

our neighbors through this difficult time, just as they so selflessly helped us during our time of need last year.

We, as a nation, have all begun to appreciate how fragile our very existence is in the face of this incredible force of nature. The loss of life and the scope of the destruction are beyond our capacity to understand. The feeling of isolation, despair, desolation experienced by those in the wake of a storm, and their families, is beyond consolation.

Having only too recently been the recipient of our own neighbors' good will, comfort, and support in the wake of our own struggles, Floridians stand ready to respond in kind. Today the news reports that over 25,000 evacuees are expected in central Florida, bringing it close to the point of strain on the local resources because of that kind of activity. Thousands of Floridians are already helping. More are asking how they can help. Citizens have contributed to numerous nonprofit groups that in turn are sending truckloads of supplies to hurricane-damaged areas.

Our National Guard troops are now stationed in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama, providing much needed manpower to the ongoing recovery efforts. Our law enforcement and fire department personnel have sacrificed time with their families so they can be in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi providing emergency aid and security. Church groups have offered temporary housing, and schools in Florida have offered to take students displaced by the disaster.

I am proud of the way Floridians and all Americans have reached out in this great time of need for our country. We will continue to help our neighbors, continue to keep them in our prayers, and continue to mourn the loss of so many of our fellow Americans through such a powerful natural disaster.

While we certainly cannot avert our eyes and attention from the human suffering, we must also recognize the tremendous outpouring of love, support, and compassion directed to those who have lost so much. The American spirit of unity and survival is reflected in the response to the American Red Cross, the Office of Housing and Employment for the Displaced, the offer of neighboring public universities to accept students from Louisiana to avoid interruption in their education. These all serve to remind us that for all our differences, we are all one people, and we will take care of our own.

Many have raised legitimate concerns about the level of our preparedness as a nation for the disaster, but now is not the time for recrimination. The time for examination and for determining lessons learned will soon come, but for now we must not be distracted from the mission of delivering aid and comfort to those who so desperately are in need and we must begin the process of rebuilding.

The rise of rhetoric will not empty the flood waters, provide relief to the

living, bury the dead or rebuild our cities. Together we can begin to restore hope to those where hope has been lost. Together we must move forward in good faith as one nation.

As we look to the future, we have a responsibility to examine our disaster readiness at every level of Government. When lives are at stake, there is no room for territorial or jurisdictional turf wars. We must make certain no lives are lost that might otherwise be saved with proper planning, training, and cooperation among Government agencies at every level. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Congress to be certain that that goal is achieved.

Our country has been through very challenging times. We have suffered through terrorist attacks on our homeland, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and most recently Hurricane Katrina and surging oil prices. Yet through all of this, the American people have moved forward with optimism and determination. It is our way. We are a resilient people. Because of the incredible resiliency of the American people, we will recover from Katrina and we will be stronger and we will be better.

#### HONORING CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to say what a great loss our country has experienced with the passing of our Chief Justice William Rehnquist. William Rehnquist was a man of deep integrity and honor, a true public servant. He served our country well, always keeping an eye toward tradition and working to bring constitutional reason to the complex questions of our nation. Our country is better for the guiding hand he placed on the Court. His resolute spirit will be missed.

Chief Justice Rehnquist's leadership brought the Court through three decades of very tumultuous times. September 17 of this year would mark the 29th year of his tenure as Chief Justice. This term exceeds that of every other Chief Justice in our nation's history, with the exception of Chief Justice John Marshall, who served for 34 years.

He led the judiciary with resolve and a steady hand. He will be greatly missed by his family, his colleagues, the Court, and by a grateful nation.

As we turn our attention in the coming weeks to the confirmation process to consider the President's nominee to serve as the next Chief Justice, it would be appropriate to pause and reflect on the service to our country provided by this man of exceptional intellect who served his Nation long and faithfully.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I join with my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Florida, in expressing my personal condolences and those of my

fellow Minnesotans to the family and friends of the former Chief Justice, and I share the sentiments in regard to his distinguished service to our nation.

#### HURRICANE KATRINA AND SOARING GAS PRICES

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I also want to join with others of my colleagues today who have expressed the concerns, condolences, and sympathies to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, which has so horribly claimed so many of our fellow Americans' lives, families and friends, homes, businesses, farms, schools, and entire communities that are the worst victims of this unprecedented disaster. Our hearts go out to all of them. Our helping hands are being extended and must continue to be extended to them.

There are millions of other victims of this disaster, Americans nationwide whose economic well-being has been harmed by price increases and supply or service disruptions.

In my State of Minnesota, probably the worst economic damage and financial hardships have been caused by the skyrocketing prices for gasoline and other essential energy supplies. Even before Hurricane Katrina, those prices had been increasing sharply. In the 3 months from May 28 to August 28 of this year, the average price of regular unleaded gasoline throughout Minnesota has risen from \$1.92 a gallon to \$2.55 a gallon. That is an increase of 63 cents a gallon, a one-third increase in just 3 months.

Then, in 3 days last week, from August 29 to September 1, the average gasoline prices in Minnesota jumped another 46 cents a gallon, according to one Web site that has spot check reports from throughout the State. So in 3 months and 3 days, the average gasoline prices, according to this Web site, in Minnesota, jumped from \$1.92 a gallon to \$3.01 a gallon, a 57-percent increase. That is not as bad as some other parts of the country, but it is sure worse than bad enough for Minnesota.

I know from direct personal experience driving around northern Minnesota last week that actual prices were much higher, as high as \$3.46 a gallon for regular unleaded gasoline, which was up almost \$1 a gallon from 2 weeks before. Unfortunately, that up-to-date, accurate information is not available from the Energy Information Administration Web site, and that is one of the defects that needs to be remedied.

Most of Minnesota's oil and gasoline supplies originate from Canada, come in either by gasoline or oil pipelines and then refined within our State. So almost all of our price increases for gasoline and other energy products were not directly the result of Katrina's supply disruptions. Rather, they were the result of other people taking advantage of that disaster to take advantage of the people of Minnesota.

Last week, President Bush called it "price gouging at the gasoline pump," and I agree with the President. President Bush also said that there should be zero tolerance for gasoline price gouging, similar to looting in New Orleans, and I agree with the President on that as well because price gouging has the same effect as looting or other kinds of stealing. It is robbing the people of Minnesota and elsewhere throughout this country by overcharging them for their essential energy needs.

Given the similarity of the gasoline price increases throughout Minnesota, I think there is a strong possibility of pricing collusion by the major oil suppliers and distributors that demands immediate investigation and, where called for, vigorous prosecution of violators. What they have done is not only immoral, it is also illegal under Federal law.

I have written the United States Attorney General and urged him to back up the President's strong words with his strong immediate action to investigate all indications of price gouging and/or pricing collusion of gasoline, diesel fuel, aviation fuel, farm fertilizers, natural gas, liquid petroleum gas, home heating oil, ethanol, and any and all other oil supplies.

At this time, I urge the President to release whatever supplies are necessary from our Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserves to offset the loss of oil, gasoline, and other energy supplies resulting from Hurricane Katrina.

Last night, the Secretary of Energy told a number of us in the Senate, in a briefing, that gasoline prices have been stabilized. Well, with due respect, Mr. Secretary, I must say they have been stabilized far too high in Minnesota, if, in fact, they have been stabilized at all. Thus, whatever has been done so far is not enough. Gasoline prices are still unaffordably too high in Minnesota. Other energy prices are still unaffordably too high, and with the cold weather heating season soon upon Minnesotans and other Americans in the United States, it is imperative to act now and keep on doing whatever is necessary to get energy prices back down to pre-Katrina levels—which were still too high—and then deal with that continuing energy price crisis in Minnesota and other affected States and continue to do whatever is necessary to get those lower prices.

In the immediate term, we need to strive for lower energy prices, and we need executive action to prosecute price gouging, price collusion. We also, then, need, as a body of Congress, to do whatever is necessary to strengthen Federal legislation to prohibit and prevent this kind of economic looting of our fellow citizens.

A couple of my colleagues have announced, just in the last 2 days, their intentions to introduce legislation. Senator DORGAN of North Dakota intends to offer windfall profits tax legislation on U.S. oil companies and other

energy suppliers. Senator CANTWELL of Washington has indicated her intention to offer legislation that would give the President additional powers to mitigate price increases in times of crisis.

I intend to introduce in the next 2 days, as soon as it is complete, legislation that would prevent and prosecute price gouging in energy and other essential commodities. In a nutshell, this legislation would make it illegal in any emergency situation to take advantage of consumers by raising energy prices or other essential commodity prices. It would give the U.S. Attorney General further authority to prosecute retail gasoline stations, oil companies, distributors—whoever is found to be in violation of this provision. It would require the Energy Information Administration to provide current prices for major metropolitan areas for every State and for our entire Nation on a daily basis so that we can evaluate those price increases so that citizens can know, in perspective, what they are being charged and how it compares with other parts of the country. They can then be our eyes and ears to report evidence of these rising prices that constitute price gouging, as the President said, at the gasoline pump.

We have witnessed once again, in the midst of this disaster affecting Southern United States, that such disasters bring out both the best and the worst of human nature. They bring out the best, as we have seen the courageous men and women of the National Guard, the medical personnel, and many others who are literally risking their own lives to save the lives of others. We have seen the best of human nature in the response of millions of Americans from all over the country who have contributed whatever they can and are offering to do more to alleviate this suffering.

Here in the Senate last week, and also in the House, we provided an additional \$10.5 billion the President requested to continue emergency operations. All of us, including those at a meeting last night with a number of the Cabinet Secretaries, were asking the administration, What do you need us to do? Money? Authorizing legislation? Streamlining existing legislation? Tell us what we need to do in the Senate and House to expedite in the best possible ways the relief effort that must continue for months ahead.

This is not a Republican or Democratic disaster or Republican or Democratic response. It is an American disaster, and it is a response of all of us as Americans to our fellow citizens in need.

Unfortunately, there is another side to human nature, and that is what we must also address. It cannot be allowed. It certainly cannot be rewarded with profits to those who take advantage of the despair of their fellow citizens. Some cannot be allowed to cause even further economic hardship, even devastation, especially to those who can least afford the prices of energy es-

entials and other necessities of life. That is where our fellow citizens look to us to stand up on their behalf to prevent, prosecute, and to prohibit this kind of economic looting that the President called price gouging.

I support his statement. I urge the U.S. Attorney General to put action behind those words, and then I urge my colleagues to join with me in passing legislation to prohibit and prevent this from happening again and to prosecute those who are responsible for it.

I yield the floor and 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. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

#### CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, one of the pleasures I have as a Member of Congress, having served in the House and the Senate, is having the opportunity to meet people who are special, unique. During the time that I have had in Congress to meet some of these individuals, I have in my own frame of reference chosen a number of heroes. One of those heroes is a Congressman from the Fifth District of Georgia by the name of JOHN LEWIS.

At home last night, I read Newsweek magazine. I saw an opinion piece written by my hero, JOHN LEWIS. This appeared on page 52 of this week's Newsweek magazine, entitled "Opinion: A Civil-rights Leader Mourns an African-American Population Left Behind."

I will read what JOHN LEWIS said:

I was headed to New Orleans as a Freedom Rider in May of 1961. It would've been my first visit, but we were arrested in Jackson, Miss., and never made it. In happier times, though, I have been able to visit New Orleans over the years. It's one of my favorite cities, one of the great Southern cities. The people are friendly, warm, helpful. In the old part of the city, there's so much history when you walk down Canal Street or Royal. One of my favorite places is a shop on Royal where they have lots of art posters by African-American artists. After Katrina, there's a loss of the music, the restaurants and the character in addition to the unbelievable loss of lives. Maybe we will never know the number of people who have been lost.

It's very painful for me to watch and read about what is happening. I have a sense of righteous indignation. I think all Americans should rise up and speak out. It's not like 9/11 that just happened. We saw this in the making. The media told us for days this storm was coming and for years people have been telling us we need to do something to prepare. It took us so many days to make the full force of the government available afterwards.

In 1957, during the crisis in Little Rock and President Dwight Eisenhower—maybe he was reluctant, maybe he had some reservations—but he put the full force of the government behind the decision to desegregate Central High. During the Freedom Rides, President