MEEHAN: Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to change my vote from yea to nay.

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.
before the date on which the President declared that a major disaster related to Hurricane Rita exists in such area.

(6) MAJOR DISASTER.—The term ‘‘major disaster’’ means a disaster declared by the President in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), related to Hurricane Katrina or Rita.

(b) REALLOTMENTS OF AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In reallooting amounts to States under section 110(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 730(b)(2)) for fiscal year 2005, the Commissioner shall give preference to affected States.

(2) WAIVERS.—If the Commissioner realloots amounts under section 110(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to an affected State for fiscal year 2005, or returns to the State of Louisiana for fiscal year 2006 the funds that Louisiana had previously relinquished pursuant to section 110(b)(1) of that Act (29 U.S.C. 730(b)(1)) due to an inability to meet the non-Federal share requirements, the Commissioner may grant a waiver of non-Federal share requirements for fiscal year 2005 to the affected State or Louisiana, respectively.

(3) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ‘‘non-Federal share requirements’’ means non-Federal share requirements applicable to the program under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.).

(c) USE OF AMOUNTS REALLOTTED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973.—

(1) TO PAY FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES.—An affected State that receives amounts reallocated under section 110(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 730(b)(2)) for fiscal year 2005 (as described in subsection (b)) or returned under subsection (b) may use the amounts—

(A) to pay for vocational rehabilitation services described in section 103 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 723) (which may include training, mentoring, or job shadowing opportunities), for individuals with disabilities affected by Hurricane Katrina or Rita who desire to participate in vocational rehabilitation services in areas in which the individuals resided on the date that was 7 days before the date on which the President declared that a major disaster related to Hurricane Rita exists in such areas;

(B) to pay for other activities in accordance with title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3864, the Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3864. H.R. 3864, the Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Affected by Hurricane Katrina or Rita Act of 2005, is a bill that I introduced to provide immediate and critical assistance to individuals with disabilities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Since I introduced H.R. 3864 last week, I have worked with my colleagues to revise the language to create an even better bill, and the amendment I am introducing today reflects the agreement we were able to reach.

I urge my colleagues to adopt this commonsense hurricane relief bill that will allow individuals with disabilities greater access to vocational rehabilitation services so they may return to work in the aftermath of these devastating hurricanes.

The measure before us today deals with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a law that provides job training and other services designed to increase employment options for individuals with disabilities. The bill will provide greater flexibility to the United States Department of Education and the Rehabilitation Services Administration so sufficient funds are made available to States impacted by these hurricanes.

Specifically, this legislation requires the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration to give preference to States like Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and others that have taken in large numbers of evacuees when unused vocational rehabilitation services funds are reallocated at the end of this fiscal year under the Rehabilitation Act.

It also assists impacted States by providing a one-time waiver of the requirement that those States match the funds they receive with non-Federal sources. This will provide the impacted States the necessary flexibility to maximize the use of both State and Federal funds to serve the citizens of those States during the critical months ahead.

The bill also ensures that States like Louisiana will continue to have access to funds under the Rehabilitation Act that had been relinquished to the Department of Education prior to the hurricane. Finally, the measure ensures that States that receive a reallocation of vocational rehabilitation funds to use those funds to provide services to individuals with disabilities affected by the hurricanes. This will give these residents an opportunity to contribute to the economic development of their communities and participate in the reconstruction efforts.

As everyone knows, my State of Louisiana has suffered through two major hurricanes this last month. I spent this past weekend in my district as we prepared for and dealt directly with the aftermath of Hurricane Rita. Those affected by this hurricane and Hurricane Katrina continue to display tremendous courage, and I appreciate all that the American people and this Congress have done to assist our region.

This bill represents yet another step we will take to provide needed resources to the people of the gulf coast, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank also the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and friend, for introducing this commonsense hurricane relief bill that will offer relief to his constituents and many other Americans with disabilities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

This bill offers additional funds to Gulf region vocational rehabilitation programs and offers the flexibility needed to continue services.

Madam Speaker, Louisiana is in a difficult position of not having met their Federal share for funds already allotted. Under H.R. 3864, Louisiana can apply for a waiver of that requirement. I commend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) for introducing this legislation to take care of that.

In the reallocation of unused funds from the previous fiscal year, this bill will give priority to those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Impacted States can then apply for waivers in meeting their non-Federal share of the reallocated funds as well.

Madam Speaker, impacted Gulf coast States can use these funds to pay for vocational rehabilitation services that allow individuals with disabilities to contribute to the rebuilding of their local communities. I am pleased to support this bill, which not only offers relief from previous obligations but also provides additional resources necessary to continue services. Moreover, it reinforces the value of having community members participate in the revitalization of their neighborhoods.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) for introducing this very much-needed legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to support its swift passage.

I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE). He has been quite an ally in this process.
Mr. DAVIDS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which provides needed assistance to individuals with disabilities who are affected by the recent hurricanes. The bill requires the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration to give preference to States affected by Hurricanes Katrina and/or Rita with respect to the re-allocation of non-federal funds for vocational rehabilitation services. This provision is a necessary step in channeling monies to enable individuals with disabilities affected by either hurricane to participate in reconstruction or other major disaster assistance activities. A strength of this legislation is that it permits affected States to use these re-allotted funds to pay for vital vocational rehabilitation services. This includes important activities such as training, mentoring, or job shadowing that contribute to the economic growth and development of individuals with disabilities as well as to States seeking to re-enter the workforce. The affected States will not have to draw upon their already depleted funds to pay for these critical services, and individuals with disabilities will be able to participate in the rebuilding of their towns and cities, which in turn will gain from the valuable services that individuals with disabilities can provide.

In my district I have seen the amazing work that disabled individuals are capable of. The Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind employs blind individuals to build clocks for the Federal Government. I am glad to support a bill that recognizes and encourages the contributions of this population.

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill to ensure that individuals with disabilities may gain access to the vocational rehabilitation services they need in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I thank my colleagues on the Education and the Workforce Committee, Mr. BOUSTANY, for his work on this bill and other legislation to bring additional flexibility and resources to the Gulf Coast region. He and another of my Committee colleagues, Mr. JINDAL, continue to work tirelessly on behalf of their constituents and all Gulf Coast residents to ensure that we act where necessary to assist in the recovery efforts.

This bill is critical for individuals with disabilities who are seeking to re-enter the workforce in the aftermath of the two hurricanes. Under the Rehabilitation Act, States must return unused vocational rehabilitation funds at the end of each fiscal year to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, RSA. The RSA then reallocates those funds to States based on the needs of their respective residents. H.R. 3864 directs the Commissioner of the RSA to give consideration to States affected by the hurricanes in this year's reallocation of those unused funds. This bill also provides significant flexibility for States impacted by the hurricanes. Under the Rehabilitation Act, States that receive a re-allocation are required to match those funds with non-federal sources. This bill provides a reasonable, one-time waiver of that requirement for States affected by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita. This recognizes the unique circumstances faced by these States and ensures that State officials will not have to lay off personnel as they seek to take advantage of these additional resources.

Madam Speaker, in the month since Hurricane Katrina, the House has approved a variety of legislation to cut through bureaucratic red tape and enhance flexibility in the affected region. We've addressed the needs of college students, workers, and their families. With this bill, we turn our attention to the needs of individuals with disabilities as well. As many of these individuals seek to return to work and around the Gulf Coast region, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this measure to ensure that they may do just that.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. BOUSTANY, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 386) expressing the sense of the House regarding July 2005 measures of extreme repression on part of the Cuban Government and in support of H.R. 3864, as amended.

The question is taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, H.R. 3864, as amended.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to assist individuals with disabilities affected by Hurricane Katrina or Rita through vocational rehabilitation services.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING JULY 2005 MEASURES OF EXTREME REPRESSION ON PART OF CUBAN GOVERNMENT

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 388) expressing the sense of the House regarding July 2005 measures of extreme repression on the part of the Cuban Government against members of Cuba's prodemocracy movement, calling for the immediate release of all political prisoners, the legalization of political parties and free elections in Cuba, urging the European Union to re-examine its policy toward Cuba, and calling on the representative of the United States to the 62d session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to ensure a robust discussion calling upon the Cuban regime to end its human rights violations, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 388

Whereas the European Union instituted measures against the Cuban Government after the Cuban Government exercised extreme repression on peaceful prodemocracy activists in 2003, but in January 2005 the European Union suspended its measures;

Whereas on July 13, 2005, the Cuban Government detained 24 human rights activists who were participating in a solemn event in remembrance of the victims of the tugboat massacre of innocent civilians by the Cuban government of July 13, 1994; were human rights activists Rene Montes de Oca, Emilio Leiva Perez, Camilo Cairo Falcon, Manuel Perez Soira, Roberto Guerra Perez, and Lazaro Alonso Roman re-pressed by the Cuban government in 2005, and face trumped up charges of ‘disorderly conduct’;

Whereas on July 14, 2005, the Government of France invited the Cuban regime’s Foreign Minister to the French Embassy in Havana for a ‘Bastille Day’ celebration; and?

Whereas members of the Cuban Government’s opposition in Cuba sought, on July 22, 2005, in Havana, to demonstrate in front of the French Embassy in a peaceful and orderly manner on behalf of all Cuban political prisoners, and to protest the current policy of the European Union toward the Cuban Government;

Whereas the Cuban regime mobilized its repressive state security apparatus to intimidate and harass the peaceful demonstrators in order to prevent prodemocracy activists from reaching the Embassy;

Whereas the Cuban regime arrested and detained many who were planning on attending the peaceful protest of July 22 in front of the French Embassy, including Naiker Tamayo, Beatriz Roque Cabello, Felix Antonio Bonne Carcasses, Rene Gomez Manzano, Jose Javier Baven, Maria de los Angeles Paredes, Ernesto Colale Gavara, Emilia Maria Alonso Del Monte, Jose Escuredo Marrero, Uldarico Garcia, Yusmil Gil Portel, Oscar Mario Gonzalez Perez, Humberto Guerra, Luis Cesar Guerra, Julio Cesar Lopez Rodriguez, Miguel Lopez Santos, Jacqueline Montes de Oca, Raul Martinez Prieto, Ricardo Medina, Raul Falcon, Saluditas Carcasse, Georgina Noa Montes, Niurka Maria Peña Rodriguez, Luis Manuel Peñalver, Pastor Perez Sanchez, Jesus Adolfo Reyes Sanchez, Gloria Cristina Rodriguez Gonzalez, Juan Mario Rodriguez Guillen, Miguel Valdes Tamayo, Santiago Valdeollosa Perez, and Jesus Alejandro Vitorce Molina; and

Whereas Rene Gomez Manzano, a distinguished leader of the struggle for freedom in Cuba, and other prodemocracy activists, continue to be detained without cause;

Whereas hundreds of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience languish in the Cuban regime’s prisons for the crime of seeking democracy for Cuba;

Whereas thousands of others languish in Cuba’s totalitarian prisons accused of ‘common crimes’, such as illegally attempting to leave the country and violating the norms of the totalitarian economic system, who should be recognized as prisoners of conscience because they are being jailed for attempting to exercise personal freedoms;

Whereas the Cuban regime has arrested more than 400 young Cubans, from late 2004 through June of 2005, and according to the regime, the annual incarceration count was put out as a ‘measure of pre-delinquency security’;

Whereas the Cuban regime has continued to repress attempts by the Cuban people to bring democratic change to the island and denies universally recognized liberties, including freedom of speech, association, movement, and the press;

Whereas the Cuban Government remains designated as one of 6 state sponsors of terrorism by the United States Department of State;

Whereas the Cuban Government continues to provide safe harbor to fugitives from United States law enforcement agencies and to international terrorists;

Whereas the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes global human rights standards, asserts that all