

have displayed great courage and resolve to help their constituents through the aftermath of this natural disaster. In my Congressional District in Houston tens of thousands of evacuees are being sheltered and fed. In fact, Americans throughout this country are stepping up to help those affected by this disaster. It demonstrates that once again in our darkest hour that we have united as a Nation to help our brothers and sisters who now seek to rebuild their lives.

Dollars spent through the Department of Defense must be re-channelled directly to the affected regions and people in order to provide relief in a timely manner.

Furthermore, we must find steps to move forward immediately to help those affected by this disaster and to try to prevent such an ineffective response from taking place again. I plan to introduce a number of legislative measures that will seek to alleviate the suffering of the survivors of the most devastating natural disaster in modern American history.

Hurricane Katrina has traumatized children on a frightening scale. According to the United Nations, as many as 400,000 children have been left homeless. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimated that the greatest impact of the tragedy would be upon the young and that children make up between a third and a quarter of those affected by the catastrophe.

Of an estimated 1.32 million people made homeless, there are around 300,000 to 400,000 children—most of whom will remain so for weeks or months! This is the impetus behind legislation I plan to introduce that would provide a one-time grant for relief programs that would serve these children.

I along with my Judiciary colleagues led by Ranking Member CONYERS will introduce legislation to protect the hundreds of thousands of families and small businesses financially devastated by Hurricane Katrina from being penalized by debtor provisions contained in the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005, scheduled to take effect on October 17, 2005. This legislation is based in part on an amendment I offered at the markup of the Bankruptcy bill. We expect a Senate counterpart to be introduced this week as well.

We are concerned that just as survivors of Hurricane Katrina are beginning to rebuild their lives, the new bankruptcy law will result in a further and unintended financial whammy. Unfortunately, the new law is likely to have the consequence of preventing devastated families from being able to obtain relief from massive and unexpected new financial obligations they are incurring by forcing them to repay their debt with income they no longer have, but which is counted by the law.

Our bill makes several important adjustments. First, it would specify that individuals who are victims of natural disasters, and who incurred a substantial portion of their debt as a result of that disaster, are not subject to the “means test” and therefore cannot be forced into burdensome repayment plans. Although the current law includes an exception to the means test if the debtor can demonstrate “special circumstances,” qualifying for such an exemption will be quite costly and burdensome, and require numerous detailed filings and legal certifications. This is the last thing a hurricane victim should need to worry about. Since the current bankruptcy law counts all in-

come earned in the six months prior to the bankruptcy as part of future income, this means that hurricane victims who have lost their jobs will be considered high income debtors who are presumed to be abusing the bankruptcy system. This is obviously absurd; so our bill gives the hurricane victims an automatic carve out, as we already do for certain categories of veterans.

The legislation we plan to introduce will prevent new bankruptcy provisions from having adverse and unintended consequences for the hundreds of thousands of individuals now facing financial ruin by providing needed flexibility for victims of natural disasters in bankruptcy proceedings.

I also plan to introduce a bill that will provide tax breaks for individuals who take in evacuees into their home. These people are stepping up to provide shelter and relief to their fellow Americans, and I believe it is certainly proper to encourage this behavior through the implementation of tax breaks.

In addition, I propose legislation that will grant a minimum of 20,000 two-year tenant-based housing assistance vouchers for Katrina's victims, together with transportation and relocation assistance to be used where necessary. These vouchers should be administered by local housing agencies presently administering HUD-funded Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher assistance, which are located in or near the areas hardest hit by Katrina. These agencies are already positioned to provide housing assistance and can play an extremely helpful role meeting the immediate housing needs of Katrina's victims. This legislation would also allow the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to issue a wide range of statutory and regulatory waivers in order to most effectively and flexibly utilize HUD resources to meet the needs of victims.

Finally, I am calling for the establishment of a Commission to study the genesis of the devastation caused by the hurricane. We need a 9/11 style commission to know everything that took place. In addition, I am calling for the establishment of a position of an ombudsman for FEMA in order to provide proper oversight. Without a proper investigation, we cannot get all the answers and without the answers we can not provide the necessary legislation and oversight needed to try to prevent this kind of human suffering from happening again in the future.

Mr. Chairman, the harm that has been incurred by the people of the many regions affected by the disaster—most of which could have been mitigated, will require many phases of rehabilitation. I support this legislation as an initial step.

ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRESS TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as the nation celebrates the 40th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the conflict on the Edmund Pettus bridge, the 40th anniversary of the signing of Voting Rights Act, and the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott

this year, I think it is fitting and appropriate that we take a moment to acknowledge the vital role that the press played in the success of the Civil Rights Movement.

I have often said that without the media the Civil Rights Movement would have been a bird without wings. I am not certain where we would be today as a nation, if the American public had not been made to acknowledge the struggles we faced in the American South. The non-violent protests of the sixties used peaceful means to demonstrate the senseless injustice of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, the inhumanity and indignity of the Jim Crow South, and the extraordinary persecution American citizens suffered trying to exercise their constitutional rights. Without the media's willingness to stand in harm's way and starkly portray events of the Movement as they saw them unfold, Americans may never have understood or even believed the horrors that African Americans faced in the Deep South.

That commitment to publish the truth took courage. It was incredibly dangerous to be seen with a pad, a pen, or a camera in Mississippi, Alabama or Georgia where the heart of the struggle took place. There was a violent desperation among local and State officials and the citizens to maintain the traditional order. People wanted to keep their injustice a secret. They wanted to hide from the critical eye of a disapproving world. They wanted to flee from the convictions of their own conscience. And they wanted to destroy the ugly reflection that nonviolent protestors and camera images so graphically displayed. So when the Freedom Riders climbed off the bus in Alabama in 1961, for example, there were reporters who were beaten and bloodied before any of us were.

And as they were attacked, I saw in them a resolve grow within them that was similar to what those of us in the Movement experienced. I have often said that the first time I was jailed, I felt so free. This Nation had dealt me its worst blow, and I had survived. I knew then that I was committed to the struggle for the long-haul. There were many reporters who felt that same curious strengthening when they too were attacked and beaten. Instead of scaring them away, those injustices created the opposite effect. It bonded them to the Movement, and it steered their commitment to publish all that they saw.

There are so many moments poignantly depicted for posterity by television and newspaper camera men. It is easy to recall many of these now legendary images—Rosa Parks sitting on a bus in Montgomery in 1955; the bombing of the Greyhound bus outside Anniston, Alabama during the Freedom Rides in 1961; Gov. Ross Barnett of Mississippi and Gov. George Wallace in Alabama denying the entrance of black students to state universities in 1963 and 1964; the speeches on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington in 1964; and the seminal speech President Lyndon Johnson made before a joint session of Congress encouraging the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

There are so many historic moments that were covered by the press, but there are two, which I count as turning points for me. The first is often heralded as the official beginning of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement, that is the photograph of a mutilated 14-year-old boy named Emmett Till who was killed in Money, Mississippi during a summer vacation.

Till's mother Mamie Till Mobley decided not to have a closed casket funeral, but she wanted to leave the casket open and let people see the horrifying injustice that had been done. Jet magazine carried photographs of Till's body and Look magazine published an interview with Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam who admitted to the murder.

I will never forget the way that image affected me. Something changed inside of me and inside of many people across America when we saw the body of Emmett Till. I was only a teenager at the time, but I knew that somehow, somehow the injustice of segregation had to come to an end.

Within a year of the Till murder, when I was 15 years old and the son of a sharecropper in rural Alabama, I heard the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. broadcast on an old radio. He was talking about the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and I felt somehow that he was speaking directly to me. That radio broadcast changed my life because that day I knew it was possible to strike a blow at racial segregation and discrimination in America. Those moments captured by the media changed my destiny.

The Civil Rights Movement is deeply indebted to the courage, the strength, the integrity, and the talent of print and broadcast journalists who overcame their fear and decided to tell the American story. America is deeply indebted to these moment-by-moment, modern-day griots who hold up a mirror image of our society for us to see. Without a free press, this Nation would not be, could not be a beacon of justice and equality that has inspired men, women, and children worldwide to try to build a better world.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MIJARES
FAMILY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Mijares Family, of Pasadena, who are celebrating the 85th Anniversary of Mijares Mexican Restaurant, their family business.

Jesucita Mijares immigrated to California in the early 1900s with her second husband, Juan, and infant son, Joe. The family settled in Pasadena where Jesucita gave birth to two more children and cared for her growing family. The young Jesucita began her legendary tortilla-making business in 1920 to provide for her family after the devastating loss of her second husband.

Mijares Mexican Restaurant began as a family and community operated business that supplied hand-made tortillas to local grocery stores and restaurants. Mrs. Mijares took in boarders to supplement her income, and soon, tables were spread throughout her home to accommodate the growing number of residents and guests. Slowly, her tortilla business expanded and she provided meals for guests, with traditional Mexican dishes such as tamales and menudo served daily.

In 1940, as the business continued to flourish, Jesucita moved the production out of her home to a location on Palmetto Drive in Pasadena to be used as a delicatessen and small tortilla business. What happened, however, was that tables were added, rooms were built and patios were poured to accommodate hundreds of guests daily at the restaurant.

During the late 1970s the Mijares family suffered a devastating loss when the family res-

taurant was destroyed by fire. Determined to continue what her mother had started, her daughter, Alice Mijares Recendez worked hard to rebuild the restaurant, which was completed in 1984. During the time of rebuilding, to help her employees, many of whom were out of work, Alice opened a second restaurant on Washington Blvd. in Pasadena which exists to this day.

In 1988, Jesucita Mijares died and Alice became the family matriarch. Today, Alice and her daughter R-lene Mijares de Lang are the owners of Mijares. Alice oversees the gardens and patios at Mijares, cultivating the same love of plants and flowers as her mother Jesucita. R-lene taught in San Diego for 12 years before returning to run her family business. Also contributing to the family business are R-lene's brother, Tom Recendez, who manages the restaurant on Washington Blvd., and her sister, Tina Jimenez, who supports the administration of the catering and restaurant business. The Mijares family warmly welcomes its guests and works hard at providing friendly, quality service.

The Mijares family has made Mijares Mexican Restaurant both an enjoyable dining establishment and a business that gives back to the community. The family actively contributes to a number of charities which include Women at Work, Child Care Information Services, P.E.O. Chapters, the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association, Villa Esperanza, NOW, Pasadena Polytechnic School, El Centro de Accion Social, the Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Hospice of Pasadena, and the Girt Scouts of America.

I am proud to recognize the Mijares Family on the 85th anniversary of Mijares Mexican Restaurant and I ask all Members of Congress to join me in honoring this family for their 85 years of service to our community.