

unprepared to respond to such an extraordinary disaster. And the floodwaters exposed a deep-seated poverty that has cut people off from the opportunities of our country. So last year, I made a simple pledge: The Federal Government would learn the lessons of Katrina; we would do what it takes, and we would stay as long as it takes to help our brothers and sisters build a new gulf coast, where every citizen feels part of the great promise of America.

That was the same pledge I repeated to Rocky during his visit to the White House. This pledge meant stronger levees and rebuilt homes and new infrastructure. It also means safe streets and neighborhoods filled with locally-owned businesses and more opportunities for everyone.

Next week Laura and I will return to Mississippi and New Orleans to meet with local citizens and officials and review the progress we have made. The Federal Government has conducted a thorough review of its response to natural disasters, and we're making reforms that will improve our response to future emergencies. With help from Congress, we have committed \$110 billion to the recovery effort, and we are playing a vital role in helping people clear debris, repair and rebuild their homes, reopen their businesses and schools, and put their lives back together.

The Federal Government will continue to do its part. Yet a reborn gulf coast must

reflect the needs, the vision, and the aspirations of the people of Mississippi and Louisiana. And their State and local officials have a responsibility to help set priorities and make tough decisions, so people can plan their futures with confidence.

One year after the storms, the gulf coast continues down the long road to recovery. In Mississippi and Louisiana, we can see many encouraging signs of recovery and renewal, and many reminders that hard work still lies ahead. This work will require the sustained commitment of our Government, the generosity and compassion of the American people, and the talent and vision of people determined to restore their homes, neighborhoods, and cities. We will stay until the job is done, and by working together, we will help our fellow citizens along the gulf coast write a new future of hope, justice, and opportunity for all.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:25 a.m. on August 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Lunch Meeting With Community Leaders in Biloxi, Mississippi *August 28, 2006*

Listen, Laura and I are pleased to be down here again, and we want to thank a lot of the community leaders from the gulf coast region of Mississippi for sharing their thoughts and their concerns and their hopes and their aspirations.

I was just commenting upon how clean the beaches look, and that wasn't a given a year ago. Those beaches were cluttered with debris and garbage, the great, beautiful beaches here had been destroyed. And now they speak to the hope of this part of the world.

There's still a lot of problems left, Governor, but the people down here need to know the Federal Government is committed to working with you and the local people, and that, even though we've been through about one year together, one year doesn't mean that we'll forget. As a matter of fact, now is the time to renew our commitment and to let the people down here know that we will stay involved and helping the people of Mississippi rebuild their lives.

The truth of the matter is, the ultimate future for this region down here depends on the people of Mississippi. It requires the spirit and the courage of the people

of this part of the world to rebuild, and I'm confident that's going to be the case.

We saw that spirit right after the storm hit, and we still see that spirit. And so I want to thank the good folks for letting us come by and say hello. We value our friends down here, and we really appreciate the good people of the gulf coast of Mississippi for what you stand for.

Governor, thank you; appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:39 p.m. in the Biloxi Schooner Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi.

Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in Biloxi *August 28, 2006*

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm glad to be back here in Biloxi, and I'm glad Laura came with me. I've been in this neighborhood before. As a matter of fact, I was here a couple of days after Katrina hit. It's amazing, isn't it? It's amazing what the world looked like then and what it looks like now.

I remember meeting Patrick Wright. Remember, Patrick? I don't know if you all remember the picture of me seeing this fellow sitting in what used to be his home, a pile of rubble. Patrick, it's good to see you.

I also met Sandy and Lynn Patterson when I was walking down the street, your neighbor. They—well, just about everybody here, they'd lost everything they owned. People can't imagine what the world looked like then. I went by their home—just came out of their home. It's got air-conditioning—[laughter]—and electricity. You can see the reconstruction effort beginning here in this part of the world.

It's a sense of renewal here. It may be hard for those of you who have endured the last year to really have that sense of

change, but for a fellow who was here and now a year later comes back, things are changing. And I congratulate you for your courage and your perseverance.

And there's still challenges. There's still more to be done. You can see it with the temporary trailers. I feel the quiet sense of determination that's going to shape the future of Mississippi. And so I've come back on this anniversary to thank you for your courage and to let you know, the Federal Government stands with you still. Laura and I really care for the people whose lives have been affected. We understand the trauma, and we thank you for your determination.

I want to thank Governor Haley Barbour and Marsha for joining us today. I appreciate the Federal Coordinator of Gulf Coast Rebuilding, Don Powell. He's my friend from Texas. We've got two of the military who helped after the storm. I think they made an enormous difference in people's lives: General Russ Honore and Admiral Thad Allen. Thank you for joining us. You've got two fine United States Senators from Mississippi, Thad Cochran and Trent