

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the work that we have to complete in the waning days of this session is significant and difficult, and nothing we do in the days ahead can be more important than helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina get back on their feet. They are counting on us. It is their time of need. We owe it to them to give them everything we are capable of giving them.

The most terrible tragedies routinely bring out the best in America and Americans. We have seen that again in the aftermath of Katrina, one of the most horrible natural disasters in the history of this Nation.

Americans are coming together and giving their time and money to the millions of victims. They are putting their personal concerns aside so they can put Americans in need first. Now they expect America's Government to do the same.

There are dozens of steps the Senate can take in order to get immediate relief to the victims of the gulf coast—steps we can take to make sure Medicaid is easily and readily available to those who need it, to get families the housing assistance they badly need, and to get resources to the school districts all over the country so displaced children do not lose a precious day of this school year. These items must be our top priority.

I commend the majority leader for clearing the Senate Calendar of the estate tax so we can focus on Katrina. We can do better. Families in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida are counting on us to do that. They are suffering, and they have nowhere else to turn. We owe it to them to make their safety and survival our top priority, and we should give them nothing less.

RECESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess prior to the hour that was chosen, just a couple of minutes early.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:28 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reconvened when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

Mr. LEAHY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the entire Nation continues to be focused on the millions of Americans who have been devastated and displaced by hurri-

cane Katrina. My heart and prayers go out to the individuals and the families who have had to endure so much over the last 8 days; first, the natural disaster of Katrina and then the unnatural disaster of the delayed and deeply flawed relief effort.

Last week, as this tragedy was unfolding, I was on a congressional delegation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, among other things, meeting with members of the Iowa National Guard who are training units of the new Afghan Army. I will have more to report about that trip in coming days. While this tragedy was unfolding, most of the time I was in Pakistan watching. No matter where we went, it was on television, whether we were going to meet the President of Pakistan or whether we were going out to a small village to visit some schools we have helped to fund in the past in poor villages. Everyone had a television focused on it.

As I was there watching it unfold, I had this terrible feeling of helplessness; also, I must add, a feeling of embarrassment and being ashamed that our Government was not responding more forcefully to this disaster.

I will take advantage of this first opportunity to be back in the Senate to speak publicly about the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. There is no question FEMA has failed and, more broadly, the Federal Government has failed the people of the gulf coast. In other parts of the country that are vulnerable to similar natural disasters or terrorist attacks, Americans are saying: There, but for the grace of God, go I, go me or my city. It is important those responsible for this systematic failure be held accountable and plans and procedures be put in place to avoid any recurrence of this failure.

I know I will not be the only Senator demanding hearings and rigorous oversight by Congress in the weeks ahead, but that is in the weeks ahead. That is down the road. Today, we must focus on the immediate and longer term human needs of the people of the gulf coast. As ranking member of the Agriculture Committee and of the subcommittee on Labor and Health and Human Services of the Committee on Appropriations I will do my part, again with my distinguished chairman, Senator CHAMBLISS of the Committee on Agriculture, and Senator SPECTER, who is chairman of the subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, along with Senator COCHRAN, the full chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, to see we provide maximum resources for relief and recovery efforts across the gulf coast region.

For instance, we need to make sure USDA, the Department of Agriculture, is able to meet the food needs of the victims and to assist hard-hit agricultural producers. We will also need to extend emergency Medicaid benefits to hundreds of thousands of victims. I will work closely with Senators and officials from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, to ensure that their needs are fully and effectively met.

Indeed, in recent days, my staff has been meeting with Senator LANDRIEU's staff to share the experience and the expertise we gained in the wake of our widespread flooding in Iowa back in 1993. Some of the visual images, especially of New Orleans and some of the other towns along the gulf coast totally flooded with water, brought back memories of the flood of 1993 in Iowa, when whole towns were wiped out, some never to be rebuilt. People lost their homes, life savings, and mementos, such as pictures and family albums, the things that mean so much in our lives.

I remember 1993 and those floods in Iowa. At that time, I cochaired a task force, along with Senator KIT BOND of Missouri, whose State was also devastated by the same flooding, to identify the types of assistance that would be needed, as well as the best way to secure that assistance in Congress as well as in the executive branch. I am hopeful our past experience can provide a roadmap for officials responding to this latest disaster.

Some of the needed assistance is obvious, beginning, of course, with food. We must make sure these people who have been displaced to other States get adequate food and nutrition, and shelter, of course. It is so wonderful to see so many people opening their homes, their communities, their facilities, to take care of people who have been displaced from their own homes and communities. But we need to provide shelter in the longer term. Where is that going to come from? People cannot live for 6 months, 9 months, 2 years, in the Astrodome or in any other public facility which is housing these people now. We have to find adequate shelter.

Many of the people who have been displaced—let's face it, the vast majority are very poor people, and I will have more to say about that later—need health care assistance. Many of the communities are already at the breaking point, in terms of providing health care to the poorest of their citizens.

We need to be doing something about at least those three things—food, shelter and health care—right now. In the weeks and months ahead, more will be needed, including grants to individuals. Grants to individuals helped immeasurably in my State of Iowa after the flood of 1993, to help them move back, to get a start, to buy simple things like a bed, a stove, a refrigerator.

Loans will be needed to small businesses to get them back on their feet. Think of all the small Main Street businesses wiped out. They are going to need help to get back on their feet.

We need buyouts of homes in frequently flooded areas. Senator BOND and I also worked together after the flood of 1993 on hazard mitigation. Sometimes individuals located in an area constantly under flood threats or which has been flooded numerous times need to be relocated. We did that very effectively in both Iowa and in Missouri.

We need funding for community redevelopment. Much more will have to be done down the pike.

This Congress must step up to the plate and do it. If we can spend between \$5 billion and \$6 billion a month in Iraq, surely we cannot shirk our responsibility to our own citizens in this country.

As we learned back in 1993 in the Iowa floods, there are other less obvious forms of assistance that are also critically important. I add here, psychological counseling, psychological help for people who have lost loved ones or were traumatized by the disaster, especially young people and kids.

I salute Governor Tom Vilsack, of my State of Iowa, for leading a robust response to this disaster. He has ordered our State Government to prepare for the potential relocation of up to 5,000 people from the gulf coast region. They will be given shelter and assistance in communities all across our State. Again, I am so proud of my fellow Iowans. The phone calls have been coming in. They have room to take in one, two, or three people. They are opening their homes. The churches across our State are saying they will do whatever they can to help find housing and accommodations for people. Governor Vilsack has also directed the Iowa Department of Public Health to deploy a 30-member team of doctors, nurses, and other health officials to southeast Louisiana.

I say to my fellow Iowans and to all my fellow Americans, our prayers for the victims are important, but as President Kennedy once reminded us, here on Earth, God's work must truly be our own. Each and every one of us can make a difference to the victims of this disaster. There are dozens of organizations, including the Red Cross and Salvation Army, in urgent need of donations and assistance.

So it is at times like this we are reminded we truly are one American family. Families look out for one another. I have no doubt people all across this country will continue to open their hearts and be as generous as possible in the days and weeks and months ahead.

Likewise, I am hopeful this Congress and this White House will also be generous. We will do whatever it takes to help the people of New Orleans and the gulf coast put their lives and communities back together.

Mr. President, with that I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I, too, rise in an expression of sympathy to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and to convey my deep gratitude to the many people who are working in ongoing relief efforts.

As we gather here today, thousands of people throughout the South are struggling to recover from one of this Nation's greatest natural disasters. Really, if you think about it, it is a

disaster that continues to unfold. With the public health issues, the sustenance-of-human-life issues, the needs that need to be met on a daily basis, this disaster, the full extent of it, is not yet even known.

As we all know, Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast on Monday, August 29, leaving in its wake destruction and devastation. The loss of life is incalculable at this time. The city of New Orleans lies in ruin, and residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida are struggling today to meet their most basic needs—shelter, food, clean water, and medical care.

This Congress has appropriated, on an emergency basis, more than \$10 billion to help meet the most immediate needs of these victims of this disaster. But, obviously, there is more that needs to be done.

Thousands of Americans now face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives. I am proud to report the people of my State of Texas are doing their part, welcoming literally almost a quarter of a million people with open arms. While some Texans are providing resources to meet evacuees' immediate needs, others are facilitating longer term needs for this large and displaced population. State and local government agencies are coordinating efforts on the ground and countless volunteers—from churches, synagogues, mosques, other faith-based organizations, and just good hearted people—are providing all of the help they can on a round-the-clock basis to ensure our neighbors' needs are being met.

On the ground, nearly 2,000 soldiers and airmen from the Texas Air National Guard are continuing to provide assistance with Hurricane Katrina relief and security efforts. An additional 350 members of the Texas State Guard have also joined them. Texas National Guard aviation has moved more than 6,650 people, distributed 20,000 meals, and almost 40,000 bottles of water, and supplied more than a million pounds of material to help repair the breach in New Orleans' levees.

Even as Texas leaders have notified FEMA and Louisiana officials that we are nearing capacity, people across the State continue to open their homes to their neighbors in need and to reach out to help them in any way they can.

In the shelters, one of the most important ongoing efforts is to locate a place for displaced residents to actually live on a temporary basis. The Red Cross in Dallas is doing everything it can to register evacuees or those who have been victimized by Katrina. This will help facilitate the reuniting of these victims with their families and loved ones. This effort is being duplicated at all other shelters.

The city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County have partnered to provide the best possible care for victims. The local government has taken full responsibility for this situation and is managing these shelters in an efficient and professional manner.

In Houston, 20,000 people are being housed and cared for at the Astrodome. Another 4,000 are being sheltered at the Reliant Center. And 3,000 more are being housed at the George R. Brown Convention Center. It is estimated that up to 100,000 more are in hotels and shelters throughout the greater Houston area, with around 200,000 to 250,000 victims of Katrina in Texas.

Mr. President, 20,000 volunteers in Houston alone have been working to accommodate the enormous manpower requirements to put all of these efforts in place.

A lot of credit is due not only at the highest levels of State government, to Governor Perry and his team, but also to local leaders such as Harris County Judge Robert Eckels and Mayor Bill White of Houston who have done an excellent job working to mobilize the major county and city efforts to offer immediate shelter to these victims. Both the judge and the mayor have been going to Fortune 500 companies in the greater Houston area to ask for immediate help and have been met with generous offers of assistance. Shelter volunteers are working, also, to make sure the medical needs of these evacuees are being met. Dallas County Health and Human Services has stated that physicians are taking extra precautions to prevent the outbreak of communicable diseases at the shelters. The Mental Health and Mental Retardation Department has deployed social workers and psychiatrists to shelters to help deal with the mental trauma associated with this disaster.

But in addition to the immediate needs for food, clothing, water, and medical care, there are long-term needs that need to be addressed as well. We must also ensure that these long-term needs are met by this same team effort of Federal, State, and local officials, as well as nongovernmental and faith-based organizations. Federal agencies have stepped up and have given information to evacuees on how to receive Social Security and other Government benefits while they are temporarily displaced.

The Post Office has stopped mail according to ZIP Codes so mail will not be lost and can ultimately be delivered. Local district clerks have given information regarding how to apply for child support payments. And I recently was in communication with district clerk Charles Bacarisse of Harris County, who is working with attorney general Gregg Abbott to make sure child support payments are delivered on time to those who are entitled to them.

Congress is also considering waivers so the Department of Housing and Urban Development can give out vouchers for housing.

My office has joined with the rest of the congressional delegation to facilitate the Federal Emergency Management Agency's ability to provide services and assisting HUD to provide housing as quickly as possible to such an enormous number of people. Likewise,

communities have joined together, and many good people are personally even housing in their home those who have nowhere else to turn.

So I am gratified, but not surprised, by the big heart of the people in the State of Texas toward those who are in need. We know there are stories that are heartwarming on a personal level as well as on a larger level as to the way people are responding, which is in a way that we would all hope that if the shoe were on the other foot we would respond.

While we have heard there have been episodes of lawlessness, looting, and other acts of desperation, it is important to remember there have been innumerable acts of kindness from those expressing charity and goodwill which I believe truly embodies the American spirit and the Texas spirit. These are some of the stories on which I would like to close.

I was told an expectant couple from Louisiana was so appreciative of the warm welcome they received when they arrived in Dallas that they named their newest arrival, their baby girl, "Dallas," after our fine city.

After a 23-hour drive to Texas, one woman gave birth to her new son and named him after the hospital where he was born in gratitude for the money, gift certificates, clothes, and other necessities that the hospital staff collected for her.

Louisiana resident Bernell Royal was rescued from his rooftop with nothing more than a bag of clothes—no identification, no wallet, no personal documents or effects. He is now being housed at a shelter in Austin, TX. Although he believes everything he owned is now gone, he told one reporter:

I feel like in Austin I've found a new sense of respect, dignity and honor. I would love to stay in Austin, get a job, and start a new life.

We hope he will.

In Duncanville, Darwin German II and his family wanted to help hurricane victims, so they decided to give away what they had—free apartments at the Candlelight Park Apartments. Move-in costs will be covered, as well as 4 months of free rent.

Dallas school officials over the weekend prepared to enroll approximately 500 student evacuees who were expected to start school today. The Dallas Morning News reports that Melissa Farria said when her children were registered for school:

These people are amazing. . . .When they were saying they were registering students, I couldn't believe it.

And the University of Texas is likewise opening its doors to Texas students who were on their way to Louisiana universities. It has been reported that 134 undergraduates and 60 law students have now been enrolled at the University of Texas and will be able to continue their programs of study.

The Dallas Morning News is offering free classified advertisements for busi-

nesses and individuals offering free goods or services to evacuees from areas struck by Hurricane Katrina.

These are just some of the stories of goodwill and charity and big hearts that we found in response to this terrible disaster. I know the temptation is perhaps almost irresistible, particularly here in Congress, to point the finger of blame at mistakes made, plans that were not executed the way we hoped they might have been. Believe me, there will be plenty of time for that. But I believe right now it represents a distraction from the job we ought to be about, as exemplified by these wonderful Good Samaritans I have described this afternoon.

We ought to be about making sure people have food, shelter, and clean water; that they have medical care; that their children are allowed to go to school; and that we help them get on with their lives and leave the blame game and the finger-pointing for later on. I know Congress and the Senate will undertake a series of hearings—and, in fact, this afternoon—looking at gasoline prices. We should and we will deal with that issue appropriately. We also ought to look at the mistakes that were made and things that could be done better. I am confident the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will, in due course, have hearings and make sure we learn from those mistakes and we do better next time.

But I think more than anything else this is a time for Americans to pull together. I wanted to take a few minutes to express my gratitude to the big-hearted people of Texas for taking in these nearly quarter of a million evacuees from Hurricane Katrina who had nowhere else to turn and who were looking for the milk of human kindness, which they found in the great State of Texas.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, millions of Americans on the Gulf Coast have endured an almost unspeakable tragedy over the past 10 days. Thousands are likely dead. Hundreds of thousands had their lives upended and wondered so rightly why their Government seemed to have abandoned them. Millions of Americans across the country are asking themselves when the suffering will end.

We cannot undo what has happened, but there is one thing we can do to redeem ourselves and to live up to our greatest American ideals.

We can commit that we will not stop, that we will not rest, until these communities are back and stronger than before, until families have been reunited, and until the survivors of this catastrophe are restored into the full measure of American life.

If 6 months from now we are still referring to American citizens as refugees, if we are content that American families are holed up without jobs,

without homes, without security, then we will have failed and failed miserably.

Our response to date has not been worthy of our Nation, and we will have to examine why it wasn't until last Friday that our brave and committed National Guard forces were deployed to deliver supplies to the starving, suffering Americans stranded at the New Orleans Convention Center.

The time will also come to determine why the mandatory evacuation order wasn't implemented effectively and why the Army Corps of Engineers wasn't given the resources long ago to prevent the collapse of the levees that caused most of the loss of life, especially when FEMA had called such a hurricane one of the "likeliest, most catastrophic disasters facing the country."

Clearly, mistakes were made that cost lives, displaced thousands, and left one of America's most unique and treasured cities under water and abandoned. There will come a time to hold accountable the responsible officials who allowed this disaster to become even more disastrous.

But our first priority now is to do everything we can to meet the needs of our fellow citizens and to provide a helping hand to the countless generous Americans throughout the Nation who have opened their homes, their schools, and their communities to our displaced fellow citizens. Today our job is to meet the great, daunting, and unprecedented challenge of rebuilding the entire region.

Our obligation is to guarantee that the Americans thrust into the darkness of despair and homelessness last week emerge with a restored faith in their fellow citizens and a renewed belief that this is a land of opportunity.

This is a challenge for all of us—as individuals, as public officials, and as members of religious and charitable organizations.

But above all it is the job of our national Government, which alone has the resources, the manpower, and the authority to lead this enormous effort. The eyes of the world are upon us—watching to see how we take care of our own.

The \$10.5 billion Congress passed last week was an initial gesture, but it's just a small fraction of the amount needed to address the unprecedented challenges this entire region faces. It's only the beginning, and we need to recognize that.

We should move quickly, for example, to address the health needs of these citizens. The disaster area is a public health hazard as well. The floodwaters are potentially disease-ridden. Countless people have been injured or taken ill as a result of the disaster. The physical and mental health needs of thousands must be met as they try to cope with the horror that they've endured.

We also need to ensure that the elderly and disabled who rely on supplemental assistance to live continue to

get it, even though they've been dislocated.

We must do all we can to see that school children and college students don't miss a year of their education.

There are approximately 70,000 children in the New Orleans school system, some 7,000 to 8,000 schoolteachers. That school system has effectively been completely destroyed—all of the books lost, all of the records completely lost. We don't know where those school-children have moved to, which children have gone where. The payrolls for all of the school administrators have effectively been lost. We know that what I just mentioned for New Orleans has been replicated in school district after school district throughout the whole gulf area.

School districts across the country are taking in children from the disaster area. Thirty-five cities as far north as Detroit have come forward to date, we understand, with Houston working to serve 6,000 students, Dallas-Fort Worth making room for 5,000. These school districts are doing our Nation a great service. We need to make sure they have the support they need as they step forward.

In my own State of Massachusetts, a number of colleges have offered to take the graduate students that were studying at law schools such as Tulane and other students who were studying at the great universities in Louisiana and along the gulf area. This is something we should follow up on, the challenges, to make sure that the students, whether it is K-12, whether it is in college, or whether it is in graduate schools, we reach out to try to assist students in the educational area.

Colleges are volunteering to admit displaced students from the region. We must offer them additional aid for generously admitting these students and must assure that adequate student aid is available to those who temporarily attend a new college.

The hundreds of thousands of workers who now have no jobs need an income to help them overcome the delay in finding new employment. We must amend our disaster unemployment assistance laws to enable these men and women to qualify for help. For example, under the emergency unemployment provisions, you to have wait 30 days in order to be eligible to be a recipient. That is obviously a rule that has to be addressed if we are going to use that particular mechanism to get income to these needy families.

We need to rebuild the public health infrastructure which is under increasing strain as the number of uninsured continues to climb. Sadly, Hurricane Katrina has only made this crisis worse.

These are but a few of the actions we must take—and take now—to deal with the immediate needs of those displaced by Katrina and of the communities that have so generously taken them in.

In the longer term, I believe we should establish a New Orleans and

Gulf Coast Redevelopment Authority, with cabinet rank, to coordinate planning and funding needed to restore the infrastructure of that battered region—the electricity, water, gas, roads, railroads, and bridges, and, especially, the levees and flood control facilities. These actions are beyond the ability of any single community, city, and State to handle on their own. It is a national responsibility, and we need a capable authority to work with State and local officials and local citizens to rebuild the future.

The scope of this national crisis exceeds anything since the Great Depression. It's the first time a major U.S. city has been leveled since the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. It will likely exceed the cost in human lives of the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, where more than 8,000 persons are thought to have perished.

It's the kind of disaster we no longer thought possible in an age of instantaneous global communications, rapid transportation, highly accurate weather forecasts, and advanced engineering. It was most certainly the kind of suffering that should not be tolerated by a modern society with so many tools at its disposal.

In the weeks, months, and even years ahead, the recovery from this disaster—the complete, total, and unambiguous recovery—must become a primary focus of our national government.

As elected officials we cannot allow this work to be sidetracked by lesser priorities. If we don't get this right for our fellow Americans, little else can matter.

For our political leadership in Washington, in the White House and here on Capitol Hill, this is a test of wills, a test of leadership, a test of vision and compassion.

It will require singular focus and an unyielding commitment.

The most immediate task is still to save lives. Over 1.5 million have been evacuated from the devastated area, but many still remain, particularly in outlying rural areas cut off the most from the outside world.

Local authorities, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard are still trying to reach and rescue men, women, and children from the ravaged areas. It's a race against time before waterborne disease, dehydration, and neglect take their toll. They are working around the clock, and they deserve all the resources they need.

For the hundreds of thousands of Americans thrust into homeless shelters as a result of the tragedy, we need to make sure they are getting the care, nutrition, and counseling they so desperately need.

But the urgency is not limited to these immediate and enormous humanitarian tasks. It extends to the rebuilding efforts too, because the more rapidly we can revitalize the great city of New Orleans, and so many other communities, the sooner we can help people rebuild their lives.

These cities and towns are not just bricks and mortar. They are communities and economies of countless families, neighbors, and business owners, desperate for a return to normalcy.

It's said that nearly 80,000 jobs in New Orleans alone are provided by the tourism industry. How many more of those jobs can we save—how many more families can have stability again—if we get the city back on its feet in 6 months as opposed to 1 year? Two years? Three years? How much human misery and suffering can we still prevent?

I'm impressed with the way the Army Corps of Engineers is working to rebuild the levees and begin to drain away the water. It's such a critical step in locating the missing and beginning the process of recovery.

The Army Corps now estimates that perhaps within 30 days, New Orleans and the surrounding areas will finally be dry.

The question for Congress and the administration is will we be ready on Day 31? Will we be ready to start cleaning the streets and homes and removing the ghastly evidence of this most unbearable tragedy.

We owe it to the living to be ready. We owe it to the charitable organizations that are filling in the gaps and helping the displaced to get back on their feet. We owe it to the first responders who are giving so much of themselves to ease the suffering.

We owe it to the millions of Americans who are opening their hearts and checkbooks to their fellow citizens.

History is watching us now, and it will judge our actions. We can't undo the failures in planning over many years or the failures in the immediate response over the past 10 days.

But we can resolve to dedicate all of our energies and resources, and our resolve from this point forward to resources to bring about a complete and total recovery for the entire Gulf Coast area, and the men and women and children who've endured more than any of us can possibly imagine in this massive tragedy.

To the Gulf Coast region we need to be like Aaron and Hur who held up Moses' tired arms in battle.

Today, we need to be just as dedicated to the Gulf Coast region if we are going to lead our fellow Americans out of this time of darkness to a better and stronger future.

The Katrina disaster also shines a bright light on another challenge facing our country—the glaring economic disparities facing our citizens. Those with means were able to escape the disaster. Those without could not.

Those with means can slowly and painfully rebuild their lives.

Those without means have nothing to let them rebuild.

As a nation, we must be sensitive to this inequality—sensitive as we respond to Katrina, and sensitive, too, as we select new Justices for the Supreme Court. That's a critical question for

Judge Roberts. Can he unite America for the future?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I know we have been alternating between the Democrats and Republicans. I note that there is no Republican on the Senate floor, and I will therefore now proceed in the interest of economy of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I note Senator LOTT has come to the floor of the Senate. I didn't know if the Senator wished to speak, as someone who has lost his home in his State. I am happy to return to my time. Would the Senator like to talk now?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank the Senator, my good friend and my partner, for allowing me to have this opportunity. But to tell the truth, I just arrived a few minutes ago, and I am still a bit emotional right this minute. If she would continue to give me just a few minutes to get my papers in order, I would appreciate it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Certainly. We welcome you back. And to the people of Mississippi, know that we extend our concern and want to put our good intentions into operation.

I come to the floor of the Senate to speak about what has happened to our country and ideas on how we can move forward and make sure this never happens again. I note that the Presiding Officer himself has been a mayor and a Governor, so he knows what these kind of challenges are.

Last week on the Senate break, when I saw what was happening in Louisiana, in Mississippi, and in Alabama, I couldn't believe it. I could not believe the devastation that occurred in these communities where entire neighborhoods were wiped out, that a wonderful city we have all loved and admired and enjoyed, New Orleans, was now under 10 feet of water, that the people of Mississippi all along their coast lost their homes, where with the flyovers all you saw was wreckage, people on a beach and an American flag and a sheet saying: Please help us. And then also this going on in Alabama. We in Maryland know what it is like for a hurricane to hit. Just a few years ago, we survived Hurricane Isabel where we had communities that looked like Baghdad on the bay. So we were very concerned.

One thing we had was confidence that hope and help would be on the way.

Well, my gosh, this did not happen. I could not believe the slowness and the sluggishness of the response to these communities; that it was the private sector that was on response a lot faster than our own Government.

Mr. President, this is just unacceptable. This failure of Government to be able to respond more quickly and more effectively shows that the people in these States have been doubly victimized. They were victimized by the nat-

ural disaster, Hurricane Katrina, and now by the response of their own Government.

It did not have to be this way. It did not have to be this way. In 2000, a tip-top FEMA was turned to the Bush administration. President Bush appointed Joe Allbaugh to be head of FEMA. We kept the legacy of reform that had begun under President Bush 1 and had started with Andrew Card and myself working on a reform of FEMA. This reform left FEMA in tiptop condition to respond to a crisis of a natural disaster in an American community.

I want to recall this to my colleagues. Back in the 1990s, I chaired an appropriations subcommittee called VA-HUD and Independent Agencies. One of the independent agencies was FEMA. We saw its lackluster performance in Hugo. But when Andrew hit Florida it was a disaster. It was a disaster of proportions from the hurricane and then again the ineptness of FEMA.

Well, we went to work, hands on. President Bush 1 sent Andy Card to Florida and he began to work and we on appropriations began to work, and we worked across the aisle on a bipartisan basis to help not only Florida but to take a longer look at the need to reform FEMA. And again, working on a bipartisan basis, reform FEMA we did. We took it from an agency that was focused on the Cold War, was riddled with cronyism both at the National and State Governments. There was a tradition that because FEMA was only organized in the case of a nuclear attack that you did not have to put in professionals because it would not matter; we would all be dead anyway. So there was cronyism, it was unfocused, it was of the Cold war, but again, working on a bipartisan basis, we in appropriations worked with the White House to change it.

President Clinton came in, and we kept the reform momentum going. And what did we do? We said, No. 1, that FEMA, first of all, should say goodbye to the Cold War and hello to being a risk-based agency, to take a look at what most American communities would be threatened by. In those days, it was a hurricane, it was a tornado, it was an earthquake. And then for it to go to an all-hazards agency, whether it was a train that got stuck in a Baltimore tunnel with toxic fumes that we worried about or whether it was an earthquake in California or a tornado in one of our Midwest States.

The other thing we focused on was that FEMA had to be run by professionals. It had to be run by someone who had dealt with management situations. And that was either a civilian involved in emergency management or possibly someone from retired military, and we asked each Governor to also reform themselves at the State level. We literally upgraded FEMA from the State and local level to the national level. We have had James Lee Witt. We had Joe Allbaugh, things were improving.

The other thing we did was we made sure that we practiced the three Rs for FEMA. What were the three Rs? Readiness, response, and recovery. It took time, it took money, and it took cooperation. But again, working on a bipartisan basis, we had it accomplished. We worked, as I said, with President Bush 1, then with President Clinton, and then, even though I chaired FEMA appropriations and was the prime mover in 1994, Senator KIT BOND became the chairman of that wonderful subcommittee, and for a decade, he too, working hand in hand, kept the momentum of reform going concentrating on a professionalized FEMA that could work on readiness, recovery, and response.

The States were ready, we were ready, and I think everyone agreed during that time it worked well.

Well, now something terrible has happened since 2000, since 9/11, and I will tell you what happened.

First of all, somehow or another, FEMA has lost its way. Since it has moved into Homeland Security, it has become unfocused, it has become unclear, it has lost its direction of being an all-hazards independent agency. Therefore, today, I am proposing a couple of things. I am proposing that, No. 1, we restore FEMA to being an independent agency responsible to the President the way it was before 9/11; No. 2, that we also make sure that, as an independent agency, it is an all-hazards agency run by a professional. I think it is time that Michael Brown leave FEMA. I think he either should leave voluntarily or involuntarily, but we need a professional in charge of FEMA; No. 3, there should be a commission to look at what happened. But we can't wait. There is much to be done. There is much rebuilding that needs to be done. We need to make sure that we are helping our own communities.

First of all, we want to congratulate the people at the local level for their tremendous resiliency, the people of Mississippi, Alabama, and, of course, Louisiana. No. 2, we need to congratulate the nonprofit sector—the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, also universities that are taking in students. We need to thank people from around the world who not only have sent condolences but have sent resources, and we appreciate their help. But we need to make sure that we have a FEMA that the American people can count on. We need to restore it to an independent level, make it an all-hazards agency, make it one that focuses on readiness, response, and recovery.

What we can do now with new leadership is focus on the recovery part. We want to say to the people of these States we know that when the TV cameras leave, your Government cannot leave you, we cannot forsake you, we cannot abandon you. To the Governors of the States that have welcomed these people, from Texas to Georgia to Arkansas, each struggling, we say that we

need to be there to help you. For all those other States that have sent help, including my own State of Maryland, we need to back those States and back those communities.

I say to all those people who have no home and living in temporary shelters, we need to help you find a way. For all of you who are living in motel rooms because you could evacuate, running out of time, running out of money, we need to identify who you are, see where you are, to make sure you are connected with your family and begin to see if we can't connect you with a home and with a job. We need to be able to do that. But in order to do that, No. 1, we need new leadership at FEMA. No. 2, we need to reform FEMA. And No. 3, we need to look ahead.

There are those who say: Well, Senator MIKULSKI, FEMA went under Homeland Security because of a global war against terrorism. We know that, and I was one who voted to put it there. Well, I will tell you, would you trust FEMA now if a dirty bomb hit a city? Would you trust FEMA now to be able to respond to a chemical or biological weapon? The answer is no, no, no.

Much needs to be done. First of all, we need to support those communities that are helping other communities. We need to also salute that which is working. Three cheers for the Coast Guard that was one of the first on the job doing rescue; support the private sector, America's corporations that are both paying their employees and sending in incredible donations. We need to support the nonprofits that are also helping. But most of all we need to support each other.

I want to, once again, as I did at the time of Hurricane Andrew, reach across the aisle to an American President to say let's stop using the term "refugee." Let's start using the term "Americans." Let's start using the term "citizens." Let's start acknowledging that we are all one people under God, indivisible. Let's work to reform FEMA. Let's get in the right leadership. And then let's work with the right resources, and let's do it in a spirit of cooperation. We had that spirit after 9/11. That is what somebody did to us. Now, we had a hurricane do something terrible to us. We should not do unto ourselves by not responding to the needs of our own people. Somebody once said it takes a village to raise a child. Right now it takes a country to raise these villages and all of those towns. My heart goes out to them. As I said, we in Maryland know what it is like to be on the coast and be hurt. I say to my colleague who has lost his beloved home that has been in his family for years, looking at him as a Senator, he has some power, and we are going to help him, but we think about all the little people, all the little people, and we think about how we can help them. If we work together as a country and make sure we work with America's corporations, we will get the resources in

the United States of America. And then for the long haul, let's make FEMA an independent agency—an all-hazards, professionally run independent, responsible only to the call of the Commander in Chief.

Mr. President, I once again say, God bless America and the people of its communities. I look forward to working, on a bipartisan basis, to resolve this issue. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I say to the distinguished Senator from Maryland, Ms. MIKULSKI, I appreciate her kind remarks, and I know how she feels, on a human and an individual basis, and I know she will be working with us to make sure that the full force of the Government is used and that where we need changes and where we need help, we will work together to put those in place.

I have learned, once again, that Mother Nature is a great equalizer. When you experience what we have experienced, which is an attack of monumental proportions, politics and partisanship, national origin and economic status, religion, all of that is put aside so that you can work together to help people who are struggling for their lives, literally.

I want to take a few minutes to talk about what is the situation there. I came back because I wanted to express my feelings in a number of areas and talk about the devastation and not try to complain—in fact, I will not complain—but tell people how they can help. We need solutions, and we need actions. After a couple days here, where I can maybe meet with Cabinet Secretaries and meet with others who make decisions, we will go back, and we will continue the effort. We are not at real cleanup yet, certainly not reconstruction. We are still dealing with devastation, search and rescue, and health and safety. And it is desperate. I want to begin by thanking my colleagues. So many of my colleagues have sent messages, have called my offices, have gotten through to me and made huge efforts to try to express their concerns. I don't want to belabor this point, but one of the calls was from Senator KERRY from Massachusetts. He said that he and Teresa had been worried about my wife Trisha and me and could they help. I said: You bet. He said: What can we do? What do you need? Where do you need it? I told him: Don't worry about distribution. You let us know when you are going to land. We will have people for pickup and distribution.

That story can be told hundreds of times over from friends or people you do not even know, Republicans, Democrats, people from Michigan, Illinois. It makes no difference. I could tell you an anecdote about every State. A lady from Illinois, pastor of a church, wanted to do something. She loaded up her own van, did not even have enough fuel

to get there, but somehow or another she begged, borrowed, wound up in the disaster area handing out materials, supplies. Nobody paid for it. Nobody asked for it. She loaded up and went to the sound of the cannon, and she made a difference.

Yesterday, when I flew in a Black Hawk helicopter to Poplarville, MS, one of the areas off the Gulf Coast that one does not hear a lot about, to make sure people in rural and small towns know that help is on the way there, too, I was escorted by our delegation. We had a Mississippi Black Hawk and three New York National Guard Black Hawk helicopters. Some of the first National Guardsmen who arrived were from Michigan. You name it, I can tell a story about every State.

On Wednesday, when I was digging through the rubble of my own neighborhood, some guys walked up from Bert, FL, and said: We know a little bit about hurricanes. We know you are hurting and you need help. We have six men, a bobcat, and a front-end loader. How can we help? I said: Can you clear that road, where we could get through there because the traffic in that area is getting to be a problem. And there is a little retired schoolteacher living back over here. We have not been able to get into her house. The debris was 6 or 8 feet up against her doors. We were afraid she was in there, but she showed up later in the afternoon, and we got her into her house. I do not know those guys. They were from Bert, FL. If they are listening, if they ever hear this, I want to thank them for loading up and coming to help.

Now, I have been dealing with disasters in Mississippi and in our region for 37 years, going back when I was a staff member for a Democratic Member in the House. So I have dealt with hurricanes. I was there for Camille, and I promised the Good Lord, if he would let me live through that one, I would not stay for another one. I have not stayed for any more. I leave, and then when the wind slows down, I go back and I take down the boards and I pull the debris, with my neighbors and my friends and my family. This time we could not even pull the debris. There was too much of it. But I have seen hurricanes of all kinds, and I have seen tornadoes and the devastation from ice storms and floods. We have had everything in Mississippi but locusts, and I expect them to show up real soon. This is a disaster of biblical proportions. I want the people to understand that.

My house is irrelevant, in the bigger picture of what happened, except for one thing. This house was 150 years old. It was 12 feet above sea level. It was 8 feet off the ground. Senator MCCONNELL slept in that house. It was nothing special, but everything in there was special. The point though is, for 150 years, this house had been able to withstand everything Mother Nature could deal her. Yes, we had the porch torn off and we had the roof replaced several times and we had other damages, but

basically it stood right there similar to a rock, and that is my hometown, Pascagoula, MS. As you go west, the damage gets worse and worse and worse: Biloxi, MS, Gulfport, MS, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Bay Saint Louis, Waveland, MS, no longer exists. You might say, well, the buildings are still standing. They were gutted. No, there is not a building standing—this little community of 7,000 people. And then there is New Orleans. A lot of people have been so emotionally touched and upset by what they have seen there, but one of the things they need to know is the hurricane hit us Monday. Their biggest disaster was Friday because the levees broke, the pumps had salt in them, and they did not work. I flew over Jefferson Parish on Friday with the President. They had water up to the roof lines of the houses standing there, and it had been rising ever since about Tuesday or Wednesday. So their worst disaster was not the hurricane; it was the aftermath.

I flew over and saw three big fires going on in New Orleans. Nobody was trying to put them out. You know why? You could not get there. Finally, the National Guard came in with helicopters and buckets and helped a little bit.

So the proportions of this are enormous. And for that reason, our response has not been perfect. A lot of criticism has been pointed at this place or that place, why was the military not there earlier, or this person or that group? It took the National Guard in my home State, going from Camp Shelby, 70 miles, to Gulfport, MS, 7 hours because they had to cut their way through a major highway. Highway 49 was covered with pine trees. They were still falling the next night when I went through there because they were kind of standing there and eventually fell right on down.

When you got on the ground, we did not know exactly where it was going to hit, and then the proportions of it exceeded what anybody expected. And even when you got there, you could not communicate with anybody, no hard lines, no cell phones operating, no blackberry messages were coming and going. It took us 2 days to get to where people were. We are still looking for people we have not been able to find. A lot of the bad things that I have tried to deal with turned out to be rumors. I had two good friends who were identified basically as missing or dead Tuesday. Well, they were there Friday. I was told I could not get to my house; the roads were closed. I advised what I was going to do to anybody who tried to stop me. When I got there, there were no blockades. I went right through there like lightning, and so did everybody else. So there are rumors about things.

Now, have mistakes been made? Is it bad? Is it still horrible? Has it not been fast enough, good enough? Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. What good does that do? I met yesterday with elected officials

from 33 counties in my State, mayors, supervisors, clerks, sheriffs, police chiefs. And by the way, I cannot give enough accolades for what they have done. I told them: Look, I do not want to hear about the problems of yesterday. I want to hear what your problem is today. Tell me what the solution is, and we will fix it before the sun goes down.

I want to give some idea of what is happening. The loss of life is just, one cannot even comprehend what people are dealing with. Of course, similar to everything else in life, when you have a disaster such as this, it is bad on everybody. The poor people and the people in low-lying areas, they are hit harder than anybody, and we have to make sure we help them.

I want to specifically thank a few people. It is not a long list and I am going to miss some and I will be back to get to the rest of them. The first responders saved a lot of lives, even saved property, which became irrelevant. National Guard, Coast Guard, military in general, they are working now, the Seabees, the Corps of Engineers, the Navy. For the first time in history, we are moving Navy flat-bottomed troop carriers in to house people so that emergency workers will have a place to sleep at night and get a warm meal. Once again, we saw that the military is not only for Iraq. We need the military for here.

You know when they got order in New Orleans? When the 82nd Airborne pulled in, the shooting stopped. They brought in a tough general that came off the plane cussing. Within 6 hours, things were under control. So I want to thank them all. Policemen, firemen, stories I have heard, people I have seen, emergency rescuers, ambulance, all of those first responders. Local and State officials do not get enough credit.

In my State of Mississippi, one reason why I think we are doing a little better than we have in the past or than some other areas is we have the best quality of elected officials, men and women, mayors, supervisors. Our Governor, Haley Barbour, and our Lieutenant Governor, Amy Tuck, they have all been pulling together, and they deserve a lot of credit. Federal officials, there are so many things that have happened I cannot list them all. Cabinet Secretaries and agency people, individuals, FEMA is there on the job. They are getting hammered the most, and we will have to think about whether they are set up in the right way, but there will be time for that.

Right now we want to know what can we do to help them do a better job. In my own State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Emergency Management Administration has been criticized. I was about ready to express myself in a very profound way yesterday about the fact that we do not have emergency housing arriving yet. I was told that the Mississippi Emergency Management Administration had not requested the trailers. So I got to where a MEMA of-

ficial was and asked: Did you request the trailers?

Yes, 20,000, 2 or 3 days ago.

What is the problem?

He said: I do not know. I have made the request. So then the word from FEMA was: Well, we have not been told where to put them. Excuse me? The whole area is slick. Park them anywhere. There are no parking limits. We are a parking lot. That is ridiculous. So there is bureaucratic nonsense going on, but we are getting there. We have that problem resolved. We have FEMA talking to MEMA, talking to the people who have the trailers. Three hundred arrived this morning; 20,000 more are coming. We will get through that.

I want to thank the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, all the other charities, individuals, and churches. My wife, yesterday, worked all afternoon loading an 18 wheeler at Christ United Methodist Church, Jackson, MS, where Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and Jews were all working together, all kinds of backgrounds, loading those 18 wheelers. Nobody asked to pay for it. Nobody told them where to send it. They said: We are loading them, and we are sending them to the First Baptist Church, Pascagoula, the First Presbyterian Church, Pascagoula, and to the Episcopal Church at Ocean Springs, MS. They are there this morning with things such as Clorox—never stop to think you need that—cleaning materials.

I saw the Red Cross riding around. They did not wait for people to come to them because people could not get there. The Red Cross people went into the communities and said: Here is a Styrofoam plate of warm food. Some people had not seen warm food for days. Some people had not eaten for days. And they are out there handing out water on the frontline. The Salvation Army never asks questions; they provide help. So all of those are doing a great job.

I want to do something else too. Well, before I get to that, volunteers, boy, they have been great—people showing up saying: Where do I go? That is one thing we do need is leaders. You have to have somebody who will be willing to take charge and get people coordinated. That takes a little time.

I also want to put a list in the record. It is a long list. I ask unanimous consent that this list be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DONATIONS AND ASSISTANCE
RETAIL AND BUSINESS

Wal-Mart

Donated \$1,000,000 each to the Salvation Army and Red Cross.

Donating \$15,000,000 to jump start the national relief effort. As part of this donation, mini Wal-Marts are being established to give free food, water, diapers, toothbrushes and clothes to victims.

Using stores as staging areas for disaster assistance and distribution centers are

stocked with flashlights and blankets for disbursement.

Have several truckloads of supplies heading to the area.

Giving funds to displaced employees for housing, food and basic needs.

Home Depot

On phone with Governor's office to see where the below is needed most.

Have more than 800 trucks staged in the area for deployment.

Directing generators, flashlights, batteries, tarps, plywood, etc. to areas hit by Katrina.

Partnering with Super Value to deliver non-perishable food items like beef jerky, peanut butter, bottled water, diapers, etc. Planning six sites for "tent stores" that will be staffed and supplied in the following days.

Have generators on the way to Northrop Grumman for their use, per Pickering's request according to Beth.

FedEx

Flying a plane of relief supplies into New Orleans.

Donating \$500,000 to the Red Cross plus \$500,000 for shipping costs in addition to the \$250,000 annual donation and annual \$850,000 shipping.

Giving logistical support to the Emergency Command Center established in Louisiana.

A chartered flight today from Newark will carry 90,000 pounds of cots and hygiene kits to evacuees located in the Houston Astro-dome.

Ashley Furniture

Donating \$500,000 to the Red Cross plus employee and individual store donations.

Willing to sell furniture to FEMA below showroom costs for storm victims.

SmartSynch

Accepting donations of clothing and other items to be taken and distributed to evacuees in Jackson area shelters.

FOOD RETAILERS

Altria (Kraft)

Sending 4 truckloads of Fruit20 and 2 truckloads of snacks, cookies and Capri Sun to the Red Cross.

Sending 1 truckload of Fruit20 and 1 truckload of Planter's Nuts to Americares.

Quizno's

Trying to coordinate food shipments from their Jackson store to the Coast.

Mar's

Working on getting truckloads of snack food into the Gulf Coast.

TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Nissan

Donating \$500,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee contributions up to \$250,000.

Leased 50 trucks and SUVs to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Ford

Organizing blood, clothing and monetary drives to benefit the Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Donated approximately 165 SUVs, heavy-duty trucks and vans for relief efforts.

Deferring car payments for 90 days to those in the affected areas.

Toyota

Donating \$5,000,000 to the American Red Cross and other hurricane-related relief efforts.

Northwest Airlines

Making planes available to fly relief into the affected areas.

BNSF

Donating \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross.

Offering rail transportation to aid in the relief effort to the Governor's of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama.

Honeywell

Donated planes and crews to help transport relief related cargo.

ASTAR Air Cargo & ATA

Helping with air lift operations.

Koch Industries

Donating \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and \$250,000 to the Salvation Army.

Matching employee donations to either or organization up to \$1,000,000.

General Electric

Gave \$6,000,000 to the Red Cross and employees have given an additional \$1,000,000 that GE matched—making a total of \$7,000,000 from GE and an additional \$1,000,000 from their employees.

Sending at least \$10 million in medical devices, power generation equipment, water purification and other goods and services as identified by Federal relief authorities.

BANKS & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Citigroup

Making a direct donation of \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and employee matching for up to \$2,000,000—possibly more if contributions exceed this amount.

Suspending credit card payments, fees and interest charges for customers in the disaster areas. Also working on a case-by-case basis to help with house mortgage payments for those customers.

JP Morgan Chase

Donating \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations up to \$1,000,000.

Working with their 1.5 million customers in Mississippi to quickly process checks and loans.

BankPlus

Established an account for donations to the Red Cross. They are matching donations up to \$250,000.

PHONE COMPANIES, MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Bell South

Have two "tent cities" set up in Gulfport and Lyman with supplies for employees and retirees. Another tent is being set up in Hattiesburg.

Cingular

Sending trailers of meals, ice and other personal items to Ocean Springs.

Sending text messages to customers asking them to donate to the Red Cross.

Setting up a tent city for their employees and working to ensure those employees affected get paychecks.

Moving ATMs and health clinics in these tent cities by this weekend.

Verizon

Encouraging customers to donate by sending text messages to a central number (2HELP or 24357). Their donation to the Red Cross will be added onto their bill. The first message will add \$5.00 and a second will add \$25.

Nextel

Have 11 satellite trucks in the area and giving out free phones to victims of the hurricane.

ABC/Disney/ESPN

Running free PSAs for the Salvation Army.

Donated \$2,500,000 divided into the following categories: \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross, \$1,000,000 to various children's charities and \$500,000 to help supply volunteer shelters.

Given toys and videos to the Red Cross for children.

Trying to get portable TVs in the affected areas.

DirectTV

Dedicated a channel to FEMA alerts, Red Cross announcements, press conferences and local shelter information. This channel will also be available for public officials to communicate with the shelters. They are working with the Red Cross to provide this service to approximately 250 shelters across the area.

Established a Hurricane Katrina text message and e-mail message line for people trying to connect with loved ones. They leave a message with their name, location, who they're trying to reach and the message. Messages are then transcribed and scrolled on Hurricane Channel mentioned above.

New Skies Satellite

Donating satellite capacity to the FCC and FEMA to help facilitate communication via satellite phones and Internet access.

Offering the service of their engineers to area communications companies to help them get back operational.

OIL COMPANIES

Chevron

Donated \$5,000,000 to the Red Cross.

Erected a "tent city" near the Pascagoula refinery for their 1,500 employees and their families. The site will include water, first aid, food, bedding and toiletries.

ExxonMobil

Committed \$7,000,000 to the Red Cross and other national or local charities.

Working with FEMA and other local emergency management organizations to provide fuel and lubricants.

Shell

Donating \$2,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations up to \$1,000,000.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Health and Human Services

Sending 10,000 beds and supplies to local hospitals.

Department of Education

Examining ways to redirect existing funds toward relief efforts.

Student loan borrowers living in affected areas may delay payments on their loans without penalty.

On a case-specific basis the Department will relax certain reporting provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act for affected states.

Department of Justice

Donated \$5,000,000 to help fund emergency law enforcement. Mississippi will receive \$879,056 of that.

Housing and Urban Development

Established a toll-free number (866-641-8102) for the public to get information on housing needs.

Identifying vacant multi-family housing, public housing units and HUD-owned homes in a 500-mile radius of the affected areas that could be used as temporary housing.

Disaster voucher assistance for any family rendered homeless—\$200 million available with authority from Congress.

Vouchers for replacement units for displaced public housing families or displaced residents living in other HUD multifamily projects—\$50 million available.

Indian Community Development Block Grant funding—up to \$300,000 per grantee—for disaster relief for Indian housing and Tribal areas.

ASSOCIATIONS & CHARITIES

American Trucking Association

Making a \$10,000 donation to the Red Cross.

The Gulf Coast Relief 5K Run

James Carville and Mary Matalin, Pacers Running Stores, Mizuno USA and Great Harvest Bread Company are hosting a 5K on

September 17th in Old Town Alexandria. Entry fees will go to help those affected by the storm.

John Grisham/Rebuild the Coast Fund Organization

Grisham has established an account at BancorpSouth with a \$5,000,000 donation. The bank is handling the money. The account is open for other individuals to contribute.

Contributions can be made at any BancorpSouth branch; or by sending a check or money order to BancorpSouth, c/o Rebuild the Coast Fund Inc., P.O. Box 789, Tupelo, MS 38802 or Rebuild the Coast Fund, P.O. Box 4500, Tupelo MS 38803. Make checks payable to: Rebuild the Coast Fund Inc.

Knights of Columbus

They have pledged \$2,500,000 to charities broken into the following groups: \$250,000 for Catholic Charities, \$1,250,000 to assist evacuees and those left homeless, and the final \$1,000,000 will be dedicated to rebuilding Catholic churches and schools.

Retail Industry Leader's Association

Creating a DHS "Wish-List" to be distributed to member stores.

National Air Transportation Association

Coordinating members volunteering to fly food, supplies, generators, etc. to the area.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Accenture

Donated \$100,000 to the Red Cross in relief supplies and are matching employee contributions up to \$100,000.

Abbott

Pledged \$2,000,000 in cash donations. Working to provide \$2,000,000 in nutritional and medical supplies.

Amgen

Cash donation of \$2,500,000 million and matching employee donations.

Amylin

Donated \$100,000 to the Red Cross and will match employee donations to an additional \$100,000.

Donated \$50,000 to the Pennington Medical Center at LSD to establish an emergency diabetes clinic.

Astellas

Donating \$50,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee contributions up to \$50,000.

Working to send needed antibiotics to the area.

Astrazeneca

Initial cash donation of \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations dollar-for-dollar.

Working with local disaster relief organizations to provide direct aid and medication.

Bayer

Donated \$2,000,000 to the Red Cross And will match employee donations dollar-for-dollar.

BMS

Initial donation of \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and are matching employee donations.

Shipping infant formula to the federal government and is working with the Red Cross to coordinate the shipment.

Boehringer Ingelheim

Donating \$600,000.

Cephalon

Matching employee donations.

Eli Lilly

Donating \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations to the Red Cross

Donation \$1,000,000 worth of insulin products.

Genzyme

Matching employee donations. Making product donations.

GlaxoSmithKline

Giving a \$1,000,000 cash donation to be divided among the Red Cross, Mississippi Hurricane Fund and Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

Giving \$2,000,000 in products and consumer goods.

Matching employee contributions.

Donating medicines and health products as needed.

Johnson & Johnson

Working with disaster relief organization to provide needed medicine products.

Donated \$250,000 in disaster relief products. Matching employee and retirees' donations.

Merck

Donated \$1,000,000 to the Red Cross and matching employee donations.

Working with states to provide needed medicines and vaccines.

Replacement prescription medicines for victims, hospitals and clinics in flooded areas.

Millennium

Allowing employees make donations to AmeriCares and the Red Cross via direct payroll deductions.

Medical Planning Resources

Waiting for HHS to approve a proposal for up to 40 fully-equipped 150 bed medical facilities, more than 1,000 medical providers, two 747s for patient transport and addition medical equipment and supplies.

Novartis

Matching employee contributions to the Novartis Hurricane Katrina Relief Gift Program.

Working with local officials to ship supplies to shelters, AmeriCares, and the Red Cross.

Organon

Working on making a cash donation and matching employee donations in addition to independently raising money for relief efforts.

Otsuka

Donating \$3,000,000 to the Red Cross and making additional donations to area victims.

Pfizer

Donating \$1,000,000 to help rebuild hospitals and healthcare center.

Donating \$1,000,000 divided among Red Cross, Salvation Army and the United Way. Donation medicines, consumer and animal health products.

Procter & Gamble

Initially donating \$700,000 in cash and products.

Working with the Red Cross to assess additional needs.

Purdue Pharma

Matching employee donations to the Red Cross and AmeriCares up to \$50,000.

Working with AmeriCares to provide medication.

Roche

Matching employee donations to the Red Cross.

Evaluating needs for products and supplies.

Sanofi-Aventis

Matching employee donations.

Helping employees affected by the storm.

Donating needed medication to relief efforts.

Schering-Plough

Product donation of \$2,000,000.

Donating \$500,000 cash with an employee matching program.

Sepracor

Offering a matching gift program.

Solvay

Already shipped 75,000 respirators.

Sending \$1,000,000 in safety, medical and cleaning products.

Matching employee donations up to \$500,000.

Valeant

Match employee donations.

Donate appropriate medicines to relief efforts.

Providing support for any affected employees.

Allowing time off for employee who are assisting with the relief efforts.

Wyeth

Donating \$1,000,000 to be distributed to the Red Cross and the Children's Health Fund as well as matching employee donations to the Red Cross.

Donating needed pharmaceutical products to relief efforts

PhRMA

Matching employee donations.

FOREIGN AID

Australia has given a \$10,000,000 to the Red Cross.

Israel is sending search and rescue units specialized in extraction from collapsed buildings.

Taiwan gave \$2,000,000 to the federal government to help with recovery efforts.

Mr. LOTT. These are donations and assistance from private companies. I am not going to list them all now because I will exclude somebody, but Wal-Mart has been unbelievable. They donated \$15 million to jump start the national relief effort. They gave \$1 million to the Red Cross. Home Depot, 800 trucks staged in the area of deployment. They took food, water, flashlights, batteries, and tarps; FedEx; food retailers have been out there; automobile dealers, Nissan, Ford, Toyota; Northwest Airlines, making planes available to fly relief in; railroads, major companies, Honeywell, financial institutions, Citigroup, JPMorgan, Cingular, Verizon; oil companies, Chevron gave \$5 million to the Red Cross; ExxonMobil committed \$7 million to the Red Cross; American Trucking Association made a contribution and helped us resolve a technical problem we had.

Even writers such as John Grisham, the writer of the great books from Mississippi, personally donated \$5 million to the effort. Pharmaceutical companies have helped us get pharmaceuticals pre-positioned, ready for the health crisis. We know it is coming. Procter & Gamble has given cash and supplies. Foreign aid, Sri Lanka has offered us money, \$25,000. Well, it might as well as be \$25 billion. Australia, Taiwan, countries all over the world. This is an incredible list and it is just a short list of people who are doing their part and I wanted that to be in the RECORD.

Most of all, I want to thank the people of my State. I cannot speak for people in other States, but I know the people in my State. I have been there with

them in Pascagoula and Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Poplarville, Jackson and points south. What an incredible spirit. We have been hammered, and they are on their knees. This very morning, as my staff called and tried to talk to county supervisors and mayors, two counties said: Look, we need MREs—that is food—and we could always use more fuel and we have some problems, but do not waste your time on us. Go help somebody else that needs it worse.

When I stood with Gene Gaezo in Biloxi, MS, which is an international city, a city of Slovenians, French, German, Greeks, Italians, Vietnamese, and Hispanics, behind him was where his house was. He had lost everything, cars, boats, trash piled up way over your head, lost his job in the gaming industry. And he said: Trent, what do I do? I said: Well, take care of yourself, feed your family, make sure everybody is safe, and then begin working on this trash. Help is on the way, do not worry. And he said: Well, you go take care of somebody who has been hurt worse than me.

Unless you have lost loved ones, you were not hurting worse than that guy was. The spirit has been indomitable. They are not blaming anybody. They are asking for help. I am proud of them. Our attitude is, hey, we have been hit before, we may feel similar to a punching bag, but we will come back. We are going to rebuild, and we will be bigger and better and stronger for it all. So I want to make sure that the American people know the spirit of the people in my area.

I know there are going to be hearings. There are a lot of questions. But, please, please, my colleagues, let's not try to fix blame right now. There will be time for that. Let's fix the problems we have to deal with now.

Do I have some ideas of what we need to do? Oh, yes. I agree with the Senator from Maryland, we should not have ever put FEMA in Homeland Security. We thought about it. Heck, we did it. Who are we going to blame for that? We did that. Maybe it was recommended, I don't know. But you make mistakes. Last time I checked, we are still human beings.

I found out something else last week: Disasters bring out the worst in bad people but the best in good people. But let's focus on the good.

We are going to need legislative help. We are going to need appropriations. I know already, for instance, we have to allow in local communities for cleanup contractors to go on private property. The law doesn't allow that except for the immediate aftermath for health and safety. There are no lines. In Biloxi, MS, and Gulfport, MS, you can't tell where the private property was and public property was. It is nothing but a mound of debris. If you lost everything you had, it will be months. You can't get the infrastructure back if you can't clean it. So we have to change that. I have lots of ideas how we can improve it for us now, but, more important, for the future, too.

What do we need? I want the American people to know. People from all over America are calling and crying, saying: How can I help? You can help. What we need right now are still basics. Food is still a problem, getting it there, getting it distributed. We have now got to the point where we need clothes. People lost everything they had. We had doctors Saturday, in my hometown, wearing the same clothes they wore Sunday the week before, because they didn't have any and they didn't have a place to get a shower or any of that.

So we need food, clothes, gas. If you can get there with some fuel, in some of those red containers, we need that. Baby supplies—I have been amazed how quickly you need diapers and baby wipes and baby formula. We could use that. Cleaning supplies. Plywood, if you have some plywood laying around, load it and bring it down. Equipment of all types—chain saws, brooms, the basic stuff.

I believe there are people in Missouri and people in Georgia, when they know that, who will load up and they will bring it to us and they will distribute it on their own.

Yes, we need money. We don't need cash, but we need you to contribute to the Red Cross and Salvation Army so they can pay the expenses. Now we are beginning to have a problem with the need for oxygen tanks. We have to find a way to get those and get them where people need them.

We need manpower. If you are in Oklahoma and you are retired at 65 and you want to help, get in your truck and drive on down. Don't ask where to go and don't worry about what to do when you get there. When you get there, look around. You will see plenty you can do. Anybody in America who wants to go there and help us, come on down. We aren't blocking anybody.

We have to be careful because we may have an impending health problem. I fear people are going to begin to have heart attacks and mental depression and emotional problems. If you cut your foot in Gulfport, MS, you could be exposed to some bad infections and bad diseases, so we have to be careful.

We do need more action. We get back down to what Senator MIKULSKI was saying. We need leaders, men and women in the Government and everywhere else, who can make a fast decision, be flexible when they make that decision, think innovatively when they make a decision, and use a very difficult thing—common sense. Use common sense.

Some of the people have been denied access to fuel or told you can't do that. It is insane. I am getting ready to leave my hometown on Wednesday night and I want to turn left, and the policeman says you can't turn left. I said, Why not? and the policeman says, Well, I'm not from here but I am told you can't turn left. So I went down to the next interchange, made a left turn and

turned right. It didn't make any sense. No common sense. We have to do that.

I also have already reached out to some of what I think are some of the best thinkers in America and some of the people who dealt with this, and I said tell us what we can do so we can do it better, quicker, and when we build back we will be more secure and we will be able to survive maybe because of the way we build. I wanted to know how did California get Interstate 10 bridges and overpasses back in operation in 2 months when it ordinarily would take 2 years. What was it they had?

I found out the Governor had the authority to waive everything. He waived hearings, he waived environmental considerations. They awarded a contract under expedited procedure. They gave the contractor huge incentives to finish ahead of schedule and under the money and great penalties if they didn't. And guess what, a 2-year project was completed in 2 months and 2 days and the contractor made more off the incentive payment than he did off the basic price. OK. We need to replicate that.

I also think the Federal Government needs to think innovatively. If you look at the situation in Bay St. Louis, MS, or New Orleans, LA, what do we want to do to avoid this sort of problem in the future, and how can we do whatever we do better than we have done it?

We need a very aggressive, entrepreneurial proposal for the dramatic, bold rebuilding of the Gulf Coast. We want to rebuild, but we don't want to build it the way it was. We want to build it bigger and stronger, maybe a little further back, maybe with the help of some incentives we haven't had before, like tax credits. We need to help people rebuild now. They don't need a refund next year, they need money and assistance now.

These are the times that try men's souls, the worst I have ever seen. But I do believe we will persevere and, with God's help and with the help of my colleagues in this great body, and with our President—who has been there, has cried with us and sweated with us, and I have looked at him and I have watched him show his compassion, and I have seen him give orders to do a better job—we will get through this.

I thank everybody. I am going to do something unusual, too. There are exceptions, but even the news media have been helpful. The news media in my home State don't just tell the bad stories. We had a wedding for some evacuees. This young couple had to get married, so the people in Jackson, MS, gave the lady a wedding dress and a wedding cake, and they gave them a wedding.

They told us good stories and they told us many times where we needed to be and where the problems are. Yes, there is some criticism and negativism to go around, but there is a lot of positive out there, too, and I am making

sure we build on that side of this equation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). The majority whip.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, first let me say I know on behalf of everyone in the Senate how relieved we are that our colleague TRENT LOTT and his wife are safe. We all thank him for his inspiring observations about the experiences of the past week, the reactions of the people, the response of people around America to this great crisis. I say to our friend from Mississippi how grateful we are he is safe and sound and back among us. We will be working with him to make sure we deal with the immediate needs and make whatever adjustments we can for the future, to try to make sure the next time, God forbid something like this happens to our country, we will be even better organized to respond.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to join with my colleagues today to talk about the devastation in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama as a result of Hurricane Katrina. While Senator LOTT is on the floor, I want to give my personal condolences to him and his family and all those who have suffered in Mississippi as well as the other States involved.

My personal deepest sympathies, and those from the people of Michigan as well as our prayers, go out to the families grieving the loss of their loved ones and to the survivors who are struggling to cope and to find shelter, food, and medical care in the wake of this horrendous, this terrible disaster.

My heart goes out to all of our colleagues—Senator LANDRIEU, Senator VITTER, Senator LOTT, Senator COCHRAN, Senator SHELBY, and Senator SESSIONS. Their constituents are suffering. So are they, and particularly Senator LANDRIEU and Senator LOTT, who have lost their family homes to this vicious storm. All of America is hurting with the victims and their families. We are finding ways to help and reach out and make a difference in these critical times following the hurricane.

Americans are donating record amounts of money, time, and supplies to help those who are displaced by the hurricane. The most important thing right now is to make sure we are saving lives and that we are providing food and shelter and medical care for the people affected by this tragedy.

As has happened with many other States, two jetliners arrived in Michigan yesterday with the first group of 289 hurricane evacuees. Troops and volunteers at our Battle Creek Air National Guard base will provide clean shelter and food and clothing to them. They are the first of many evacuees we plan to take in Michigan, and I know this is happening in the States of my colleagues all over the country as people open their hearts, open their homes, and open their pocketbooks to

share with those who have been affected. Michigan's Department of Natural Resources has loaded 25 boats and trailers with supplies and sent them to the Gulf Coast. We also have several Michigan State Police teams moving south to assist with the emergency response.

Michigan's Department of Transportation has fuel trucks headed south and is making arrangements for alternative flight operators to pick up evacuees, if necessary.

There are so many individual stories of heroism and generosity rising from the depths of this catastrophe, both in the States affected by the hurricane and in communities all across our country. I have heard stories about individuals in New Orleans who stayed after helping their families escape to safety. They stayed to help rescue their neighbors. Two men from Simmesport took their airboat through New Orleans and transported by themselves more than 1,000 people to safety in the first day after the hurricane. When a news crew from North Carolina tried to interview them about their heroic efforts, they declined, saying they had too much work to do and no time to stop and talk.

We have all heard the heartbreaking stories of sacrifice—of the wife who let go of her husband's hand as he clung to the wreckage of their home, giving her own life so her husband would be able to be alive to raise their children. We salute each and every one of those heroes, these people who put others before themselves, who made sacrifices so others could be brought to safety.

There are stories about people all across our great Nation who are answering the call to help fellow Americans. In Michigan, families and businesses are working together to help victims and families. My alma mater, Michigan State University, and the University of Michigan, are collecting donations for the Red Cross at their football games. On Saturday, the University of Michigan fans put \$40,000 into buckets as they entered the stadium. One anonymous donor put in a wad of five \$100 bills. Some donations are big, some are small, but they all count and the donations are coming in from all kinds of venues. Nine-year-old Rochester Hills resident Megan and her five-year-old sister Lauren set up a booth to sell lemonade, chocolate chips, and their toys to raise money to send to the Red Cross. The girls raised \$80, and their parents promised to match it.

These are the stories that matter right now, both in the States affected and all across the country: saving lives, finding shelter, food, medical care, and raising funds to help the hurricane victims.

But there is also another story to tell. It is about the Federal Government and our responsibility to all Americans to be prepared—to be prepared not only for this kind of disaster but for a coordinated response to help

save lives and prevent chaos. We must find answers to basic questions that the American people are asking right now as they watch the aftermath on TV, minute by minute, hour by hour, and they say over and over again to themselves: How could this have happened in the United States of America, the greatest country on Earth? How could our country allow people to die without getting them water, food, and medical care?

In this time immediately following the disaster, we have an obligation to correct the mistakes in crisis response and we have questions to answer to everyone—certainly to those who have been affected.

Are we investing enough in homeland security? I say no, and I have said no since 9/11. Why has the Senate basically ignored the Rudman report from 3 years ago that showed our Nation's first responders need additional funding in the amount of \$20 billion a year? Senator DODD and I offered that amendment to fully respond to that report now for 3 different years. I hope we are going to be able to get that done.

How much are we to invest to maintain the flood control projects of our Corps of Engineers? Clearly, the current level is not enough, and people have said that it wasn't enough. In 2002, Mike Parker, former Assistant Secretary for the Army for Civil Works, testified before the Senate Budget Committee, of which I am a member, that funding cuts to the Corps' budget would have a negative impact on the national interest.

Are we stretching our National Guard troops too thin? Thirty-five percent of Louisiana's National Guard troops—3,000 soldiers—are in Baghdad. Is that too many? Spokesman LT Andy Thaggard of the Mississippi National Guard, which has a brigade of more than 4,000 troops in central Iraq, said this about the hurricane response: "We need our people."

Are we heeding the scientific advice that overwhelmingly points to global warming as a possible cause for increased hurricanes?

We have important questions to answer—serious questions for which we all need to work together to take responsibility—about how the Federal Government could have better handled the events that unfolded as a result of this catastrophe called Hurricane Katrina. We need to make sure that we are responding quickly, not only to help those in need today but, Heaven forbid, that something happens tomorrow. We have to be ready. We have to learn from this catastrophe, from the mistakes and the lack of adequate response, and quickly fix it. That is our job.

It is absolutely critical that local communities have the tools they need to communicate, to coordinate, and to respond effectively when disasters hit. They didn't have that in New Orleans—where the police department and three

nearby parishes are on different radio systems. They didn't have enough satellite phones. They had ground and cell phone lines that were taken out with the storm. And the communications systems they did have—like most local communities across the Nation—were not interoperable. They do not work together.

Police officers called Senator LAN-DRIEU's office because they couldn't reach commanders on the ground in New Orleans because they were sharing satellite phones that were in short supply. The result of this lack of interoperability was nothing short of chaos.

FEMA Director Michael Brown has said that emergency assistance delivery problems were caused by "the total lack of communications—the inability to hear and have good intelligence on the ground."

The distinguished Senator from Louisiana, Mr. VITTER, has said that FEMA's efforts to deal with the hurricane have been completely ineffective, and he called the Federal Government's response a failure. These are his words:

I think FEMA has been completely dysfunctional and is completely overwhelmed, and I don't know why. This situation was utterly predictable.

And he is right. We knew before Katrina hit that too many of our police, fire, and emergency medical services and transportation officials could not communicate and still cannot communicate with each other. Our local departments are not able to link their communications with State and Federal emergency response agencies.

A June 2004 U.S. Conference of Mayors survey found that 94 percent of cities do not have interoperable capability between police and fire and emergency medical services. Sixty percent said they do not have interoperable capability with the State emergency operations center. As we saw with the hurricane, that puts our communities and every single American in danger.

This lack of communications interoperability is a crisis, and we must deal with it. We must deal with it now. It is one of the lessons that has been painfully—painfully—learned from this hurricane. We need to learn it, and we need to learn it quickly.

That is why as soon as possible I will offer, again, my amendment that provides \$5 billion for interoperable communications grants for America's first responders to provide a strong commitment to this problem. We know what it costs. CBO outlined what it would cost. We need to get this done.

When we debated this amendment in this year's 2006 debate on homeland security appropriations, many of my colleagues across the aisle opposed it because they felt it was a local responsibility.

Communications is not a local responsibility when the FEMA Director admits that he learned about the 25,000 people trapped at the New Orleans Con-

vention Center from news reports. This is not acceptable, and the American people expect us to act now. There is no more time to waste. I am for fixing the problem.

I believe our Government failed the people of the gulf coast. Members of the administration and the Congress must admit that we need more resources to deal with potential disasters, whether they are natural disasters or stem from a terror attack.

The shock and the horror of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will live with us forever.

We salute the heroes in this disaster, and our prayers are with the victims. The American people, as they always do, are rising to the challenge and helping our communities across the Nation. We thank every single person for making that contribution, saying that prayer, donating their clothes, donating food, getting in their cars and driving down to help, or getting a bus or getting a caravan from their church. But I believe from the bottom of my heart that we in Government, this Senate and the House and the administration, have got to step up and do our part. We have got to step up. We know what needs to be done. We know what needs to be done to make sure our communities have the communications equipment they need. We know what needs to be done to make sure these disasters don't happen again—by providing the Army Corps of Engineers with what they need to keep communities safe. We know what needs to be done.

While we are joining on the floor—and we will join together to reach out to help the victims and address issues that relate to health care, housing, education, and other issues that need to be addressed—I hope we are not going to leave this floor after working on those things without having said we fixed it for the next hurricane, for the next terrorist attack, for the next bioterrorist attack, or for the next natural disaster. We have a responsibility to step up and solve the problems that added to the chaos and the hurt and the loss of life because the right priorities were not put in place by the Congress and this administration.

We can fix it, and it is on our shoulders to make sure that we do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank you.

A few moments ago, Senator TRENT LOTT of Mississippi spoke on the floor of the Senate about the pastor from my State of Illinois who just got into her truck and drove to Mississippi to see what she could do to help. There are people like her all over my State and all over this Nation.

Illinois so far has received 500 Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Another 250 will arrive at the Rockford Airport today. The number could rise into the thousands.

Thirty families so far have asked to enroll their children in Illinois schools, and more are on their way.

America's Second Harvest, based in Chicago, and the American Red Cross, filled a United Airlines flight with 25,000 pounds of critically needed relief supplies and sent it—in just a few days from Chicago to New Orleans.

I got a call while I was traveling the State last week from a Pepsi Cola distributor in Quincy, IL. He said:

Senator, I want to send 33,000 cases of water to Louisiana. How can I do it?

We have been working with them ever since.

Six-hundred Illinois firefighters traveled to Baton Rouge. Personnel from the Scott Air Force base near Belleville, IL, have been busy flying airlift missions to the disaster area.

Mr. President, 328 members of the Illinois National Guard are providing some of the big trucks they desperately need to transport people and material to the areas hard hit by Katrina. Another 500 members of the Illinois National Guard are expected to ship out to the gulf coast by tomorrow. By the end of the week, nearly one-tenth of the entire Illinois National Guard could be serving on the gulf coast.

Mr. President, 400 doctors and nurses from the Rush University Medical Center, the University of Illinois, and Cook County Hospital are ready to be deployed as soon as they get the call.

What does this say? It says that when we have pain and distress in the American family, we come together. And that is the way it should be.

Twelve years ago, there was a flood on the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri Rivers. As a Congressman from the flood-affected area, I really felt the pain of the people living in the small communities. I reflected on that for a moment and the heroic efforts made by some to respond to their needs. Then I tried to put it into perspective of what was happening on the gulf coast in Alabama and Mississippi and certainly in the State of Louisiana. What we went through just absolutely pales in comparison.

Thousands of our fellow Americans may have lost their lives in Hurricane Katrina. Hundreds of thousands of people in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana have been displaced from their homes maybe never ever to return.

Hurricane Katrina may be one of the worst economic disasters in our Nation's history.

Put in perspective, 48 hours after 9/11 we came up with the estimate that we would need \$250 billion to deal with the devastation of that terrible act of terrorism; that is about the high level mark for the cost of a disaster. Preliminary estimates now from Hurricane Katrina surpass \$100 billion, and some say as high as \$150 billion, to give you some idea of the devastation and the challenge that we face.

How do we estimate how many jobs have been lost on the gulf coast? Some say a half million.

The economic aftershocks are being felt across the country. Just ask anybody who is filling up a gas tank anywhere in America.

In Illinois, our farmers, who have had a tough year with the drought and a short corn crop, now worry about getting their products down the Mississippi and down the Illinois to market with the Port of New Orleans damaged.

Let us put it into some perspective for a moment.

President John Kennedy said:

To those whom much is given, much is required.

Sadly, the agenda of the Senate in the past has not reflected what I consider to be the core value and truth of President Kennedy's remarks.

Last week, while the mayor of New Orleans was issuing a desperate SOS for help to rescue tens of thousands of people who were trapped in the city and in danger of dying without food, water, medical care, or shelter, the leader of the Republican National Committee sent out his own SOS. It said: Call your Senators and tell them to vote this week to give a \$1 trillion tax break—to the wealthiest people in America.

It is hard to understand how that could be happening in the midst of this national disaster. At a time when thousands are dispossessed, homeless, hungry, and desperate to know what their futures will be, how can we focus on tax breaks and tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America?

Majority leader BILL FRIST did the right thing. He pulled the estate tax issue from the agenda. A trillion-dollar tax break for millionaires should be the last thing on our minds. We have Americans in distress. Let us not worry about making it more comfortable for those who live in the lap of luxury already.

Never in our history have we cut taxes for the wealthy during a war—which we are engaged in now in Iraq and Afghanistan—and never should we cut taxes on those in America who are well enough during a national crisis such as Hurricane Katrina. We need to put first things first.

At a time when the American family is in pain, when our neighbors are homeless in Katrina's wake, when we are losing our children in Iraq, when our hard-working friends can't afford health insurance and gasoline for their cars and the basics for their kids, when the blessings of prosperity reach a few and not the many, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle must feel the hurt and understand the heart of America.

Americans will always rise to a call for shared sacrifice and unity. During World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt made a speech. This is what he said.

Not all of us can have the privilege of fighting our enemies in distant parts of the world. Not all of us can have the privilege of working in a munitions factory or a ship-

yard, or on the farms or in oil fields or mines, producing the weapons or the raw materials that are needed by our Armed Forces.

But there is one front, and one battle, where everyone in the United States—every man, woman, and child—is in action, and will be privileged to remain in action throughout this war. That front is right here at home, in our daily lives, in our daily tasks. . . .

FDR said:

Here at home everyone will have the privilege of making whatever self-denial is necessary, not only to supply our fighting men, but to keep the economic structure of our country fortified and secure during the war and after the war. . . . This will require, of course, the abandonment not only of luxuries, but of many other creature comforts.

Franklin Roosevelt was appealing to the best in America, a sense of unity and a sense of sacrifice in a time of great national need. Can anyone recall a time recently, other than September 11, when we have felt that same sense of need in this country?

President Roosevelt went on to say:

Every loyal American is aware of his individual responsibility. Whenever I hear anyone saying, "The American people are complacent—they need to be aroused," I feel like asking them to come to Washington to read the mail that floods into the White House and into all departments of this government. The one question that recurs throughout all these thousands of letters and messages is, "What more can I do to help my country in winning this war?"

Those are the words of Franklin Roosevelt, appealing to a core American value, appealing to the American family to stand together.

After September 11, a new generation of Americans asked the same question: What can we do to help this country win this war on terrorism? Many of them, the best of them, are serving today in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 2,000 members of our military, including 77 from my home State of Illinois, have paid the ultimate price, have given up their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Four Illinoisans died in Iraq during August. More National Guard and Reserve members died in Iraq during the first 10 days in August than in any full month during the entire war. Many thousands more have suffered serious injuries. I have met some of them at Walter Reed Hospital and other veterans facilities. They are making enormous sacrifices.

After September 11, Americans answered the call for shared sacrifice at home, too. What an enormous outpouring of sympathy and generosity, including the blood banks with people standing in line, the charities with people making their contributions, the outpouring of sentiment and hope and prayers for the victims of September 11. Even people living on small fixed incomes in America asked: How can I help? They each gave what they could.

Some of the same units that served in the Persian Gulf, those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, are now helping others right here at home. That is the spirit of America.

This week, as we prepare to mark the fourth anniversary of the September 11

attacks, we see the same spirit on the rise in America. The extraordinary way our country reaches out with its wallets, its hearts, opening its home to the victims of Hurricane Katrina shows us once again that the spirit of shared sacrifice is strong. That spirit must not only guide us in our conversation with America, it should guide us with our agenda in Congress.

We are all in this together, in times of war and in times of national catastrophe. It is not tax cuts for the wealthy that protect America and make us strong. What sees us through hard times has always been our belief in America, our shared commitment to one another, and our willingness to accept our fair share of sacrifice.

We have all learned a lot in the last few weeks. Sadly, many believed our homeland security was up to the challenge and the task. It did not work in many parts of the gulf coast. It certainly did not work in New Orleans. This hurricane, leading to a breach of a levee, has resulted in the loss of thousands of innocent lives.

Many felt if we faced that kind of catastrophe, whether from a natural disaster or from some terrorist attack involving biological or chemical weapons, we were ready to evacuate innocent people, to move folks out of hospitals so they could be taken care of in other places. But we know now from what happened just a few days ago that we are not prepared. We are not ready. We are not as safe and secure as we should be in this time of danger in the world, danger from terrorist attack, danger from natural disaster.

We need to do more. We need to focus on making America safe. We need to focus on thanking those who are giving so much every minute of every day to help those in need. And we need to focus on our prayers and thoughts directed to the victims of this terrible tragedy.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARTINEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to speak, as my colleagues have before me, about the terrible tragedy in the Gulf Coast. As the rescue and recovery in the Gulf Coast continues, as we pray for each life, my thoughts, for instance, always go back to 9/11, the tragedy that befell my city and State.

It is sort of a horrible thing to say, in a certain sense, about the number of people who died, but people thought the number of deaths in our State and our city would be much greater than it was. I think about a week after the planes hit the Twin Towers, most people were talking about over 10,000 people dying. As I said, I feel awkward

saying this, but it is a true thought we all have, that only 3,000 were found to have passed. Still, it is an awful number, and the families miss those people every single day. I knew some of them myself. I miss them and think of them. But we hope and pray this happens in Louisiana, that the horrible numbers we have heard about—the possible number of deaths—are significantly lower.

One other thought I want to mention about New York, before getting into the substance of my remarks, is that this morning I was privileged to attend a groundbreaking for the new New York/New Jersey rail station to be built at Ground Zero. It will be a beautiful and sweeping station. The architect, the world-famous Mr. Calatrava, got the idea of a child releasing a dove at the station. At least by the designs and pictures I have seen, it will be a soaring and sweeping station.

At that memorial I thought about the victims and the people of the Gulf. I said to them that a week after the planes hit the Twin Towers, we were filled with despair, anguish, anger, and thought there would never be any hope after something that horrible happened. But the human condition is a remarkable one. And, of course, hope is always with us, as the Greek mythological story of Pandora's box shows.

The groundbreaking that Senators CLINTON and LAUTENBERG and CORZINE and I attended this morning with the Governors of New York and New Jersey shows us there is always hope. This station—a beautiful, sweeping, soaring station—will rise like a phoenix out of the ashes of 9/11.

I say to my colleagues who represent the Gulf States, as well as to all the people in the Gulf States: Hope will return. It is hard to see now, with so much devastation and so much anguish and so much sadness, but it will return. Just as in New York we are rebuilding ourselves, hopefully to be bigger and better and stronger than we were before 9/11, I know that, too, will happen with the people in the gulf region. So my thoughts are with them. All of our thoughts are with them.

Because of the devastation of Katrina, we confront one of the most extraordinary challenges this Nation has ever faced: To feed, to clothe, to house, to help an estimated 1 million Americans who were displaced and who now have to rebuild their lives.

The disaster area is some 90,000 square miles. That is almost double the entire State of New York. It is an area nearly as large as the United Kingdom. The amount of damage to the homes, the businesses, the schools, the infrastructure, the roads, the bridges is in the tens of billions of dollars, most certainly. It is already estimated, for instance, that Louisiana alone has lost at least 110,000 businesses. And that number is likely to climb as we calculate the full extent of the damage.

The images on TV are devastating. They are of hungry, weeping children,

of families returning to the destroyed remains of their neighborhoods, discovering they have lost everything they have owned, from precious family keepsakes to their houses and cars and livelihoods. The pictures of angry, frightened people, with nowhere to go, unsure of what will happen to themselves and their loved ones rings a deep chord in every one of our hearts. And there are the deaths of so many. The psychological toll of this tragedy will be heavy indeed, especially, of course, on the children. Another thing we learned after 9/11 is to pay particular attention to the children. Sometimes it took them, in New York, over a year to speak about what they had seen.

When my city faced a devastating attack, America stood with us in our time of need. I want to assure the people of the gulf region that New Yorkers—I think I can say probably just about every one of the 19 million New Yorkers—will stand with you, the people of the gulf region, as you stood with us in the dark days immediately following 9/11.

The love and support New Yorkers received from the rest of the country after 9/11 meant so much in the wake of those attacks and the long, difficult road to recovery. I want the people of New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast to know we will support them, too, no matter how long, no matter how difficult their recovery may be. We will do whatever it takes to help now, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, and on into the future.

We took the first step last week when Congress provided \$10.5 billion in desperately needed disaster relief funds to the devastated region. But as I learned in the aftermath of 9/11, money is only the first step. The next step is to ensure that bureaucratic rules and regulations do not prevent the money from being spent quickly and where it is most needed. We discovered after 9/11 that the rules governing how Federal dollars can be spent and benefits accessed—from HUD to the Department of Transportation to the IRS—became insurmountable obstacles for so many of our citizens in need. And many of the problems faced after 9/11 will be faced a thousandfold for Hurricane Katrina because there are so many more people and businesses that were hurt.

It is essential that Congress take action as quickly as possible on as many fronts as possible. Every day makes a difference for those seeking a place to live, a way to get their children back to school, to get health care, to get a job. So many jobs are gone. Furthermore, after 9/11, Congress tackled many of the problems facing Hurricane Katrina victims and has a template to work with. And Senator REID, working with our committee leaders, has already compiled a list of action items Congress should address this week.

Before I get into those action items, I want to say one other thing. We do

need the most competent people running the agencies that are in charge of this recovery effort. And I heard, an hour or so ago on the floor, our colleague, my friend, Senator MIKULSKI, speak on that issue. We all know Senator MIKULSKI is somebody who knows FEMA and the agencies involved with recovery extremely well because as chairperson and as ranking Democrat on the relevant appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, she knows them. We also know she is a temperate person in the sense that she does not regularly get up and demand that people step down. But when she spoke on the floor an hour ago and said that the FEMA head, Brown, should either step down or be forced to step down, I think all of us should listen to her. These are serious times, and fingers of blame should not be pointed at any one place. But to make sure we have the most competent people in charge as the rescue effort proceeds is very important. So again I want to urge my colleagues to listen to what Senator MIKULSKI had to say because I think it is extremely important to us.

Now, getting back to the list that Senator REID, working with some of our committee leaders, has compiled, it is a list of action items, and I hope Congress will address it this week. The list includes providing Medicaid, housing vouchers, and emergency cash for all displaced victims, waiving deadlines, and expediting applications where necessary, and waiving the requirements to prove residency or asset levels or to provide other paperwork which, of course, so many of those who have lost everything in their lives no longer have. The Reid package also proposes tax incentives for families who take in victims, and identifying Federal facilities that can house them.

The proposal also focuses on helping the tens of thousands of children who need to get enrolled quickly into schools around the country by providing those schools with financial assistance and waiving the usual bureaucratic requirements for enrollment. I believe this must be one of our highest priorities. Since the hurricane occurred right at the beginning of the school year, there is not a day to waste. We cannot let our children simply hang out there without providing for their education, which, Katrina or not, means their future.

My heart grieves at the sight of so many of these children sitting around the Astrodome and other shelters with no place to go. It is September. Let us pledge to get all those children, who have faced so much trauma already, into school by the end of the month. We must provide the Federal dollars needed to bolster those schools that are opening their hearts and doors to these children, from Houston to San Francisco to Vermont. We must also provide these children with all they will need—food and shelter and school supplies—to keep their education on track.

We must also make sure our brave National Guard personnel, who are on the front lines abroad in Iraq and now here at home, receive all the assistance they need, from debt and student loan relief to allowing them to qualify for Federal health care and retirement benefits. Our Nation owes these American heroes nothing less.

Finally, the Reid proposal addresses what may ultimately be our most pressing challenge—finding employment for the victims of Katrina, by making employers eligible to claim the Work Opportunity Tax Credit of up to \$2,400 per worker they hire. We need to do this and much more. With so many businesses and so much infrastructure destroyed, we will need both the Federal Government and the private sector to step to the plate and get people back to work.

Congress can and should tackle right away in these few weeks the problems that have been mentioned above. We should learn lessons from what we were able to do after 9/11 for New York. With a million people in need of assistance, it is inexcusable that we would delay. Let us move this package this week, not next week or the week after.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleagues today have spoken about the almost unbelievable disaster that has occurred in the Gulf region. Only now are we fully beginning to understand the lives lost and the complete devastation of the region. I know there will be a lot of time, perhaps, to evaluate what kind of emergency preparedness existed or why proper preparedness did not exist. This is the moment and the time for all of us to concentrate on finding the survivors.

There are so many victims. We know that many of those who have died in this disaster have not yet been found. We know there are survivors who have not yet been found. We are nearly certain of that. This is an important time to marshal the resources of this country, to effectively organize the resources to search for survivors, and then to help those who have been made victims by this devastating hurricane.

Many of us have suffered disasters. In North Dakota, in 1997, there were the Red River Valley floods, when the entire city of Grand Forks was evacuated. It was an enormous evacuation of people. Thank God at that point we did not lose lives. We lost a great deal of property and people suffered and had very tough times, but there was not loss of life with respect to those floods. But an entire city of over 50,000 people was evacuated from those floods. I recall President Clinton flying into Grand Forks on Air Force One and meeting with a large number of people who had crowded into a hangar at the Air Force base. I remember what President Clinton said to them that day. He said very simply: You are not alone.

That is the message that our country must give to all of those who are victims of Hurricane Katrina: You are not alone. This country doesn't move ahead by leaving some behind. This country knows your plight, knows the despair of having lost what you have lost, joins you in sympathy for the loss of lives, and extends a hand to say we want to help you during these difficult times.

There are so many needs and so many things that have to be done: housing, basic needs such as food and shelter, jobs, education, short-term spending money to get on your feet if you have lost everything. Those are the things that, in a package of assistance by the Congress, need to be addressed quickly.

I know there are some who tend to believe that Government ought not exist. They think Government is the problem. But when something like this happens, we together, through our Government, work to extend a helping hand. This Congress cannot be reticent about arriving at that point to extend a helping hand to provide for the needs of people who have been displaced, who have suffered and are victims of this devastating hurricane.

My thoughts and prayers are with all of the victims of this devastating hurricane that has displaced, some say, 1 million people and caused massive loss of life. While there are public policy issues that we should discuss and will discuss in the coming days and months, all of us, as a country, will pray for those poor people who have suffered immensely in recent days. We hope the searches to find survivors continue to move forward and that we find additional survivors. And we hope in every possible way those who have been the victims of this hurricane understand this is a great country and this country extends its hand to say to them: You are not alone. Actions by this Congress will manifest that. We ought to do that quickly and urgently.

GASOLINE PRICES AND WINDFALL PROFITS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I also wish to speak about a subject that has some relationship but an issue that the American people were facing before the hurricane hit. Prior to the devastating Hurricane Katrina, the Senate Energy Committee had scheduled a hearing on gasoline and oil prices. That hearing is now going on. I spent the last 2 hours attending it. It was scheduled before this hurricane. Obviously, when the hurricane hit, a number of oil refineries and a couple of major pipelines shut down. It has had an impact beyond that which was occurring prior to the hurricane.

Prior to the hurricane hitting, oil prices had already risen \$30 a barrel above that which existed a year and a half to 2 years ago. The major integrated oil companies that have become larger through mergers and concentra-

tion in recent years were already earning record profits.

Last evening, a friend of mine went to a gas station and pumped gasoline into his car and his son's car, about 15 gallons in each car. The bill was \$103 dollars. Every American citizen understands that sticker shock when they pull up to the gas pump. We are told by some: It is the free market.

Here is what has happened to the profits of U.S. major oil and gas companies in billions of dollars from 2002, at which point they were \$20 billion, to this year, when they are going to be over \$100 billion. This is not a free market; this is a market with clogged arteries. It is OPEC pricing. It is a few countries that live on top of sand that is undergirded by substantial deposits of oil sitting around and deciding how much they are going to produce and what price they want to extract. So it is OPEC pricing. It is a concentrated domestic industry through mergers. It is rampant speculation. And it is also substantial windfall profits for some very profitable oil companies.

The question is, Where is the gain and where is the pain? Here is the gain.

We use 21 million barrels of oil a day. Sixty percent comes from outside of our country, which means we now have revenuesharing going on between the American drivers and consumers and the OPEC countries, including the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, and the Iraqis and others. It is forced revenuesharing. We pull up to the pump, we pay an inflated price for gasoline, and we send the money to the Middle East. Forty percent of that which we use is produced domestically by larger and larger oil companies, grown larger by mergers in recent years. That 40 percent has increased by \$30 a barrel. That means the profits have increased by \$7 billion a month for the domestic producers.

The integrated domestic producers in many cases have control of oil from the discovery in the ground to the gasoline pump. Eighty billion dollars a year in extra profits will exist in the coming year if the price of oil stays where it is now. That profit doesn't emerge out of thin air. It comes from extracting it from the consumers who drive up to the gas pump and take out their credit card or their currency and pay for a tank of gasoline.

Something needs to be done. Tomorrow, I intend to introduce windfall profits rebate legislation. The bill will establish a price point for a barrel of oil. A portion of the windfall profits above that amount would be captured and sent back to the consumers who are paying the excess or windfall profits to the companies. I would exempt from that windfall profits recapture that amount of additional money that is being used by the companies for domestic exploration or for increasing refinery capacity. If it is being used for that, I say fine. At least we are trying to search for a better future with a greater energy supply. But some of the