

Thousands more are in hotels and private homes across Texas and in the Houston area. There are about 100 seniors that have just moved into a senior housing facility in our district, and thousands more may end up in similar housing.

Some estimate in the Houston area we have about 100,000 to 150,000 total evacuees, maybe more.

The health care, food, and clothing and other needs of these shelters is and will continue to be enormous for a long time.

The charitable giving by individuals, nonprofits, and businesses has been overwhelming. Like 9/11, we are seeing Americans and Texans at their best.

However, most of the burden for caring for these new residents of the Houston area will fall on already over-burdened local governments. So we are relieved that FEMA is up with five disaster relief centers at some of the shelters coordinating the disaster assistance. But we need a lot more. We had 20 centers during Tropical Storm Allison in 2001.

Unfortunately, we are having a hard time caring for all the needy folks who live in the Houston area alone, so we are going to have to rely on the Federal Government to respond to this national disaster.

To show how steep the costs are, the city of Houston on Monday, Labor Day, met in special council session and put \$10,000 advance cost immediately for evacuee costs. This does not include our Harris County costs. And the amounts are so huge in other jurisdictions, the city has to rely on accountants from the Big Four accounting firms who volunteered to compile these expenses.

I understand our Federal disaster law has never been used to compensate States for such a massive relief operation for citizens who are not from our State.

There appears to be a significant amount of red tape for the money. There are several different ways to flow funds, through Louisiana then to Texas, or Texas may have to bill Louisiana, and then Louisiana gets reimbursed, and Texas may be reimbursed by the Federal Government directly.

In addition, the public health costs alone present a complex situation. And I believe Texas will need a public health emergency declaration just like Louisiana.

Many of these evacuees could already have or be susceptible to infectious diseases that thrive in our cramped conditions. That is why we are trying to move them out of these large facilities to apartments and homes as quickly as we can.

How can Texas afford handling the Medicaid and Medicare costs of Louisiana residents who fled to our State? We cannot even cover our own needy children as we would like to. That is why the Federal Government should pay, at least in an emergency, 100 percent of the Medicaid match in times of

emergency and national disaster. And tonight I am going to introduce legislation for that.

While progress is being made on the housing front, there is much work to be done, and the sooner housing is found, the better off for our health situation.

We need to figure out the best way to do this in an unprecedented situation. This event will be the largest charity and volunteer operation ever by Texans, and I think by our Nation. But we are stepping up to the challenge.

Many Houstonians worked through Labor Day weekend to provide the initial relief for our Louisiana brothers and sisters. Donations are pouring into our churches and charities across my district, our community, and our State.

Our religious community, it is great to see these daily meetings in the city of Houston with our Democratic city of Houston mayor and our county judge is a Republican, being problem solvers and dealing with our faith community. Our Catholic bishop and our Methodist bishop, churches of all walks of life are literally out there every day helping. However, local and State governments cannot be equipped.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have used up my 5 minutes. That is why I would like to put the rest of my statement in the RECORD. And I cannot say too much about being so proud to be a Texan, but also an American.

However, the local and State governments are just not equipped to deal with the scale of the situation. There is a reason that disasters like this are borne on the Federal level.

Therefore, Texas, like Louisiana, will need to be reimbursed for the local government costs of this operation. Otherwise Hurricane Katrina's impact will become ever wider as the costs spread ever outwards.

FEMA has been criticized for its red tape, but on this issue we have a chance to be proactive. Let's devise a financial strategy that keeps aid and relief moving as fast as possible.

If we need a legislative fix, then we need to find out now, rather than later. We will have at least two more supplementals to address the situation.

FEMA'S INEPTITUDE IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue a discussion I began last evening about who is responsible for much of the human destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. The Bush administration has been in charge of relief efforts, and it is clear they have failed the American people. Why were relief efforts so painfully slow to get started and, in fact, FEMA not on the ground after 4 days?

Meanwhile, trying to fill the gap of a failed Federal administration, our

thousands of first responders, volunteers, members of the National Guard and active duty military personnel and religious and committed Americans who are performing exemplary service and deserve the highest praise.

President Truman used to have a sign on his desk that said, "The buck stops here." Truly, the buck in this instance stops with the President of the United States. It is he who appointed the Cabinet and subcabinet level individuals tasked with organizing and implementing the plan to deliver timely relief to those in need, and they failed to do that. Yes, the President holds responsibility. His appointees hold responsibility. Specifically, these include the Director of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, and the Federal Emergency Management Director, Mike Brown, and several other individuals.

And it has been quite painful for me, as a Member of Congress who served on the FEMA Oversight Committee for a number of years, to witness the constant failures of judgment by this team, starting with the President himself when he took office, and importantly, early on in his administration, hollowed out FEMA, taking away its Cabinet status, saying that it should no longer be an independent agency that reported directly to the President, instead rolling it into the gargantuan Department of Homeland Security and tasking that with eliminating terrorism.

FEMA is tucked three levels down in this lumbering massive bureaucracy of 170,000 people which still cannot figure out how to answer a letter.

I voted "no" on that reorganization; was on the losing side when the President tried to pass that through Congress and was successful, and have now joined with my dear colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), to call for the removal of FEMA from the Department of Homeland Security in order to restore it as a fully independent agency headed by an actual professional with direct reporting to the President of the United States.

Now, the first person that the President appointed to head FEMA was his campaign director from Texas who ran the Bush campaign in the year 2000. His name is Joe Albaugh, and he accepted the FEMA position in 2001. And here is what he said back then. He characterized the organization as an oversized entitlement program, and counseled States and cities to rely instead on faith-based organizations like the Salvation Army and the Mennonites Disaster Service. As important as they are, those organizations are not equipped to handle a national disaster. Thank God we have them, but even they know they are not up to the task fully. So the tone was set back in the first Bush administration. And it is instructive to see how the President's appointees have been locked in over at FEMA.

We know that Mr. Chertoff, who heads the Department of Homeland Security, is an attorney. He has spent

more time in courtrooms prosecuting the Mafia than managing large-scale crises like these.

Under him is Michael Brown, the Director of FEMA, who has absolutely no experience in national disasters or emergencies. In the last 10 years before being appointed by President Bush as head of FEMA, he earned about \$100,000 a year in a position with the International Arabian Horse Association, where his job was to ensure that judges followed rules and to investigate allegations of cheating in horse races.

Most frightening is, after he got his position, and when Katrina hit, he waited 5 hours after Katrina actually reached land to officially request help and legal authority to send rescue workers and supplies into the affected regions. What was he doing during those 5 hours, and why was he not more active ahead of time in evacuating people?

As noted by the Center for American Progress, those under Mr. BROWN, his deputies, make him look qualified. The number two at FEMA is Chief of Staff Patrick Rhode, who was an event planner or advance man for the Bush Presidential campaign. He had absolutely no emergency management experience before joining FEMA. And under him, the number three person at FEMA, Deputy Chief of Staff Scott Morris, was a press flak at the Bush campaign. He previously worked for Maverick Media, the firm that produced TV supports for Bush's campaigns.

I say, who holds responsibility? The President of the United States holds responsibility. The buck stops with him.

God bless the people who have suffered and God bless this country.

On CNN, just his second day in Louisiana, Brown placed blame on the victims for not evacuating.

Most frightening, though, is the fact that Mike Brown waited until five hours after Katrina reached land to officially request help and legal authority to send rescue workers supplies into the affected regions. Despite three to four days of constant alarms that Katrina was a Category 5 hurricane poised to strike Louisiana, Brown did practically nothing to prepare for the devastation that was predicted in the event of just such an occurrence.

In spite of the dire warnings of what would happen should a Category 4 or 5 Hurricane strike New Orleans (and the Gulf Coast in General) Mike Brown sat patiently by while the Hurricane delivered 100+ mph winds and a 25-foot storm surge into the region—obliterating towns, killing thousands of Americans and causing what will be hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.

Mike Brown is not the only FEMA official with little to no experience, though. As noted by the Center for American Progress, "Brown's top deputies, however, make him look qualified. The number two at FEMA, Chief of Staff Patrick Rhode, was an event planner ("advance man") for Bush's presidential campaign. He had absolutely no emergency management experience before joining FEMA. The number three at FEMA, Deputy Chief of Staff Scott Morris, was a press flak at

the Bush campaign. He previously worked for Maverick Media, the firm that produced TV spots for Bush's campaigns. Morris also has no emergency management experience. In contrast, the top deputies of Clinton-era FEMA Director James Lee Witt ran regional FEMA offices for at least 3 years before assuming senior positions in Washington.

FEMA spokesperson Natalie Rule said the absence of direct managing emergencies is irrelevant because top managers need "the ability to keep the organization running."

That's all well and good, except for the fact that this Administration cut more than six hundred million dollars last year from funding for local administrators and offices—diverting it to other accounts. Effectively, poor planning and management has created a vacuum of leadership anywhere in this agency that Congress and former President Clinton worked so hard to "fix" in the early to mid-1990's.

As former chief-of-staff at FEMA Jane Bullock said yesterday, "We knew that about 120,000 of the people who needed to be evacuated did not have cars, so we would have to position buses. The buses were not there. We knew that the levees would be under heavy stress and so we should position barges with pumps up the Mississippi in preparation for flooding. This was not done. We knew that the Superdome would be used as a refuge of last resort so we should pre-position food and medical supplies. They were not there. There was a lack of leadership."

[From the New York Post, Sept. 7, 2005]
FEMA FOOL SAT ON HIS HANDS

(By Douglas Simpson, Ted Bridis and Ian Bishop)

The head of FEMA waited a mind-boggling five hours after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf before even contacting his boss about sending personnel to the area—then suggested workers be allowed two days to get to the ravaged region, shocking internal documents reveal.

One stunning Aug. 29 memo—sent from embattled Federal Emergency Management chief Michael Brown to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff—called killer Katrina a "near-catastrophic event," but otherwise lacked any other urgent language underlining the potential magnitude of the disaster.

Brown then politely ended his memo with: "Thank you for your consideration in helping us to meet our responsibilities."

In another note sent later to FEMA workers, Brown said one of their duties would essentially be to make the agency look good. "Convey a positive image of disaster operations to government officials, community organizations and the general public," he wrote.

In Brown's memo to Chertoff, he proposed sending 1,000 Homeland Security workers within 48 hours and then another 2,000 within seven days.

In explaining the two-day period that workers had to arrive in the disaster area, Homeland Security spokesman Russ Knoke said it was to ensure they had adequate training before going down.

The same day Brown wrote his memo to Chertoff, he also urged local fire and rescue departments outside Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi not to send trucks or emergency workers into disaster areas without an explicit request for help from state or local governments.

Brown said it was vital to coordinate fire and rescue efforts.

Several congressmen have already called for Brown's resignation.

In other developments yesterday:

President Bush and Congress pledged separate probes into the feds' response to Katrina.

The airline industry said the government's request for help evacuating storm victims didn't come until late Thursday afternoon—three days after Katrina made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane.

A Long Island congressman ripped into New Orleans officials, who he said did a woefully inadequate job of responding to the hurricane, compared with how New York handled 9/11.

"All New Orleans has to worry about is a hurricane. They don't have to worry about terrorist attacks," Republican Representative Peter King said. "They've seen this coming for 200 years."

As the Army Corps of Engineers battled to pump out flooded New Orleans, Mayor Ray Nagin warned that the receding water will reveal horrors.

"It's going to be awful and it's going to wake the nation up again," he warned.

Late last night, Nagin authorized law enforcement and the military to forcibly evacuate residents who have refused to obey orders to leave.

A refugee from the devastated city attempted suicide aboard a commercial flight bound for Washington, D.C., causing the plane to be diverted.

[From the Financial Times, Sept. 7, 2005]
STAFF EXODUS AND CUTBACKS CURB DISASTER MANAGEMENT

(By Peter G. Gosselin and Alan C. Miller)

While the federal government has spent much of the last 25 years trimming the safety nets it provides to Americans, it has dramatically expanded its promise of protection in one area—disaster.

Since the 1970s Washington has emerged as the insurer of last resort against floods, fires, earthquakes and, after 2001, terrorist attacks. But the government's stumbling response to the storm that devastated America's Gulf coast reveals that the federal agency singularly most responsible for making good on Washington's expanded promise has been hobbled by cutbacks and a bureaucratic downgrading.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) once speedily delivered food, water, shelter and medical care to disaster areas and paid to rebuild damaged roads and schools and get businesses and people back on their feet. Like a commercial insurance company setting safety standards to prevent future problems, it also underwrote efforts to get cities and states to reduce risks ahead of time and plan for action if calamity struck.

But in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Fema lost its cabinet-level status as it was folded into the giant new Department of Homeland Security. And in recent years it has suffered budget cuts, the elimination or reduction of key programmes and an exodus of experienced staff.

The agency's core budget, which includes disaster preparedness and mitigation, has been cut each year since it was absorbed by the Homeland Security Department in 2003.

The agency's staff has been reduced by 500 positions to 4,735. Among the results, Fema has had to cut one of its three emergency management teams, which are charged with overseeing relief efforts in a disaster.

Three out of every four dollars the agency provides in local preparedness and first-responder grants go to terrorism-related activities, even though a recent Government Accountability Office report quotes local officials as saying what they really need is money to prepare for natural disasters and accidents.

"They've taken emergency management away from the emergency managers," complained Morrie Goodman, who was FEMA's chief spokesman during the Clinton administration.

Michael Chertoff, secretary of homeland security, acknowledged in interviews on Sunday that Washington was insufficiently prepared for the hurricane that laid waste to New Orleans and surrounding areas. But he defended its performance by arguing that the size of the storm was beyond anything his department could have anticipated and that primary responsibility for handling emergencies rested with state and local, not federal, officials.

His remarks, which echoed earlier statements by President George W. Bush, prompted withering rebukes both from former senior FEMA staffers and outside experts. "They can't do that," former agency chief of staff Jane Bullock said of administration efforts to shift responsibility away from Washington. "The moment the president declared a federal disaster, it became a federal responsibility."

THE TRAGEDY OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you all Americans for your prayers, your volunteerism, your most generous financial support, and all of the ways that you attempted to relieve some of the pain of those evacuees who were affected. My prayers continue.

The United States Congress, Members of the United States Congress, should board the plane transportation and go to the gulf, go to Mississippi, go to Louisiana, and all the other affected places. Congress should go, not just watch it on television, because it is very heart-wrenching, and I think we ought to be there in person.

I think we need to understand what happened to the young man whose mother cried out for help. On a Monday they promised her help was coming. On Tuesday they promised her it would be there shortly. On Wednesday it would be there in just a few. On Thursday, help is on the way. On Friday she drowned. Most heart-wrenching story that I have seen.

In my district, Calvary Temple sent nine buses after they got authorized by the American Red Cross to go down. But once they got there, FEMA would not allow them to board people on the buses. And they only allowed 12 people to get on nine buses, and the rest of the buses returned to Indianapolis empty, which is tragic.

We have some of the most sophisticated hospital ships in the whole world that sit right out here at Virginia. It took them 5 days to even get started to go down to the gulf, when it was clear that the help of the ships and the midshipmen and all the medical supplies on board were needed immediately.

We need to immediately reinstitute WPA days, Work Progress Administration days, that worked so well during

the Roosevelt administration and that allowed all of these unemployed people that we have now in the South to begin to rebuild their own cities. And I know that numerous of them would be more than happy to allow the government to pay them while they rebuild their own cities. It is like Charles Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities," the worst of times. But we could augment legislation to make it better times for the people that were so tragically affected. And I encourage Congress to do that.

Mr. Speaker, there have been so many comments made that I was going to make, and I will not replicate them. But in closing, I would like to remind us that every Member of this Congress should get together, not all at the same time, it is too many of them. But day after day after day we need to take a trip to the gulf, meet the people there, help serve the homeless, help serve the hungry, take clothes, our own money used, take clothes, take water, take diapers, take hygiene equipment. We need to personally be involved ourselves. And we need to get on the road right away.

Mr. Speaker, I regretfully rise today to join a growing chorus of American outrage in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster on the Gulf Coast.

My purpose tonight is not to assign blame for this tragedy onto any single official or agency, but to express my shame and the shame of my constituents at the failure of our government to serve its citizens when they needed it most. Mr. Speaker, the American people know that this great Nation can do better. They deserve answers. They deserve results.

When I talk to my constituents I hear their indignation that a city like New Orleans, which lies below sea level and is so obviously vulnerable to hurricanes, was turned down repeatedly in recent years by its Federal Government for assistance in shoring up levees and reinforcing the ailing water pumps which kept the city above ground.

I hear anger that, in a city where with several days' notice of an imminent landfall of the hurricane, in a city where one third of all residents live below the poverty line, the only real option for evacuation was the ownership and deployment of privately owned automobiles.

Mr. Speaker, families living on less than \$9,000 a year don't own cars. And because the hurricane came at the end of the month, low-wage earners living from paycheck to paycheck could not afford passage even if they had them. It was these poor, overwhelmingly African-American residents who were left to die in the thousands. The American public knows this tragedy could have been avoided. They deserve answers. They deserve results.

And now, with as much as 10,000 feared dead and thousands more waiting for housing, food, and other supplies, Americans from across this country who have offered their assistance and opened their cities to displaced citizens from Louisiana and Mississippi are being turned down by FEMA.

Last weekend a caravan of relief supplies and buses organized by local charities in my hometown of Indianapolis arrived in New Orleans to help evacuate the homeless to Indianapolis but was sent home by FEMA officials

who insist that such generosity first pass through exorbitant layers of red tape before reaching citizens in need.

Never before has the great disconnect between the American public and its government been so clear.

The management of this disaster calls into question our readiness to deal with similar emergencies, including future terrorist attacks that may displace citizens and require massive relief efforts. But it also exposes the colossal failures of this Congress. And for that the American public deserves answers. They deserve results.

The business of this body has for too long been dominated by legislation that explicitly benefits the wealthy at the expense of our Nation's poor, such as the bankruptcy bill, the repeal of the estate tax, the President's devastating income tax proposals, and multiple bills shielding corporations from lawsuits, which are often the only means to reverse the injustices inflicted on our forgotten poorest citizens by our richest and most powerful.

Indeed, this Congress and this administration have not dared acknowledge the plight of the poor and less fortunate in this country. Now, finally, we have no choice.

In the wake of this profound tragedy, let us find the strength to face the failures of our past and turn toward policies that aim to protect all our citizens from harm.

HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing in Louisiana and in Mississippi right now is the complete meltdown of the Federal Government, and in particular, the Department of Homeland Security. Given that the Federal Government can't even dole out adequate assistance to this one area of the country during this tragedy, how can U.S. citizens feel safe at a time when we are faced with the threat of a terrorist attack on a national level?

What I find truly amazing is that the disaster planners have said that a direct hurricane strike on New Orleans is one of the top 3 catastrophic scenarios facing our Nation. So how is it that the agencies have been so slow to respond to this crisis, claiming to have been caught off guard? The President himself said that the levee breach was not anticipated . . . how can that possibly be true? In addition, while the Superdome has long been considered as the city's main hurricane refuge spot, no supplies were stocked there before the storm hit on Monday. It is simply incomprehensible to me how Federal officials had not deployed equipment and relief supplies before Katrina struck land, or even bothered to mobilize in the region beforehand? This lack of response is outright shameful, an outrage, and an embarrassment!

This is one more example of the complete failure of the Federal Government under the Republican led administration. Since 9/11, the Republican led Congress has given natural disaster preparedness secondary status in the Federal budget, undermining the effectiveness of FEMA, and has cut funding for the Army Corps floor control projects in and around New Orleans, and throughout the Nation.