method of tracking missing family members and reuniting them with their loved ones. I spoke to people who were desperate to learn the whereabouts of their loved ones. The pain in their voices was evident and made worse by the scarcity of available information. A number of websites, registries and other electronic bulletins have sprung up in response. CNN and other cable channels have taken on this challenge. Children are going before the cameras seeking relatives. What is the federal responsibility to ensure a comprehensive emergency database for such catastrophes? We need to reevaluate existing emergency management practices and policies. What are the skill sets needed to assure those in charge are able to properly and aggressively manage a widespread emergency? How much can we realistically rely on the military? Can and should those capabilities be developed to a greater extent in the civilian population? Do we overextend and over depend on local responders who—by virtue of being personally affected by a cataclysmic event—are unable to provide their talents when needed?

We can, we must, and we will do everything possible to make sure our lack of preparedness and slow response to this catastrophic on-going tragedy never happens again.

REGARDING THE $10.5 BILLION AID PACKAGE FOR THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, “Four years ago this month, the City I represent fell victim to a major disaster now infamously known as 9/11. When that happened we received the world’s sympathy and we expected and received the support of the federal government to help us rebuild. Last December, this world came to the aid of Southeast Asian nations when the Indian Ocean leapt upon the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka and other coastal nations. The world responded and the U.S. Federal government stepped up to the plate.

Once again, disaster has struck, this time in the form of hurricane Katrina. Again, thousands of people will have lost their lives and ten times that have lost their homes and livelihood. The world is offering its sympathy and support and Congress is meeting its responsibility by providing the Federal Government with $10.5 billion in initial emergency aid. Certainly more will be needed, and more will be provided.

Additionally, I urge my fellow members of Congress to work with their local communities on neighborhood efforts to provide support for the relief efforts. As Americans we have many differences amongst us. Differences in race, religion and political ideologies to name a few. However, we have two commonalities that supercede those differences—we are all Americans and we are all human beings. As it was four years ago in my City of New York, it is today in our Gulf region. Let us respond today as we did then with overwhelming compassion and support for fellow members of our American-human family.”

SECOND KATRINA SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

HON. ROSA L. DELAURO
OF CONNECTICUT
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, September 8, 2005

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, rescue personnel from across the country are continuing the relief effort while ordinary citizens in cities throughout America are volunteering and giving. They are taking in those who have lost everything. Heroism is winning out. And the funding in this underlying bill will help ensure that it continues.

But as we work to get this relief effort right, Congress should recognize how we got to this point. That starts with understanding what this Administration has done to FEMA. Last year, former director of FEMA James Lee Witt told us, and I quote—“Scientists tell us that we are going to be seeing more catastrophic natural disaster events in the 21st Century than we ever have seen. And yet we have destroyed the one agency that not only responds to those events, but also works with state and local governments to do pre-disaster mitigation prevention before that risk could ever happen, to minimize that risk.'’

As long as our nation gazes upon the devastation in this once-vibrant city of New Orleans, it will remain a symbol of this Administration’s misplaced priorities—its misplaced values. The Obey Amendment would have gone a long way toward restoring FEMA to the efficient, non-political agency it was during emergencies like the Oklahoma City bombings and the 9/10s. In doing so, we would ensure that never again in the face of a national disaster will the Federal government and the agency responsible for emergency relief fail to act or fail to lead. We owe the victims of Katrina and the heroes of this rescue effort nothing less.

BEATRICE AVINA: WINNER OF THE 2005 JOHNS RETIREE OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, by the time Bea began her career in 1984 with the AFL-CIO Community Services Department with United Way of San Diego County, she had already learned that families have special needs due to unexpected events and circumstances. Those things she learned while she was a member of UFWI and Seafarers International.

Addressing those special needs gave her an advantage when chairing the Federal Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program, Catholic Charities’ SDG&E Utilities Program, and working in cooperation with the San Diego Food Bank. Under her leadership, the Adopt a Family Program and the Toy & Holiday Food Drive were developed and still continue to be a success.

Bea Avina has always been dedicated to bringing her fellow brothers and sisters social and economic justice. She is a prime example of a person who always puts her neighbor’s needs first.
many times with personnel awards including Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, the Presidential Service Badge, and six Marine Corps Good Conduct Medals. For 20 years, he has helped make our country a safer place for all of us to live. I ask my colleagues in the 109th Congress to join me in congratulating him, and wishing him well in his retirement as well as all his future endeavors.

HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to extend my deepest condolences to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, who lost their lives, their homes, their communities, and their livelihoods. My thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

I have been very disappointed in what appears to have been a slow federal response to this disaster. In addition, many appeared to have ignored warnings over the years about the potential vulnerabilities and the steps that could be taken to prepare for this situation.

It is my hope that we can come together on a bipartisan basis and work to review and assess the adequacy of the early federal, state, and local preparedness. We must also continue to focus on providing immediate assistance to those in need. I am pleased that the Congress convened on an emergency basis to provide more than 10 billion dollars for disaster funds. This statutory framework is designed to provide the early federal, state, and local governments the resources they need to respond to these emergencies.

The assistance that we are providing to the victims of Hurricane Katrina is too important to be misspent. The Federal government has a responsibility to ensure the proper and effective distribution of aid. Any dollar lost to fraud or mismanagement is a dollar that does not make it to someone who is in need.

With the passage of the Stafford Act (Public Law 93–288) and its subsequent amendments, the Congress put in place specific requirements for the effective allocation of disaster funds. This statutory framework is designed to protect those resources from those who would seek to gain at the expense of the victims of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. With sound management, appropriate controls and accountability, we will have the means to continue to provide resources to those who are truly in need of assistance.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of these supplemental appropriations for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

As someone who helped rebuild my city, New York City, after the terror attacks of 9/11 and as someone who has lost over 110 constituents, I can attest to the tragedy of the World Trade Center. I know the pain and suffering the people of the Gulf Coast are feeling and their despair.

When America hurts, America helps. The damage of Hurricane Katrina is much greater than the physical destruction that was left in its wake. And it is much more than the psychological trauma that has affected these survivors who are now displaced. The damage is so great, and the lack of response from our Federal Government in the immediate days after this storm was so small, that it begins for this Congressman, for this country, to lose faith that our Government will truly take a back burner, while these people suffer.

We must work to bring the full Federal resources of this government to help these people get back into their homes and quickly as possible, and to rebuild their lives. We must use this tragedy as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for these residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. For one-third of the people of the city of New Orleans to be living in poverty, sub-standard housing with poor healthcare, is inexcusable in this the richest country in the world. We must raise living standards through job training, better schools and stronger neighborhoods and eradicate the hopeless conditions so many Americans live in not only in the Gulf region but throughout our Nation. Let us use this terrible storm to learn a lesson and commit to never do it again.

When we choose to rebuild on the foundations of the 19th Century we will bring Americans who are living in 19th Century poverty into the 21st Century through better housing, healthcare and education.