

major oil companies are now buying back their stock with that profit. That doesn't benefit this country.

These are windfall profits at the expense of consumers to enrich the larger integrated oil companies. I believe part of it ought to be recaptured and sent back as a rebate to the American consumer. I will introduce that legislation tomorrow.

I know it is controversial. I know some people may think the best way to address all of this is to sit around with your hands in your pocket and wipe your brow and wring your hands and fret about it and essentially do nothing. These represent the windfall profits on 40 percent of that which we use. Twenty-one million barrels a day. Forty percent of that comes from domestic producers. That has increased over \$30 a barrel with no additional cost incurred by the major oil companies. It amounts to \$7 billion windfall profits a month or \$80 billion windfall profits a year. I believe some of that ought to be collected and sent back to consumers as rebates.

Again, I know that is controversial. I know some won't want to do that. The plain fact is, if we do nothing, you have a massive transfer of income from people who can't afford it to people who shouldn't get it to interests that shouldn't get it. I believe Congress should take action. I understand that this is a shorter term issue, but John Kenneth Galbraith said: In the long run, we are all dead. So let's deal with the short term.

Yes, I want to shed our addiction of running gasoline through carburetors and fuel injectors. I wrote the provision in the Energy bill, signed by the President, that has a \$3.7 billion title dealing with hydrogen and fuel cells. That ought to be our future, hydrogen and fuel cells. If you run on hydrogen—and hydrogen is ubiquitous, it is everywhere—you get water vapor out the tailpipe, and you have twice the efficiency of power to the wheel. That is wonderful. Put up a wind turbine and collect energy from the wind and use the electricity collected from the wind to separate hydrogen from water with electricity—something called electrolysis—and then put that hydrogen in a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle. The Energy bill has a pretty good title on that. I wrote that title.

We need to shed our addiction to this oil. We need to shed our dependence on Middle East oil. In the meantime, in the short term, when you drive up to a gas pump with 2 cars and pump 15 gallons in each and pay \$103, the question is, Who is pocketing that money and why? There is no justification for that kind of windfall profit.

If the oil industry wants to have substantial profits to invest back into the ground or to build additional refineries, that is fine. That wouldn't be captured by a windfall profit. But when the oil industry is getting windfall profits to the tune of \$7 billion a month, which they are doing right now,

and some are busy buying back their stock, the American consumers deserve a break. They have had a bellyful of this. We have seen it all over this country where the big interests get bigger. They extract more from the rest, and nobody seems to care much.

One final point, there is also a provision in the final Energy bill that requires the Federal Trade Commission to launch an investigation of oil and gas prices within 90 days. I wrote that provision as well. But frankly, I have minimum hope that the Federal Trade Commission is going to be an ambitious referee with respect to pricing. This Congress should take action.

Here is what we face from now to Halloween to Thanksgiving to Christmas with respect to \$226 million a day of windfall profits. That is \$30 a barrel above that which existed when you already had record profits in the domestic industry. I believe some of it ought to be recaptured and given back to American consumers.

I saw an old car with an old bumper hanging down. That car had seen a better day—rust in the fenders and the bumper hanging halfway on the right. I saw it at a stop sign near Mohall, ND, one day. The bumper sticker had a plaintive message. It said: We fought the gas war and gas won.

The fact is, American consumers ought to be given an even break. That is why I am introducing this legislation tomorrow.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Before the Senator from North Dakota leaves the floor, I commend him for his comments. I am prepared to share some thoughts as well about the events in our country over the last week or so, but the Senator's comments about the energy crisis are tremendously timely in light of what has occurred in prices over the last number of days all across our country. And I join him in introducing legislation at least by tomorrow I hope in a bipartisan effort.

Again, he makes a very significant point that any of these resources, additional dollars that are pouring into the coffers of the industries that would go for exploration, research, refining capacity, are not included. In fact, we wish they would do more in developing new sources of energy. But if they are pocketing these resources at the expense of our economy, then I think it is incumbent upon us in this institution to respond and to not allow this gouging to occur at a time when the country is suffering. As someone who has paid a lot of attention over the years to the fuel cell industry, I do not think I am exaggerating when I say the capital of the fuel cell industry has been the State of Connecticut over the last number of years. United Technologies, to their great credit—aside from being a large defense contractor—has worked aggressively in the fuel cell area. The Senator from North Dakota is absolutely correct that fuel cells

offer tremendous opportunity. It is not like inventing some new technology. It is out there. If we would put the resources behind it, make it a bit more efficient than it is today, which is not a great deal, not a very difficult thing to do, then we could make some giant steps forward in reducing our dependency on foreign countries and our dependency on nonrenewable sources of energy.

I commend the Senator for his comments and his ideas.

Mr. DORGAN. I wonder if the Senator will yield for a moment.

Mr. DODD. I am happy to yield.

Mr. DORGAN. There are many companies involved in hydrogen fuel cell technology, including United Technologies, that are very active in this area. The Senator is absolutely right with respect to activities in Connecticut. I also want to point out my point on the floor of the Senate is not to tarnish the oil industry. I have been a supporter of it in areas where I felt we should support it. We produce oil in North Dakota. My point is that as the major integrated companies become bigger and more concentrated, they in some cases work oil from the ground to the gas pumps with tremendous pricing capabilities. They are beneficiaries from the enormous amount of excess profit. If they pump those back into the ground or to increase refinery capacity, that is fine. But when they are buying back their stock, I believe they ought to give that windfall, ill-gained profit back to the consumers from where it came.

Mr. DODD. I commend my colleague from North Dakota. I know my colleague from Connecticut, Congresswoman ROSA DE LAURO, has offered the legislation in the other body. I think it was a bipartisan proposal that she made over there on this issue. So again my compliments to Senator DORGAN.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I wanted to spend a few minutes this afternoon if I could and express my sympathy and the sympathy of my family. I know the sympathy of all of us in this Chamber, to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding that occurred particularly in Louisiana. I thank the leadership for giving us an opportunity today to express ourselves as a national body about this devastation that has occurred. There will be a lot of discussion about what happened, what did not happen, the shortcomings of our Government in responding in a timely fashion to this situation. But today is a time to offer our prayers and our sincere and deep sympathies to those who have suffered as much as they have.

There will be hearings next week. The President, I gather, has announced an investigation at the executive branch level. I think an independent investigation is probably the best way to proceed. Having the Government investigate itself is interesting but not

always the best way to get to the bottom of the information we ought to have about what happened. Because we will have events like this—hopefully nothing of this magnitude—again. There will be other events that require our Nation to respond far more expeditiously, far more thoughtfully, far more humanely than we did in this situation.

First, it obviously goes without saying that the thoughts and prayers of all of us and the entire country are with the people of the Gulf region at this hour. This is a disaster of unspeakable and unprecedented proportions, and we are still struggling to comprehend the magnitude of this event. Certainly the attacks of September 11, 2001 come to mind in terms of the damage done to life and property.

At the same time the devastation wrought by this act of nature is quantitatively and qualitatively different. As we speak here this afternoon, an entire American city, between a half a million and a million people, is uninhabitable. Its mayor tells us it will remain in that state for many months to come. Hundreds are believed to be dead and he predicts that the number will soar in the days to come—possibly into the thousands.

In Mississippi over 100 are known dead. According to that State's Governor, the destruction of the Gulf communities such as Biloxi, Gulfport, and Bay St. Louis is nearly total. Let me be clear and repeat what I said. I said destruction, not damage. Thousands of homes and places of business are a total loss and will have to be completely rebuilt in the coming months. I know that our colleague, Senator LOTT of Mississippi, lost his own home. Nearly a million homes in his State have been without power for days.

In Alabama more than 400,000 homes and businesses have lost power. Mobile and the surrounding environs suffered severe flooding. In western Florida the situation is similar. The Presiding Officer certainly knows of what I speak. Hundreds of thousands were without power and with scant access to the basic necessities of life—clean water, sanitary facilities, food, and shelter.

The upshot of all this destruction and damage is that millions of our fellow American citizens are now literally refugees in their own country.

We don't like to use the word refugee and I certainly have stayed away from it. But as you watch pictures of people walking along railroad tracks, along highways, of people perched on rooftops waiting patiently for aid, and enduring deprivation that we have never seen in this country on such an immediate and immense scale as we have in this event, then certainly the word refugee is appropriate in these circumstances.

We are receiving reports of looting, shooting, and chaos that has interfered with rescue and relief efforts. We all struggle to remember a comparable amount of destitution and destruction

in our Nation. And so far we struggle in vain in that effort. We cannot believe what we are seeing is taking place in our own Nation, our beloved America. Nothing like this has ever happened in the United States.

And we are reminded as well that America is not a loose collection of States or regions. We are a single indivisible nation. What happens in one State or region is felt all across our country in the concerns of loved ones, the charitable contributions, and the secondary deprivations that all Americans will experience as a result of this catastrophe.

The Gulf region is a principal source of domestic and foreign goods that are consumed by all of us—natural gas, oil, lumber, poultry, coffee, and bananas. It is the departure point for the export of billions of dollars worth of goods made in our own Nation—corn, soybeans, wheat, and other commodities.

The Army Corps of Engineers tells us it could take as long as 6 months to drain the water from the basin in which the city of New Orleans lies. It will take months if not years before that city and other areas damaged by this hurricane and flood return to some semblance of normalcy. The aid package we considered last Thursday evening is the first installment of emergency aid for the national Government but by no means will it be the last. This Senator pledges his support for delivering all appropriate aid as expeditiously as possible to those in need in the Gulf region. This is a time requiring unity and urgent action.

There will be a time, as I said earlier, in the days and weeks to come to examine what went wrong. And a lot went wrong before as well as after this hurricane and flood.

Our citizens are already asking the tough questions about what we could have done to prevent the full extent of this tragedy. They are outraged, not just in the Gulf area. I spent yesterday in my home State of Connecticut. I went to the State armory in that city to help organize food assistance packages that were being shipped to the Gulf region. I can tell you people in the city of Hartford, as well as people throughout my State are outraged and appalled by what they saw as incompetence and indifference at the very highest levels of our national Government. And I think they are right to be incensed and to demand better action and answers to what occurred.

They want to know why there has been a 44-percent cut in funds for flood prevention in New Orleans since 2001, even though a 2001 FEMA report told us that a hurricane flooding New Orleans was one of the three most likely major disasters facing the United States, along with a terrorist attack in the city of New York.

Citizens want to know why the administration, despite promising there would be no net loss of wetlands, has allowed their development, including those in the Gulf region, which are bet-

ter flood prevention mechanisms than any dam or levy built by man.

Citizens all across this country want to know why, despite knowing for days before the hurricane that it could cause major devastation, it took so long for the Federal agencies to mobilize relief, rescue, and law and order operations.

Citizens want to know all across our Nation whether nationwide spikes in the price of gasoline are normal under these circumstances or the result of price gouging by unscrupulous profiteers who always stand ready to take advantage of tragedy. And they want to know that our President and Attorney General are doing everything possible to prevent price gouging.

These are very important issues—not the only ones—but they are some of the ones being asked by our fellow citizens at this very hour.

As I said a moment ago, now is the time for us to pull together as a nation to support one another, to do what we can to help the people of the Gulf region get their lives back to some semblance of normalcy.

Eight days after the hurricane first hit the Gulf region and 9 days after it became a storm stronger than the New Orleans levees could hold, there are still critical needs that must be addressed immediately.

Right now as we speak here today in this Chamber, New Orleans is coated with a layer of toxic sewage that endangers the health of both those left stranded and the relief workers themselves. It has been estimated that there are thousands of bodies that have yet to be recovered on the streets and bayous of Jefferson Parish. There are public safety concerns. There is not enough food and water. And the city remains without power.

They need our help now, and they need more than the direct assistance we have just begun to deliver. Last week, as I mentioned earlier, this body approved over \$10 billion in emergency aid. That is a fraction of what will be required in the coming months and years to rebuild the lives and communities affected by this tragedy.

Our first concern must, of course, be the health of those who still remain.

We need to guarantee all displaced victims access to comprehensive health care coverage, to Medicaid, including waiving residency, assets, and copayments requirements. Those who survive remain at great risk for illness and disease. They need and deserve medical care.

We need to provide resources to help the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local public health authorities monitor and respond to disease outbreaks and to help treat victims. We need to work closely with the pharmaceutical industry to get badly needed medication to these affected areas.

We need to make sure that this is a long-term effort. We must provide funding for continued monitoring of

those in the region, as exposure to environmental hazards could have life-long consequences.

We should invest in the public safety net and support mental health providers to help victims cope emotionally with the disaster. We need to offer Federal support for communities and tax incentives for individuals to incorporate displaced victims.

We also must provide basic services and support for those who now literally live as refugees in other States.

The New Orleans school district has been decimated. Only 2,500 of the 7,000 employees have been accounted for. The central office has been destroyed, and all of the school records in New Orleans are gone.

Thankfully, there are over 30 cities that have stepped forward to take in the 20,000 children who have so far been identified as in need.

We have to get direct financial assistance to the school districts absorbing these students so they can adequately care for them in addition to the students they already serve.

We also must provide financial assistance for college students as they relocate to other universities and provide incentives for those universities that have already offered students a new home.

And we must make sure that victims are not penalized by rules, regulations, and responsibilities that may work well under normal circumstances but can be debilitating in times of an emergency.

We should waive income requirements for Head Start displaced children. We should give States that have offered childcare to refugees flexibility on their subsidy payments. And we should waive TANF work requirements for victims of the hurricane and flood.

We should also offer tax relief to victims so they can begin rebuilding their lives and expand and extend unemployment assistance so they can get back on their feet more quickly.

We should mobilize volunteers through AmeriCorps and other organizations in a unified rebuilding effort. And we should encourage private industry to participate with their own resources and expertise.

We also need to guarantee that the brave military personnel who continue to carry out operations in the gulf region with characteristic precision and professionalism will have all the resources that they need.

Last week, the U.S. Coast Guard crews rescued over 22,000 people in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, but we are not properly supporting them, in my view. Their costs in both operations and reconstruction are estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and they are being forced to divert funds from their already strapped 2005 accounts. This should be simply unacceptable to all of us.

We also must start discussing long-term solutions. We must be prepared as a nation to prevent or mitigate the ef-

fects of tragedies of this magnitude. We must invest in viable and sufficient flood control projects. We must examine building codes to consider if they can be strengthened to limit damage in the future. Perhaps most importantly, we must develop disaster relief plans throughout our Nation so that we will not again be caught off guard as we were this time.

We must restore the ability of the Federal Government to respond to a disaster of this magnitude whether manmade or natural.

During the 1990s, FEMA evolved to fulfill this role and demonstrated through several disasters its ability and confidence, I might add, to quickly mobilize resources and other aspects of relief efforts. By all accounts, that is no longer the case. We should consider whether FEMA should be made a Cabinet level agency and whether there are other steps that the national Government can take so that in the future we can fully mobilize our resources to respond to national catastrophes.

I am also going to revisit shortly, when the appropriations bills come up, what I have recommended on three different occasions, along with my colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, to fully fund the first responders. It was strongly recommended by our former colleague, Warren Rudman, who, along with a very distinguished commission financed and supported by the Council on Foreign Relations, reported that we should be spending some \$20 billion every year for 5 years to see to it that we have the adequate resources in place to respond.

Now, they were talking about a terrorist attack when they talked about first responders. They did not have in mind natural disasters of this magnitude. But clearly we need to anticipate both. We have narrowly lost that amendment on three different occasions. But I would hope in light of what has occurred in the Gulf region of our own Nation over the last week and a half that we would be able to find the necessary support to see to it that our first responders in this country have the tools, the equipment, and the preparation so that we never ever again find ourselves in this situation, ill prepared to respond to a crisis of this kind.

Lastly, I want to pay a little special tribute to my own constituency. As I mentioned a few moments ago, I spent a good part late yesterday morning at the armory in Hartford, CT, where people in my office were gathering these supplies to send down to the gulf region. It was Labor Day, and I went over half expecting there might be a handful of people there to process and handle the contributions. There were hundreds of people there. It was really rather an emotional moment to drive up and see literally hundreds of people, volunteers from various churches and organizations in my State, gathering the materials. There was a line of automobiles that went around the block several

times. People with their families in the car, with young children, arrived, opened up their trunks and the backs of their cars, and pulled out food, clothing, supplies of all kinds to be delivered to the victims of Katrina in the Gulf region. And then to watch volunteers sorting it out, packaging it up again. This was at one armory. Today they are opened up across the State, and again we are seeing the same reaction today—literally thousands of people pouring out in our small State of Connecticut to provide assistance. What I know is that it is occurring all across the country.

While we are talking about the failures of Government to respond well, how proud all of us ought to be in this Chamber of our fellow citizens because they are not sitting down. They are reacting. They are involved in telethons and charitable giving, doing everything they can to assist the people of the Gulf region. It is a great picture of America. It is what all of us believe about our country. In moments like this I did not hear a person in Connecticut talk about the South or southerners or differences in red States and blue States. I watched good people in the city of Hartford, CT, doing everything they can to help out people in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. That is our America. That is the country we represent, and we are all deeply proud of our fellow citizens. We will get through this. We will put these people back on their feet again, but we need to be better prepared so we can minimize the kind of hardship that these communities have suffered through in the last 10 days.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to join my colleagues in offering my support and sympathy and certainly everything we can do from my home State of Washington to so many of our fellow Americans who are suffering so tragically from the outfall of Hurricane Katrina. I want them to know we will do everything we can to make sure we are there for them.

I have to say that over the past week, citizens from this end of the country to my end of the country on the west coast have been glued to their television screens and really overwhelmed by the tremendous devastation and the unfathomable suffering of so many of our fellow Americans. The images have become almost too much to bear, watching families without food and water, people who have been trapped on their roofs, people searching for their loved ones. People have come up to me everywhere when I have gone through my State over the last week. My office has been inundated by calls from my fellow citizens in Washington State who are really horrified at the conditions they have seen on TV. They are asking, rightfully, what can we do to help and how can we be there for our

citizens? They are reaching into their own pockets and doing everything they can, and that truly has been heartwarming to see.

They are also asking, How could this have happened? I have to say that people in my home State are upset and, really, with good reason. Our Government failed in its initial response. We now have to see that we succeed in this ongoing recovery. That certainly is my focus right now.

There is going to be a lot of time for hard questions and accountability, but I think today we need to focus on meeting the tremendous needs that rescue workers and our guard and police forces are meeting on the ground. We also need to recognize that the recovery area is now no longer just limited to the gulf coast. As Americans have opened their hearts and their homes and they have opened up their communities and their stadiums and their hospitals and their homes in towns and cities from coast to coast, that need has spread across the country.

Shortly, in my home State of Washington, we are expecting to welcome 2,000 evacuees. Nearly 200 of them are going to arrive by this Thursday, and we need to make sure we are doing everything and being prepared to meet their needs as they come to our States. Right now we have to ensure that the evacuees have the bare essentials, that they have food, clothing, and shelter. We also have to make sure we are preparing for the long term.

For most children in this country, as we all know, this week marks a very exciting time, the beginning of the school year, a time that they head off to meet their new teachers and reconnect with old friends and make new ones. For all of the children who have been displaced from their homes and their school districts by the effects of Hurricane Katrina, the beginning of the school year is really the least of their worries. But we will need to come together as a country to help these schools across the Nation that are taking in these students from the gulf coast.

I just heard on the television before I came here that there will be probably 200,000 or more of these young students, and we have to do everything we can to absorb the costs and help the transition for these children and families, to make it as smooth as possible.

We also need to make sure we pay special attention to funding for support for homeless and foster children and ensure that the most vulnerable among us have the support they need to succeed and to build brighter futures again.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many different sectors of our transportation system have also stepped up to the plate to deliver critical service, and because this region's infrastructure is so devastated we need to immediately explore alternatives to moving people and freight throughout

the region. I think we all know it is going to take time to get our transportation infrastructure back to where it was, but we need to start concentrating on that and getting systems put in place now as well.

Rest assured, I will be asking very hard questions in the days to come about what went wrong and what we need to do to ensure that Americans never endure such preventable suffering again. All of those questions will be explored in detail, but right now I am going to continue to make sure that we are providing the immediate support that our families and our communities again need. Once again, I just want to say my thoughts and my prayers go out to everyone who has been touched by this disaster.

I see my colleague from Illinois who has been down in the region is on the floor with us. I look forward to hearing about his firsthand experience as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise to address what has been a heartbreaking week for all of us. As was mentioned by my distinguished colleague from Washington, I just returned from a trip from Houston with former Presidents Clinton and Bush as part of a fund-raising effort to deal with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. As we wandered through the crowd, we heard in very intimate terms some of the heartwrenching stories that all of us have witnessed on television over the past several days: Mothers separated from their babies; adults mourning the loss of elderly parents; descriptions of the heat, filth, and fear of the Superdome and of the convention center in New Orleans.

There was an overriding sense of relief in Houston, and the officials in Houston and in the entire State of Texas deserve great credit for the outstanding job they have done in creating a clean and stable place for the tens of thousands of families who have been displaced.

A conversation I had with one woman captured the realities that are settling into the families as they face the future. She said to me: We had nothing before the hurricane, and now we have less than nothing. We had nothing before the hurricane, now we have less than nothing.

In the coming weeks, as the images of the immediate crisis fade and this Chamber becomes consumed with other matters, we will be hearing a lot about lessons learned and steps to be taken. I will be among those voices who will be calling for action. In the most immediate term, we will have to assure that the efforts at evacuating families from the affected States proceed—they are not finished yet—that these Americans who are having to flee their homes, their cities, their counties, and their towns are fed, clothed, housed, and provided with the medical care and medicine they need.

We are also going to have to make sure we cut through the redtape that

has inexcusably prevented so much help from getting to the places where it is needed. I can say from personal experience over the last week how frustrating it has been, how unconscionable it has been to be unable to find somebody in charge so that we can get medical supplies, doctors, nurses, and other supplies down to the affected areas quickly enough.

We are going to have to make sure in this Chamber that any impediments that may continue to exist in preventing relief efforts from moving forward rapidly are eliminated.

Once we stabilize the situation, this country is going to face the enormous challenge in providing stability for displaced families over the months and years that it is going to take to rebuild. Already the State of Illinois has committed to accepting 10,000 displaced families. There are stories in Illinois, as there are all across the country, of churches, mosques, synagogues, and individual families welcoming people with open arms and no strings attached.

Indeed, if there is any bright light that has come out of this disaster, it is the degree to which ordinary Americans have responded with speed and determination, even as their Government has responded with what I consider to be unconscionable ineptitude, which brings me to the next point. Once the situation is stable, once families are settled for at least the short term, once children are reunited with their parents and enrolled in school and the wounds both on the outside and on the inside have healed, we are going to have to do some hard thinking about how we could have failed our fellow citizens so badly and how we will prevent such failures from ever occurring again.

It is not politics to insist that we have an independent commission to examine these issues. It is not politics. Indeed, one of the heartening things about this crisis has been the degree of outrage that has come from across the political spectrum—from across races, across incomes; the degree to which the American people sense that we can and we must do better, and a recognition that if we can't cope with a crisis that has been predicted for decades, a crisis in which we were given 4 to 5 days' notice, then how can we ever hope to respond to a serious terrorist attack in a major American city in which there is no notice and in which the death toll and the panic and the fear may be far greater?

That brings me to my final point. There has been a lot of attention in the media about the fact that those who were left behind in New Orleans were disproportionately poor and disproportionately African American. I have said publicly that I do not subscribe to the notion that the painfully slow response of FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security was somehow racially based. I do not agree with that. I think the ineptitude was colorblind.

But what must be said is that whoever was in charge of planning and preparing for the worst-case scenario seemed to assume that every American has the capacity to load up the family in a SUV, fill it up with \$100 worth of gasoline, stick some bottled water in the trunk, and use a credit card to check into a hotel on safe ground. I see no evidence of active malice, but I see a continuation of passive indifference on the part of our Government toward the least of us.

So I hope that out of this crisis we all begin to reflect—Democrats and Republicans, Black and White, young and old, poor and wealthy. I hope we all begin to reflect, not only on our individual responsibilities to our families and ourselves but on our mutual responsibilities to our fellow Americans, mutual responsibilities that reflect themselves in church and community organizations and block clubs but also express themselves through our Government.

I hope we realize the people of New Orleans were not just abandoned during the hurricane, they were abandoned long ago—to murder and mayhem in their streets, to substandard schools, to dilapidated housing, to inadequate health care, to a pervasive sense of hopelessness.

That is the deeper shame of this past week, that it has taken a crisis such as this to awaken in us the understanding of the great divide that continues to fester in our midst. That is what all Americans are truly ashamed about. That is what I am ashamed about. And the fact that we are ashamed about it is a good sign. The fact that all of us don't like to see such a reflection of this country that we love tells me that the American people have better instincts and a broader heart than our current politics would indicate. "We had nothing before the hurricane," the woman told me. "Now we have even less." I hope we all take the time to ponder the truth of that message.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to extend my deepest sympathies and strongest possible support for the people of America's Gulf Coast region, which was devastated by the terrible forces of Hurricane Katrina.

In the aftermath of the worst natural disaster in the history of the United States, we continue our attempt to comprehend the magnitude of the losses that have occurred—most especially all those who have lost their lives, lost livelihoods, and virtually all their physical possessions. The scale of the destruction is most horrifically reflected in the faces of those we have seen over the past week—faces etched with an indelible and almost unimaginable sorrow, suffering, and burden, and their images have reverberated throughout a country in solidarity with their terrible plight. Indeed, there are colleagues in this very body who have endured horrendous loss, and my thoughts and prayers go out to them as well.

In Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida lives have been forever transformed along with the landscape, as we have witnessed untold scenes of homes that no longer exist; floods that ravage entire neighborhoods and cities; fires that consume what remains of buildings, men, women, children, and the elderly seeking food, water, and medicine—as well as missing loved ones.

The cities of New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulf Port, Pascagula, and so many others have sustained injuries almost beyond belief. America and the world have been stunned by the cruelty of the tragic effects of this storm. At the same time, we are also hearing the stories of those who have rushed to the aid of our fellow Americans in need—men and women of the National Guard and the U.S. Armed Services, paramedics, doctors, police men and women, volunteers from all walks of life. And as chair of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Fisheries and Coast Guard, I especially thank the selfless commitment of the people of the Coast Guard, who have rescued at least 32,000 thousand individuals and have served with the greatest heroism and honor.

To the people of the Gulf region: You do not stand alone in your pain and frustration. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that essential items, medical care, and shelter are provided in a timely fashion, wherever and whenever they are needed. I am pleased the Congress passed a \$10.5 billion emergency spending bill to move the Gulf region toward recovery, and there should be no question that as additional resources are required, they will be provided. It is only with the full weight of the Federal Government that the entire region will not only endure, but recover. And as chair of the Senate Small Business Committee, I will leave no stone unturned in identifying resources and services that can help bring such a recovery to fruition.

I also believe that, looking forward, it is critical to examine and assess what steps might have been taken not only to diminish the impact of the hurricane, but also to respond appropriately in its aftermath. We must determine how we, as a nation, could have been better prepared. We owe that not only to those who will face potential catastrophes in the future, but also to all those who have died and those suffering today from Katrina's swathe of devastation.

In the end, no human or natural act can deprive Americans of their unyielding and singularly determined spirit, and that truth has once again demonstrated itself in the hearts of the people of the Gulf Coast as well as the millions of acts of kindness and compassion that have manifested themselves throughout America in Katrina's wake. We also appreciate the outpouring of sympathy and support expressed by many nations and their people throughout the world. Grief and hu-

manity, hope and caring truly know no political boundaries. This is a tragedy for all of humankind, a wound to our world, but it is one from which we will, in time, recover to the fullest extent possible.

All of our will and our resources as one of the wealthiest nations on earth must and will be brought to bear over what will be a long but ultimately triumphant process of reclaiming our Gulf Coast towns and cities for the future. As we all work toward that common goal, we do so hand-in-hand with all those for whom we are praying and keeping in our thoughts.

While the hurricane's winds and rain have long since dissipated, the collective concern and strength of this Nation continues ever onward—unbroken, undaunted, unflagging. Our message to the people of the Gulf Coast is both simple and solemn: Your country will be with you every step of the way, and that is our promise to you in this most difficult and desperate of times and forever forward from this day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I want to again express my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered so much because of Hurricane Katrina and its aftereffects. This past week has seen destruction and misery on a scale perhaps not witnessed before in the United States. Words simply cannot describe it.

Americans have responded to this tragedy in typical fashion with untold acts of kindness and selflessness. Many who have lost everything themselves have worked without sleep and in terrible conditions to help those who cannot help themselves. The Coast Guard and military saved thousands stranded on rooftops. People have volunteered their services and their homes and have donated generously. Companies both large and small have also stepped up to help, as has the international community. In my own State of Wisconsin, we have mobilized and deployed almost 500 members of the National Guard. First responders and rescue workers have traveled to the stricken areas to help, people are preparing shelters for those who have been displaced, and people are opening their pocketbooks. I deeply admire and respect all of these acts of heroism and generosity. And as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I want to express my sincere thanks to the many in the international community who have come forward with their own offers of help, and their words of support and solidarity.

Unfortunately, these acts of heroism and compassion starkly contrast with the inadequacy of the response to this major national disaster. Thousands desperate for help were left stranded as the relief effort slowly sputtered into action. Empty assurances and high-level excuses were no comfort to those stuck in overcrowded and unsafe shelters or to those who were desperate for medicine. It is shocking and disappointing, to say the least, that 4

years of efforts to supposedly improve our emergency response capabilities fell so short. We have devoted countless hours, and tens of billions of taxpayer dollars, to Homeland Security since 9/11. But the American people have not gotten an adequate return for this massive investment.

We must do all we can to help the residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama get back on their feet and rebuild their homes and their lives. These Americans will need our resolve and our partnership long after the headlines fade.

In addition it is of the utmost importance that there be a thorough and independent review of the response to Hurricane Katrina in order to identify failures and improve our emergency response system and capabilities. I pledge to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that those responsible for costly failures are held accountable, and to ensure that we learn from this tragedy. We must face up to the searing and shameful images of American families being left to fend for themselves in increasingly desperate circumstances, and we must ensure that we never see such images again.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF THE CATAFALQUE IN CONNECTION WITH MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE LATE HONORABLE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 52, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislate clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 52) providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the crypt beneath the Rotunda of the Capitol in connection with the memorial services to be conducted in the Supreme Court Building for the late honorable William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consideration of the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 52) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 52

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Architect of the Capitol is authorized and directed to transfer to the custody of the Supreme Court of the United States the catafalque which is situated in the crypt beneath the Rotunda of the Capitol so that such catafalque may be used in the Supreme Court Building in con-

nection with services to be conducted there for the late honorable William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States.

**ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 7, 2005**

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the rollcall vote on the Hurricane Katrina resolution, the Senate adjourn until 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 7. I further ask that following the prayer and the pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate then proceed to a period of morning business until 12 noon, with the time equally divided and Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, tomorrow the Senate will pay its respects to the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist. Senators will be able and are encouraged to make statements tomorrow morning relating to the passing of Justice Rehnquist.

We will be voting at noon tomorrow on a resolution which expresses the sense of the Senate. The Senate will recess during the funeral ceremonies as a further mark of respect. As I mentioned earlier, we will begin consideration of the Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill on Thursday this week.

**EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES
OF THE NATION TO THE VICTIMS
OF HURRICANE KATRINA**

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in a few minutes, we will be voting on a resolution expressing our deep and heartfelt sympathy for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. I know I speak for all when I say that the Senate and the American people stand by the good people of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi who have suffered so deeply and who have lost so much. We are committed to helping them recover and rebuild. Last Thursday night, we passed \$10.5 billion in aid, but this is just the downpayment. There is still much hard work ahead.

One of our most important and pressing duties is to conduct a thorough investigation from top to bottom of the initial emergency response. There is no question that in many places the early emergency response was simply unacceptable. No one who saw the news and the mounting discomfort and despair at the Superdome and the convention center could say otherwise. We need to find out what went wrong and what went right, and we will. We need to find out what we need to do so we are never, ever caught unprepared again.

As I mentioned this morning, I traveled to the gulf coast this weekend, not

as a Senator but as a volunteer physician. A major problem I saw firsthand was a very basic one, one of communications. It is so ironic, and this is why it is so important that we provide the oversight, because Congress has appropriated funds for communications and for the interoperability of communications, but I didn't see any of that on the ground. People worked without functioning radios when I arrived, and literally within that large terminal and one of the large main rooms there, people could not communicate from one side of that room to the other. Doctors and nurses had to use runners to shuttle through the airport. It simply did not make sense. It does not make sense in America.

Many other challenges I saw we will be addressing on the floor of the Senate in the appropriate oversight mechanism. Our full attention at this juncture needs to be directed to saving lives. The President has stated this again and again. Literally as we speak here today, there are people in those second and third floors of homes who have not yet been rescued. Every major city houses the poor and the elderly and the infirm, and every American city is a potential target of a disaster or an attack, either natural or otherwise. There can be no excuses for inaction.

Senator SUSAN COLLINS and Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, the chairman and ranking member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, have announced their oversight hearings. Again, our attention needs to be on saving and sustaining those people who are suffering as we speak, but at the same time we have a mechanism that is underway to begin our very serious, very important responsibility of oversight as to what did not go well and what needs to go much better in the future.

I do want to assure the American people that the Senate is hard at work. We have rolled up our sleeves. We began with the passage of the \$10.5 billion the other night. It is very likely that in very short order, we will have a much larger supplemental come through, maybe within the next several days, on the Senate floor, and it will require yet another supplemental funding bill in the future. We are determined that New Orleans, where I was Saturday and Sunday; or Biloxi, where I was on Sunday; or Mobile, also on Sunday—really that entire coast—will recover and that we will rebuild in a way that is bigger and better and stronger. That is the future to which we are committed.

We have many hurdles to face in the meantime, and we will address those aggressively. We faced urban disasters in our history. As former Speaker Gingrich said in the last couple of days: A large chunk of Chicago was burned all the way to the ground, and it came back stronger than ever. He also mentioned San Francisco, leveled by an earthquake only to reemerge a