject that has some relationship but an issue that the American people were facing before the hurricane hit. Prior to the devastating Hurricane Katrina, the Energy Committee had scheduled a hearing on gasoline and oil prices. That hearing is now going on. I spent the last 2 hours attending it. It was scheduled before this hurricane. Obviously, when the hurricane hit, a number of oil refineries and a couple of major pipelines shut down. It has had an impact beyond that which was occurring prior to the hurricane.

Prior to the hurricane hitting, oil prices had already risen $30 a barrel above what they existed a year and a half to 2 years ago. The major integrated oil companies that have become larger through mergers and concentra-

tion in recent years were already earning record profits.

Last evening, a friend of mine went to a gas station and pumped gasoline into his car and his son’s car, about 15 gallons in each car. The bill was $103 dollars. Every American citizen under-