

with no hope in sight of regaining their former jobs because their workplaces were destroyed.

For the region, the economic devastation is on par with the effects of the Great Depression. At that time President Roosevelt asked for a National Industrial Recovery Act with which the government put millions of people back to work rebuilding the country's infrastructure. That is what the hurricane-demolished region needs today. The people of the region who have lost their livelihoods should be given a preference in hiring for the Federal dollars spent, and the Federal dollars should be conditioned on local hiring targets.

But this is not a New Deal administration. Instead of leveraging Federal tax money to put people back to work, this administration is content to send Halliburton billions of dollars in no-bid contracts.

SALUTING THE NATIONAL GUARD

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and salute those members of the National Guard for the tremendous efforts they put forth in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. They have tirelessly devoted their time and energy working around the clock to support neighbors, Americans who have been affected by this unfortunate devastating event.

Altogether, there are over 45,000 National Guard personnel on the ground or aboard ships supporting the massive relief efforts that continue to take place. Members of the National Guard have provided widespread search and rescue, evacuation, medical support. They braved the dangers of flood waters and have been faced with unimaginable situations to evacuate over 50,000 people and rescue 11,000 from hotels, rooftops, and floating debris.

I want to specifically commend and thank the 155 members of the 8th Brigade of the Texas National Guard. Under the command of Colonel Donald Petrash, the 8th Brigade is stationed at 12 different shelters helping evacuees from Louisiana in southeast Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the National Guard and Reservists are vital to our communities especially during these times. This is just another reminder that we must never forget about our citizen soldiers.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONGRESS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today Congress will vote to borrow \$51.8 billion as a down payment on the relief, rescue and recovery effort, a sum which could reach \$200 billion.

It is the responsibility of this Congress to oversee the administration's

disbursement of these funds and to make certain it goes to the victims and appropriate expenditures and not disaster profiteering. Likewise, Congress must safeguard against opportunists, some even in our own ranks, who would use the disaster for their own petty political ends.

In fact, in light of the huge costs, the big run-up in the deficit that we are about to see, some on the other side of the aisle are suggesting this makes the case for tax cuts for the wealthiest investors in America, those who earn more than \$300,000, have estates worth more than \$6 million. They say that those tax cuts will provide economic stimulus that will trickle down on the people of New Orleans and Mississippi.

They have been trickled on more than they can stand. We need an appropriate, compassionate, and cost-effective recovery effort, not more tax breaks for the most privileged among us who were not affected.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. FOLEY of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like us all to tone down the rhetoric and start thinking of the victims. I watched Cokie Roberts yesterday, a proud Democrat, from one of the legendary Democratic families of this Nation, on Fox News, not casting aspersions, not seeking to blame anybody. She had personal tragedy in that they had lost their homes. But she was calm and considerate and thoughtful and reasonable, asking us to come together as a Nation to help the victims of this hurricane.

We have other leaders going on TV calling the President dangerous. After 9/11, we joined hands and prayed. We were considerate, courteous, and, most important, we were Americans. We had four hurricanes in Florida, so I know what it is like to be damaged by a storm.

What is worse after this event is the damaging words of our colleagues disparaging the institution, disparaging the President, and bringing shame on this House. Our victims and our families deserve better.

AN ADMINISTRATION IN DENIAL

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, the Nation has gotten used to hearing an administration in denial. Two nights ago, Congress got a firsthand view when six Cabinet members came before the House of Representatives and described a picture-perfect Federal response to Katrina. But as Americans have watched the tragedy unfold on their television screens, they

learned to differentiate rhetoric from reality. The sad, yet unmistakable, truth is that the Federal Government failed the people of the Gulf Coast, both in the years before the hurricane and in the days after it. The American people get it; but, unfortunately the administration does not.

This is not a time for finger-pointing or political posturing. Neither is it a time to stick our heads in the sand and pretend that the government has performed admirably. It has not, and the administration should stop pretending otherwise.

The stakes are too high to continue heading along this road without asking how we got there. The President needs to explain to the American people why we can trust this same team to adequately deal with the crisis that continues to face millions and cost billions. Congress needs to establish an independent commission to ensure that the American people learn the truth. We simply cannot afford any more mistakes.

FUNDING TO REBUILD AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, Katrina breaks my heart. When I consider its tragic aftermath, the ancient parable comes to mind: "And the rains descended and the flood came and the winds blew and beat against the house and it fell with a great crash."

For most American families, when a tree falls on your house, you tend to the wounded, rebuild, and then figure out how you are going to pay for it. Later today Congress will continue funding the work of relief and recovery for Hurricane Katrina, and well we should, by speeding more than \$50 billion to FEMA and other agencies.

But as we tend to the wounded, as we begin to rebuild, let us also do what every other American family would do in like circumstances and expects this Congress to do: let us figure out how we are going to pay for it.

Congress must ensure that a catastrophe of nature does not become a catastrophe of debt for our children and grandchildren.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, last weekend I went to the floor of the Astrodome to work with some of the evacuees. I have never been so inspired by people of courage and grace and great dignity.

On the way home on the flight from Houston to DC, there were 10 evacuees headed for Florida. In the middle of the flight, a young man took out a razor

blade and slashed his wrists in a suicide attempt.

The pilot made the appropriate judgment. There were two MTs on board. They saved his life. Actually, it probably was not life threatening. We diverted to Nashville. We made a flight change in response to a problem.

Now this administration has to make a change in the flight plan about who and how FEMA is being run. It is a disaster in itself. We need a flight change, and this is not a matter of accountability. There are more hurricanes on the way.

FEMA's job in this disaster is not done. We do not have confidence in the people and the organization in the FEMA cockpit. It could crash again. This President needs to change FEMA, and we should be doing it in this debate today.

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VENEZUELA GASOLINE SHIPMENTS

(Mr. MACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MACK. Mr. Speaker, I have been and continue to be gravely concerned with Venezuela President Hugo Chavez's march against freedom. But I appreciate that Hugo Chavez acted appropriately in a time of crisis when he recently offered to provide the U.S. Government with a supply of needed oil and gasoline in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

This morning's Washington Post includes a story which outlines that Chavez plans to ship 1 million barrels of gasoline in addition to its scheduled shipment of 1.2 million barrels to the United States in the coming month. While this may help alleviate consumers' concerns at the pump, we must all recognize that when we purchase Hugo Chavez's gasoline, we will be lining the pockets of a staunch enemy of freedom.

The United States welcomes efforts to help stem our temporary gasoline and oil shortage, but Hugo Chavez must understand that we will not yield an inch in our demand for freedom in Venezuela and around the world.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 426 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 426

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, September 8, 2005, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on

the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 426 provides that suspensions will be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, September 8, 2005. This resolution will allow the House to consider and debate legislation to address the needs of the hurricane-ravaged areas of the Gulf Coast in our country, such as increased borrowing authority for the National Flood Insurance program, the Student Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Response and Recovery Act, and a supplemental emergency appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, my community in South Florida was very fortunate that we did not have to bear the full brunt of this latest hurricane, Hurricane Katrina. Over a million of us in South Florida lost electricity. Many homes and businesses were flooded and some structural damage was caused to homes and businesses, but we did not bear the full brunt, the full fury of this latest hurricane, Katrina.

We in South Florida were very fortunate as well to receive generous aid from fellow Americans in the wake of Hurricane Andrew in 1992. As a Hurricane Andrew survivor, I have an idea of the trials and tribulations that face hurricane survivors. I am also very much aware that assistance from the Federal Government is essential for a comprehensive and robust recovery effort.

With that said, I wish to make clear to our friends in the Gulf Coast that we will continue to mobilize nationwide in response to this tragedy, we will remain steadfast in our commitment to the recovery effort, and we will not walk away from our obligations to our fellow Americans. Just as we did after Hurricane Andrew, Mr. Speaker, together it is that we will rebuild and together it is that we will recover.

In response to this terrible disaster, the majority leadership of this House has set out a plan to continue helping the victims of this terrible catastrophe. Last week, the House of Representatives passed emergency funding totaling \$10.5 billion to provide urgently needed relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Congress needs to do more for the victims of this catas-

trophe, and we will. We will consider, I am certain, other supplemental bills, and they will provide additional billions for recovery and rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast.

The American people have demonstrated their resiliency before and will do so again. We will continue to work to comfort those who suffer. Rescue workers are at this moment lined up across this great Nation to support the recovery effort that is under way, and volunteers from every corner of America are ready to support those efforts. Our prayers continue to go out to the victims, to their families and to all the valiant rescue workers. The spirit of community, of generosity and good will across the country gives me confidence that Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama will recover from this tragedy, and they will be better than ever before.

House Resolution 426, Mr. Speaker, is a necessary rule for our efforts to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina. I would like to say a special word of thanks to the Speaker, to the majority leader, to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and to the minority leadership for their swift action on this issue as was begun to be demonstrated last week. I urge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to support both the rule and support the emergency legislation that is authorized under this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, the vitally important bill before us today will help to begin the process of rebuilding one of our Nation's greatest regions and the lives of the people within it. It comes to us in the wake of what was last week nothing short of a catastrophic failure of responsible and competent governance. And not surprisingly, the way in which we are going about passing this bill is itself a tremendous failure, the most recent in a seemingly endless line.

It is a failure, Mr. Speaker, because almost no time has been provided for discussion of this bill and because no amendments have been permitted to be introduced. This body is about to spend more than \$50 billion and all the minority wants is to spend it wisely. All we want is to give the Members a chance to know where the appropriations are going and to actually give Representatives from the affected States a chance to make suggestions to the legislation before it becomes law. We want to ensure that that this body will address as quickly as possible the tremendous errors which have been made by our Federal Government in its response to Hurricane Katrina.