

day about how this may be a boon to the terrorists. We need to improve our response to an emergency so this does not happen again to any American, anywhere, any time, because failure when it comes to an emergency is not an option. When lives are at stake, and this was the worst tragedy in America and lives could have been saved, we need to be honest with ourselves and the American people who pay the bills here, because they expect that type of service, and they should, from their government.

Now, pointing fingers and attributing blame does little to put our country back together. On the other hand, acting Pollyanna, as if everything went according to plan, would be dangerous and foolish. Again, you cannot fix a problem if you do not think you have a problem. My colleagues, we have a problem.

In times of crisis like this, the American people rightfully look to their government. This time, the government at all levels failed them. That is unacceptable. People should and will be held accountable. But today our utmost important task and this body's primary task should be putting the people's lives back together and building communities.

Here are four things I think we can do immediately. First, anyone affected by this tragedy should be exempted from the recently enacted bankruptcy laws immediately. Many have lost everything, including their jobs. Expecting them to honor their obligations would be unrealistic and against the values of this country.

Second, we need to make sure that all the children have universal health care and access to education, and we should provide these children and their families universal health care at least minimally for the next 18 months. We should also consider making community health care part of our emergency response on the part of FEMA, like any first responders. We must also make sure they do not miss a day of school by quickly enrolling them in new schools and providing those schools with the types of services they need.

In addition to that, on education, every individual who is going to get either a GED, college education, post-graduate work, or job training should get a \$3,000 voucher for their education.

IN MEMORY OF SPECIALIST ERNEST DALLAS, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, just before we left at the end of July, I received notice from the Department of Defense about the death of one of my constituents, Specialist Ernest Dallas, Jr., in the country of Iraq on July 24. I wanted to take some time this evening to talk about the life of Specialist Ernest Dallas. Many of the remarks that

I am going to make tonight were taken from an article that appeared in the Denton Record Chronicle on July 27, written by Matthew Haag.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate tonight to honor the memory of Specialist Ernest Dallas. He was from my district, the 26th Congressional District of Texas, and he was serving his country during Iraqi Freedom. Again, he died on July 24 with three other soldiers when a roadside bomb exploded next to their Bradley fighting vehicle. Specialist Dallas was assigned as a scout in the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment in Baghdad. He was 21 years old.

Celebrating and recognizing the life of Specialist Dallas is important. He was a graduate of Fred Moore High School, and he enlisted for a 3-year term in the Army in November of 2003 because he wanted to serve his country and he felt he needed the training that he would be provided to meet his future goals, a future that he hoped included a job as a Denton police officer.

Specialist Dallas was a loving family member and he always took time to phone home to get his family caught up on news of what was going on with their unit. He was the first Denton, Texas, resident to die in the conflict in Iraq.

His first love was baseball, his family said. He started playing when he was 9, and he idolized the former Texas Rangers Catcher Ivan (Pudge) Rodriguez. In 2000, he decided to forgo baseball and enrolled in the Denton Police Department's Citizen Youth Academy. He turned out to have another dream. He wanted to be a Denton policeman, said his stepfather, Manuel Sauseda. In the program, Specialist Dallas would ride along with Denton police officers.

As soon as school let out in the afternoon, Specialist Dallas would race home and get ready to go out with the officers. The program was scheduled from 3 p.m. until midnight when the officers' shift was over. But his stepfather said that Specialist Dallas would frequently call at midnight and ask to stay a little longer, and a little longer frequently turned out to be 6 a.m. in the morning. His mother joked that the neighbors must have grown suspicious of the police cars that were constantly stopping by her house and bringing him home. I know what the neighbors thought: that little boy must be in so much trouble, said his mother, Charlene Sauseda.

Specialist Dallas' family said he always wanted to protect the people he loved. So 2 years after 9/11, he enlisted in the Army. He said that the attacks inspired him to enlist. He saw how it affected everybody, his mother said. Enough was enough, said Ernie. He wanted to go over there and take care of things.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Specialist Dallas' family during the August break and they told me of his love of the Police Academy. They told me how he came to love the Police

Academy. Specialist Dallas was sometime earlier prone to leadership that was taking him in the wrong direction. He was brought home one afternoon by a sheriff's deputy in Denton, a gentleman I know well, named Greg Levling, who now works for the Dallas Sheriff's Department.

Apparently, Specialist Dallas was at that time, at 8 years old, a lookout man for someone who had figured out how to get free pinball games on a pinball machine. Specialist Dallas was to watch and tell if anyone was coming. Well, when the sheriff's deputy came around the corner, Specialist Dallas sang out "Here comes somebody." The sheriff brought him home and his mother said that the sheriff's deputy, Mr. Levling, provided some firm direction for the young man; and it was then and there that he got his love for the police force and his wish to, hopefully, one day serve in the military.

Just a few weeks prior to his death, Specialist Dallas sent an engagement ring to his girlfriend.

He was truly a soldier who understood his duty, and he planned for a future beyond the service to his country.

Mr. Speaker, it was my honor to represent Specialist Dallas. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family. On behalf of the United States Congress, I want his family to know that his service and their sacrifice were deeply appreciated and we thank them.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ARMY SPECIALIST TOCCARA GREEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an American hero. Army Specialist Toccara Green, a native of Rosedale, Maryland, served with the 10th Mountain Division based in Fort Drum, New York. While on mission in Al Asad, Iraq, with her transportation company, she was unfortunately killed by the detonation of a roadside bomb.

Specialist Green was the first woman from Maryland killed in combat in Iraq. What we know with certainty is that she made the ultimate sacrifice in service of her country. The lasting lesson about this tragedy arises in part from the fact that Specialist Green was only 23 years old. Her wonderful and promising life was cut too short by far.

Mr. Speaker, for as long as humanity has walked this earth, we have been forced to deal with the terrible devastation of war.

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This age-old truth brings little comfort, however, when the loss becomes so personal. Knowing this, I offer my deepest condolences to her family during this very difficult time, and I join the entire Maryland Federal delegation in mourning their loss.

Our prayers go out to a very strong and close family, which includes her

mother and father, Yvonne Green and Detective Garry Green of the Baltimore City Police Department; her brother, who she loved dearly, her "big brother," she called him, Marine Staff Sergeant Garry M. Green, Jr.; her sister-in-law, Kim; her nephew, Jayline; and all the family and friends who have been touched by Toccara's life.

This remarkable young woman was one of Maryland's finest citizens. Public service was in her blood. The Armed Forces seemed like a natural progression for Specialist Green. She spent 4 years in ROTC while attending Forest Park High School in my district in Baltimore. Her dad, a Baltimore City police detective, risks his life for us on the streets of Baltimore every day. Her brother, whose life was an inspiration to Specialist Green, serves in the Marines.

Her mother and father instilled in their children the importance of serving others. Yet, knowing the perils of war, they were apprehensive when their only daughter shared with them her dream of joining the Army. As loving parents, her safety and security was their priority. But Toccara Green's determination was steadfast.

Along with her intense desire to serve, she also shared her father's love of cars, and she transferred that love to her duty in the Army as a motor and transport operator. She was serving her second tour, her second tour of duty in Iraq when she was killed.

Toccara Green loved her country. She wanted to do all that she could to help people and give back to the Nation that had given so much to her.

Yet, as I noted, Mr. Speaker, her death is an all too painful reminder of how deeply the sorrows of war cut into our hearts and burden our souls. Now we will never know what her future would have become. Her family and her friends will never celebrate the milestones and triumphs that each passing year would have brought to her life. They have been deprived of her laughter, her affection and of her love.

Nevertheless, Specialist Green has left with them, and all of us, a legacy that can inspire. I am sure she saw more horror while serving in Iraq than most of us can ever imagine. Yet, even in the face of death and destruction, she had the ability to provide strength and a positive outlook to her weary fellow soldiers. She was an eternal optimist who could find the good in the worst of situations. They called her the unofficial morale officer of her unit.

Toccara Green was following a higher calling, a calling to serve. She rose above the adversity that surrounded her, lifting herself and others by her courage and her unyielding determination to do her part in attempting to make the world a better place.

Toccara Green gave our Nation her very best. She willingly did her job because she was a woman of honor and a courageous soldier. She touched the hearts and lives of all of those who knew her. As Americans, we owe her a

debt of gratitude that we can never repay. We can only do our best to give meaning to her sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the family of Specialist Green for sharing her with the Nation and the world. She is now at rest; and as a Christian who was active in her church, I am sure she is looking down from above saying, It is well, it is well, it is well with my soul.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

INSPIRING ACTS OF KINDNESS OCCURRING IN WAKE OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share one of the many inspiring stories of personal commitment and sacrifice that have occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In the Eleventh District of Georgia in the town of Marietta, my hometown, a community came together to rescue more than 30 hurricane victims from the Waldo Boys Home in Louisiana.

It started when Marlene Murphy, an employee at InfoMart, a local company in Marietta, made a desperate appeal to her fellow workers. Marlene's sister and brother-in-law were counselors at the Waldo Burton Boys Home in New Orleans. They were stranded, along with many of the residents and staff, after floodwaters engulfed that city.

Without wasting a bit of time, InfoMart employees, led by the company's president, Tammy Cohen, swung into action, taking on the cause as their own. The employees brought food, clothing, and necessities for the stranded boys. They notified the Coast Guard of the situation. Naval Air Station Atlanta's Captain Sean King and other leaders in the community quickly organized a mission to rescue these victims.

InfoMart rented three passenger vans and a truck, and they started that long trip to New Orleans. On the way, there were plenty of reasons to turn back: 2-mile long lines for gas, police barricades, and even cars driving on the wrong side of the interstate.

But these volunteers did not for a second think of themselves or their troubles. They were only focused on rescuing these boys, no matter what; and I am proud to report that their mission was a success. Fifteen boys, aged from 12 months to 15 years, along with 16 staff and family members, were brought back to Marietta, Georgia, where now they were welcomed by a generous community eager to help.

After spending the night in donated rooms at the Marietta Conference Center, the boys are now being transitioned into three homes owned by the YWCA. They have been fed. They have been given fresh clothes and personal necessities. Efforts are being made also to locate other family members, and local businesses and charities are donating the resources needed to get these victims settled.

Mr. Speaker, if I thank all the people who deserve praise for this astonishing and selfless effort, we would be here all night. A gas station in Birmingham donated gas for the trip home, and local restaurants, like Panera Bread and Mellow Mushroom Pizza, are donating food for the boys. InfoMart employees and community members have donated supplies, clothes, and that most important gift of all, their time.

This is a shining example of a community coming together to help another community. In this time of crisis we can draw strength from the knowledge that Americans are helping Americans. It is good to know that the American way is a generous and giving one.

Mr. Speaker, the acts of kindness I have witnessed in Katrina's wake make me proud to be a citizen of this great Nation. Neither waves, nor rain, nor wind, nor blistering heat can crush the American spirit. Wherever nature kicks us down, there are millions of hands waiting to lift us up.

There are many acts of kindness taking place across this Nation, and I ask that you join me in praising the selfless dedication our citizens have shown in opening their wallets, their homes, and, most importantly, their hearts.

ENSURING THAT MEDICAID IS AVAILABLE TO HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina put a human face on hardship. It reminded us that there are Americans who work hard and pay their taxes and play by the rules, yet are still hanging on by a thread. It reminded us how easily that thread can break. In the clearest terms possible, it communicated the value, both tangible and intangible, of government assistance.

Many people who suffered from Katrina have relied on Medicaid, a government health care program for poor families, for families who are working but do not make enough or have health insurance. Yet as we return to Washington this week after surveying the damage from this terrible storm, Republican leaders are pursuing \$10 billion, \$10 billion, in cuts to that Medicaid program, in large part because they are insisting on more tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent of the people of our country.