

We have seen some horrific images. We have seen government make some mistakes. We have seen government rescue some folks. And we have watched everyday people perform extraordinary feats.

Like most people, I have been impressed and sometimes sorely disappointed. For me there is a personal element. I grew up 60 miles inland from Gulfport, Mississippi. My family still lives there. I remember Hurricane Camille and the devastation that that storm caused. I was a senior in high school. I remember watching a lot of it play out, and I can tell the Members Hurricane Katrina is worse.

Last week my husband, my children, and I all traveled to Laurel, Mississippi from Tennessee's 7th Congressional District. We took our turns. We took supplies, and we helped with the cleanup. My parents have been long-time volunteers with the American Red Cross, and Laurel is an area where many coastal residents flee when they are trying to outrun the storm.

We knew that those volunteers could use the reinforcements, and absolutely they could. A lot of them had no running water, no electricity, no gas, no gasoline available, no roof over their homes; but they were there at the shelter feeding those that were in need.

That is America, Madam Speaker. That is the America that I grew up in, and that is the country that still today exists.

As incredible as the damage is, what is more amazing to me was the way the local communities were all pulling together, the way Americans were traveling from all over, the way many of our colleagues in this Chamber were traveling from all over to get to the region and to lend a hand. And for all those who could not physically get there, we know they are home sending donations to charities, and they are aiding organizations. They might not be there physically; they are there in spirit.

There is no measuring the generosity and compassion of the American people when they see need. The hurricane has told us that. So I want to thank every town, city, and State for sending help.

As representative for Tennessee's 7th district, I want to take a moment and recognize the work of some of our Memphis and Shelby County organizations that have made it their mission to help any way that they possibly could.

Our Memphis Corps of Engineers is already working to help rebuild the New Orleans levees. We are also thankful that the Bellevue Baptist Church, the Cathedral of Faith Ministries, Christ United Methodist Church, Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church, the Cummings Street Baptist Church, the Greater Harvest Church of God in Christ and the Greater Praise Church of God in Christ, the Independent Presbyterian Church Grove, the Memphis Union Mission, Mid-South Baptist Association Retreat Center, and the Bap-

tist Children's Home are all working to provide shelter for some of the 15,000 evacuees that are in Shelby County; and that the Friendship Baptist Church, the Germantown Presbyterian Church, the Oakland First Baptist Church are providing shelter and meals; and that the Breath of Life Seventh Day Adventist, the Calvary Episcopal Church, Holy Rosary Catholic Church and School, the Hope Presbyterian Church, Hutchison School, and the Impact Ministries of Memphis are all providing meals.

Madam Speaker, I know there are other organizations that are out there working, and we will be talking about them as we help these evacuees find a place and rebuild their lives.

REHNQUIST, ROBERTS, AND RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, as we honor Chief Justice William Rehnquist's life, we pause to reflect on his service to our country, a record of service that was colored with honor, dignity, and distinction.

Many commentators are focused on his success ushering in a quiet, conservative revolution on the Court. Another remarkable facet of Rehnquist's legacy, however, is found in a much more understated role of the Chief Justice, that of the judiciary's chief advocate and ambassador. The hallmark of his style, no matter how volatile the issue or context, from abortion to impeachment, was one of respectful debate, a quality that garnered an enormous degree of loyalty and respect among his fellow Justices, litigants, and Court watchers.

But the Chief Justice not only worked to foster respect and collegiality within the walls of the Court; he did more. For the last 2 years of his tenure, Rehnquist turned his focus to a matter that has also been a source of growing concern for many, the deterioration in relations between the Congress and the courts. As the Chief Justice reported in his year-end analysis of the state of the judiciary, and again in his customarily understated way, "During the last year, it seems that the traditional interchange between the Congress and the Judiciary broke down."

This hostility long preceded congressional intervention in the tragic case of Terri Schiavo and has taken many forms beyond the most simple and pernicious, that of defunding the courts. It includes measures stripping the courts of jurisdiction to hear particular cases, condemning the courts for the citation of certain precedent, and splitting circuits out of a dislike for their jurisprudence.

One constitutional amendment would even change the Framers' design-of-life

tenure for lower Federal courts and subject judges to costly campaigns and retention elections. If Members think political campaigning by elected officials and the growth of 527 organizations and other independent expenditure efforts are already out of control, just imagine adding negative attack ads in judicial races around the country: "Call Judge Jones and tell him to stop coddling criminals" or "Call Judge Smith and ask him why he denied relief to widows and orphans." One can just imagine what the judicial ads might look like.

Even though many of these legislative initiatives have yet to pass, we are already witnessing the direct consequences to our court system. In recent years there has been a marked decline in the level of interest and service on the bench among highly qualified attorneys. Judges are leaving the bench to return to private practice. Reckless talk in the House Committee on the Judiciary about the potential impeachment of judges not for unethical conduct but out of a disagreement with their decisions has only added to the chilling effect on the courts and people's willingness to serve.

Ultimately, this protracted war against the judicial branch will only denigrate both Congress and the courts. This is not the first time relations between the two branches have been at a dangerously low ebb, nor was Rehnquist the first Chief Justice to express alarm. Former Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes admonished the Congress of his day that "in the great enterprise of making democracy workable, we are all partners. One member of our body politic cannot say to another 'I have no need of thee.'"

Increasingly, however, the Congress has been saying just that, and Rehnquist was among the first to spot the danger. When the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and I formed a bipartisan caucus to improve relations with the courts, Justice Rehnquist was the first to sit down with us. We invited him to meet with our caucus. He came to the Hill, sat down with us, and it was a very important meeting and interchange. After presiding over the high Court for the last 2 decades, he was clearly disturbed at the turn of events in relations between the branches and the resulting attack upon the independence of the judiciary.

Why does it matter if the Congress and the courts are at war? Because if the separation of powers has eroded and an independent judiciary is impaired, decisions become increasingly politicized. Public confidence in the rule of law erodes and people begin taking law into their own hands: 174 years ago, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall warned, "The greatest scourge an angry heaven ever inflicted upon an ungrateful and sinning people was an ignorant, a corrupt, or a dependent judiciary."

During the confirmation hearings of John Roberts next week, there will be

a great many important questions asked about Roberts' judicial philosophy, his views on individual rights and freedoms. But I hope that at least one Senator will ask whether Roberts, a prodigy of and potential successor to Rehnquist, will aspire to succeed not only his mentor's conservative revolution but his all too solitary work to repair the damage to the historic and vital comity between the Congress and the courts.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

RELIEF EFFORTS FOR VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

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

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the wonderful people of Rescue Task Force who are headquartered in San Diego, who have been operating in the disaster area in New Orleans, and use that discussion about them to reflect on all the great private efforts and public efforts to help the victims who have been created by this incredible disaster in New Orleans.

Rescue Task Force is a small group. It is headed up by Wendell Cutting, who is my chief of staff in San Diego and a guy who a couple of years ago was given only 3 months to live with terminal cancer and who has continued to survive and I think survive as an inspiration based on his continued drive and enthusiasm for helping people.

Wendell and Gary Becks have gone around the world in setting up medical clinics, providing food, providing medical services in Afghanistan and Iraq, in Albania, in Central America, and now are providing a helping hand in New Orleans.

A couple of days ago, they allowed me to go along on one of their missions. We went to Houma, Louisiana. I had with me Scott Turner, who is retiring this year after 10 years in the NFL, a wonderful cornerback who played for the Redskins and the Chargers and the Broncos. And along with Scott was Larry Nelson, the mayor of Yuma, Arizona; and Roy Tyler, who is a businessman from San Diego who now has Tyler's restaurants in Yuma, Arizona.

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We brought along some help, but we also stopped in Houston.

When we landed in Houston, we had a lot of supplies there ready, and we trucked them into the affected area in Houma. We went to the civic center in Houma with the rescue task force per-

sonnel, and one of the things that they needed was beds because you have literally tens of thousands of people who are living in gymnasium settings; that is, where they go into a civic center or a gymnasium and they may have a blanket or two, but they do not have a bed, a mattress, between them and the ground.

So we had a need there, and rescue task force personnel managed to run down, working with some of the big stores, 1,000 beds for the folks there, and we got those paid for. I got a call yesterday that they, in fact, had been delivered.

Then we delivered lots of baby food and canned food to the various locations.

But I was really impressed when I was at the civic center there, this refugee center, or evacuee center. I was impressed with the people of Louisiana, because they had so many volunteers, they actually were having to turn them away, and they had mountains of clothes that had been donated to the point where they said, do not bring any more clothes.

They had a great medical system set up where people from the disaster were getting, in most cases, more checkups than they had had in years with the doctors and nurses available, and they were getting good, hot meals.

We went in the next day by air boat, into the streets and the communities that were under water in New Orleans, and I want to report that our military personnel, the National Guard folks, the active duty folks, and also lots of other folks from other agencies like ATF and reserve sheriffs' organizations are doing a wonderful job now in providing that very necessary security.

Now, I think it is a shame that we have to spend so much manpower on security and have active duty military forces come in that have to provide that security, but that is a fact of life, and they are doing a great job.

Madam Speaker, along those lines, I think that the real tragedy of this hurricane, aside from those individuals who lost their lives, is not the water and it is not the hurricane itself or the damage, the property damage, because all of that can and will be rebuilt. The real tragedy to me was that group of people, part of that generation of folks who live in New Orleans, which included people who shot at the rescue helicopters, who looted, and who committed crimes against their fellow citizens during this time of tragedy, during and shortly after the hurricane.

I think we need to put together a program or legislation to make sure that we do not reinstitute the projects, the location where people have lived for generations in a system that has not produced a high degree of moral compass and a high work ethic, and all of the other things you need to have for a solid community.

So let us work to rebuild not just New Orleans, but let us build a new generation of young people in New Orleans who will be outstanding citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss MCMORRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

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 addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORTING THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA IN A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE WAY

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I feel compelled to come to the Floor here and make some remarks with regard to Hurricane Katrina, what we have done here from Congress, and what we need to do in the future.

First, I want to say that as I look across the broad expanse of that disaster, the 90,000 square miles, roughly the size of Kansas, and I listen to the description that was delivered by Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, that if you were going to do a military assault on a city, that storm did what a military assault would do. It went in on the wind and blew out the electricity and the communications, took the communications systems out, the power grid out, and then it cut off the transportation avenues in and out of the cities by taking out the bridges.

Then, once it had isolated the city, then it attacked, and that was the flood that went in and did such devastating damage, damage that we have not quantified to date and will not quantify for at least some months to come, if not years to come.

The work that was done down there, I know that the National Guard as early as a week ago Wednesday took chain saws and sawed their way into some of the communities. We have 70,000 military on the ground down there providing all of the assistance that they can. There were volunteers that came from everywhere, as the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services has said, so it is a huge human effort on the part of our people in this country. The donations have been flowing in. We have all reached out.

Now, having said that, Madam Speaker, I want to also qualify this