

CORPORATE HERO: HOME DEPOT

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the continued good work by an Atlanta-based company in helping rebuild the hurricane ravaged gulf coast.

Nine months after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the area, Home Depot continues to play a lead role in reconstruction. The region remains in need, and to date Home Depot has contributed over \$11 million to the relief efforts, and their employees have volunteered countless hours and resources to help rebuild the region. The company has vowed to continue their work to make sure that the region realizes that rebirth. And while it may be easy for a company to pledge support early when the spotlight is on, it is admirable to see Home Depot still out there with hammer and nails in hand months after the media frenzy has subsided.

While time has passed, Home Depot's enthusiasm and compassion for the victims of this disaster has not. It is important to recognize these ongoing efforts and all the people continuing to aid in the recovery.

Mr. Speaker, the gulf coast region remains in need of a helping hand, and Home Depot is an outstanding example of corporate responsibility and compassion.

TRIBUTE TO LUCKY MONDRES

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, many of our colleagues and staff who are on the Hill today may not remember Marvin "Lucky" Mondres, but those of us who have been around for a while will recall Lucky ran Representative Burke's Washington office for several years.

Our paths first crossed when I served at the Interior Department and Lucky was my counterpart as the congressional liaison officer for the Commerce Department in the early 1970s.

He served with distinction at Commerce and in several other Departments in both the Nixon and Ford administrations. Members on both sides of the aisle came to know that if they needed information or assistance, they could depend on Lucky to be forthright and diligent in providing it.

I want to share the news that Lucky is battling the final stages of cancer. But as those who know him would guess, he is not dwelling on that but is focused on living each day to the fullest, just as he has done his entire life.

In his retirement years in Massanutten in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, he has devoted his time to his children and his grandchildren, with some charity work along the way, and always some time for golf.

We want to thank Lucky for his public service and his contributions to our country and ask the Good Lord to bless him.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

HURRICANE RELIEF EXTENSION
ACT OF 2006

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5354) to authorize the Secretary of Education to extend the period during which a State educational agency or local educational agency may obligate temporary emergency impact aid for elementary and secondary school students displaced by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5354

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Hurricane Relief Extension Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PERIOD FOR OBLIGATION
OF TEMPORARY EMERGENCY IM-
PACT AID FOR DISPLACED STU-
DENTS.

Notwithstanding sections 107(f) and 110 of title IV (commonly known as the "Hurricane Education Recovery Act") of Division B of the Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, and Pandemic Influenza Act, 2006 (Public Law 109-148; 119 Stat. 2680), the Secretary of Education may extend the period during which a State educational agency or local educational agency may obligate funds received under section 107 of that title, except that such funds shall be used only for expenses incurred during the 2005-2006 school year, as required by section 107 of that title.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds as follows:

(1) According to the Department of Education, more than 370,000 students were unable to attend school in the weeks following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

(2) According to the Department of Education, 158,000 students remained displaced as of October 1, 2005, and are eligible for impact aid.

(3) The unprecedented nature of this crisis and the massive dislocation of students prompted the Congress in 2005 to approve the Hurricane Education Recovery Act to provide money to reopen schools in the Gulf Coast region and an additional \$645 million for impact aid.

(4) The Congress included stringent time lines in the Hurricane Education Recovery Act to ensure the money would quickly be sent to the local educational agencies to help the schools in need.

(5) The Department of Education accelerated the application process in order to quickly release education-related relief.

(6) A significant portion of the recovery aid, both restart and impact aid, has yet to reach damaged schools and local educational agencies.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—The Congress urges State educational agencies to expeditiously distribute education relief funds received under title IV (commonly known as the "Hurricane Education Recovery Act") of Division B of the Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, and Pandemic Influenza Act, 2006 (Public Law 109-148; 119 Stat. 2680) to impacted schools and institutions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 5354.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5354, the Hurricane Relief Extension Act of 2006, amends the Hurricane Education Recovery Act to allow the Secretary of Education to extend, beyond the 2006 school year, the period during which a State educational agency or local educational agency may obligate temporary emergency impact aid for elementary and secondary schools that enroll students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita.

In addition, the bill includes a sense of the Congress that urges State educational agencies to distribute expeditiously any education relief funds received under such act to impacted schools and institutions.

I want to thank Chairman McKEON and the Education and the Workforce Committee staff for working with me on this legislation.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita created real and pressing educational needs in the gulf coast region. According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 370,000 students were unable to attend school in the weeks following the hurricanes. About 158,000 students were still displaced as of October 1, 2005, and are eligible for impact aid. More than 1,100 schools, public, private, and parochial, were still closed 2 weeks after the storms.

In the immediate days after the hurricanes hit, I worked closely with my colleagues on the Education and the Workforce Committee to assess the damage caused by the storms and to move forward and send Federal aid to the highest need areas in the shortest amount of time possible. We supported an innovative electronic reimbursement proposal that would have enabled

parents and schools to bypass government bureaucracy and receive Federal aid more quickly.

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Unfortunately, many of our colleagues opposed these efforts as a backdoor attempt to implement a voucher system. Let me be emphatic: That was not the case. This proposal would have prevented the delays we are now seeing in Federal support reaching our teachers and students who most need it.

As an alternative, when Congress passed the Hurricane Education Recovery Act in December, we included stringent timelines to ensure the money would quickly be sent to local educational agencies to help schools in need. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education accelerated the application process for these funds in order to quickly release education-related relief. Yet, Federal education aid is still not reaching the ground in many Gulf States, including my home State of Louisiana.

I recently visited Johnson Bayou High School in my congressional district in Cameron Parish hit directly by Hurricane Rita, and school officials had yet to receive one penny in Federal assistance. This was only 3 to 4 weeks ago. A headline last month in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* read, "East Baton Rouge Schools Await Hurricane Funds." At an April 26 Education and Workforce Committee hearing, education leaders from throughout the gulf coast testified that Federal aid had yet to make its way to the local level.

This bill allows the Secretary to set a date to obligate the funds for displaced students that is beyond the end of the school year because several districts have indicated the difficulty in meeting the current statutory July 31 date. The extension of this date will give the districts the extra time needed to ensure the funds are obligated toward the allowable expenditures from the 2005–2006 school year.

The bill makes certain that the funds can only be used for expenses from the 2005–2006 school year and that the funds will not be extended into the 2006–2007 school year. These funds are desperately needed by the districts to help with the costs associated with educating the displaced students.

Districts should not have to return the funds because they were not able to obligate them by the July 31 deadline. Mr. Speaker, schools should not be penalized because bureaucratic red tape has delayed the process on the State level, which, to me, is very unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5354, the Hurricane Relief Extension Act of 2006.

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5354, the Hurricane Relief Ex-

tension Act, and thank Mr. BOUSTANY for introducing this very important measure.

Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, Democrats from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce traveled to New Orleans and surrounding areas to survey and see firsthand the damage left by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The members of the delegation were clear in their assessment: Until you see the damage firsthand, it is very, very difficult to understand the magnitude of these storms and what the devastation that they left behind is.

The school systems in the gulf coast were hit particularly hard. The wind tore off roofs of schools, and storm surges brought additional water into classrooms, sometimes reaching over 10 feet. These school systems, both public and private, lost books, computers and desks. Teachers, principals and students lost their homes to the storms.

At the time of the delegation's visit, families had started to return to the area, and due to the leadership of local superintendents, principals and teachers, students were returning to the classrooms. Across the country, school systems in nearly every State opened their doors to enroll displaced students. They continued to educate these children, expending their own resources to meet the increased enrollments.

In spite of the pressures on schools to reopen and enroll displaced students, it was not until December, nearly 5 months after the levees broke, that Congress designated funds to assist schools along the gulf coast and the schools that had taken in displaced students. And it appears Congress did not live up to its own promise. The funds provided were less than what was promised, nearly one-third less.

H.R. 5354 does not fix the funding problem, nor does it address the challenges these same schools will have next year, particularly those in New Orleans, which expect their enrollment to double in the fall. H.R. 5354 will, however, resolve an immediate issue by extending the time in which funds are to be obligated for the current school year.

H.R. 5354 also addresses a concern heard by the delegation during its visits to schools that State educational agencies were delaying the distribution of these funds to local school systems. As such, H.R. 5354 includes a sense of the Congress that urges States to expedite the release of these funds to local school districts.

Families are eager to return to their communities, but will only do so if they can be assured that their children can attend school. H.R. 5354 will assist schools in their efforts to educate displaced students and reopen schools.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman on the other side of the aisle, Mr. BOUSTANY, for bringing this bill to the floor, and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close at this time. I want to thank my colleague, the gentlelady from New York, for her support, and for all the support of my colleagues across the aisle. I think this is an important piece of legislation, because much of the money that we have obligated has not reached where it needs to go, to those students and schools in need.

When I was back home just about 2 months ago, I was at a school in Erath, a small town that was devastated by flooding, and they were rebuilding the school. In fact, they had just reopened some of the classrooms there. One of the teachers showed me her bright new shining classroom, freshly painted with a new bookshelf, and she had actually spent \$1,600 of her own money to do that, because the Federal money that we had obligated had not reached the ground level. So I am urging the States to release the money that we have sent down so that we can get the money where it needs to be to take care of those students in need and get those schools up and running.

With that, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5354.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5354, the Hurricane Relief Extension Act. I thank my Education and the Workforce Committee colleague, Mr. BOUSTANY, for his work on this measure—and for his efforts on behalf of his constituents in the wake of last fall's hurricanes.

Last year, the Gulf Coast endured one of the worst series of hurricanes in our nation's history. Students, workers, retirees, and families from the region were impacted in ways seemingly incomprehensible before the storms struck.

The Education and the Workforce Committee and this Congress have been active in driving legislation to provide resources to schools and families as part of the recovery effort. Last year, led by Mr. BOUSTANY and his Louisiana colleague, Representative JINDAL, we passed legislation to reimburse public, including charter, and private schools that have enrolled displaced students and to help those schools get supplies and equipment to help educate those students.

Now, as the academic year during which Katrina and Rita struck draws to a close, we want to ensure that available money will be used by the schools and districts. The bill before us today will allow the U.S. Secretary of Education to extend the date by which these funds must be obligated to beyond the end of this school year. While the funds must still be used on expenses for the 2005/2006 school year, by extending the obligation date, the districts and schools will be able to make sure that funds are used on appropriate expenses and do not have to be returned to the federal government. It is not just a necessary move—but an appropriate one as well.

Last month, the Education and the Workforce Committee held a hearing highlighted by educators from across the Gulf Coast region. We listened as they discussed the challenges faced and successes achieved by Gulf Coast schools in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and

Rita. And we heard them provide their unique insights into what we have done well with regard to education in the Gulf Coast region, as well as what obstacles we still face.

Unfortunately, some officials testified that they have yet to receive their full, expected sum of federal impact aid dollars. And as we consider this legislation today, I am especially hopeful that some of the bureaucratic problems we've witnessed in the past several months will end—and end soon.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this: as educators, joined by parents and students from the region, work to rebuild an academic way of life, they ought to have all of the necessary tools at their disposal. The measure we are considering today takes a major step toward providing just that. And I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5354.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOALS OF NATIONAL ONE-STOP MONTH

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 808) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of the goals of National One-Stop Month.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 808

Whereas national workforce professional organizations and the local workforce investment boards will celebrate National One-Stop Month from May 1 to 31, 2006;

Whereas workforce investment boards and One-Stop delivery system were created under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and are designed to provide a full range of employment solutions to employers and job seekers in a single location;

Whereas more than 600 workforce investment boards and 2,000 One-Stop Career Centers are enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation by providing workforce solutions for hundreds of thousands of employers annually across the United States;

Whereas, in the spirit of the Workforce Investment Act, the cornerstones of maximizing customer choice, employment and training solutions, and universal access are the primary missions of the One-Stop delivery system, allowing more than 14,000,000 job seekers annually the opportunity to connect with the tools they need for their next career opportunity;

Whereas each year the One-Stop delivery system and regional workforce investment boards contribute to the competitiveness of the Nation's workforce by providing training assistance through grants to job seekers and employed workers and other programs to more than 400,000 Americans so they may upgrade or acquire new skills; and

Whereas, in the spirit of the Workforce Investment Act, the private sector leadership

of the regional workforce investment boards provides the planning, oversight, and accountability of workforce strategies that succeed in communities across the country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of National One-Stop Month; and

(2) supports the efforts of the workforce investment boards and One-Stop delivery system in preparing the Nation's workforce.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 808.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, associations representing the local workforce development community have declared May National One-Stop Month. I rise this afternoon in support of H. Res. 808, which expresses the support of the House of Representatives for the goals of National One-Stop Month and supports the work of the Nation's local workforce investment boards.

The one-stop delivery system this resolution recognizes is a product of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, or WIA. WIA consolidated numerous Federal training programs and integrated employment and training services at the local level in a more unified workforce development system. Local business-led workforce investment boards now direct the activities of the system.

One of the hallmarks of WIA is the establishment of One-Stop Career Centers to provide re-employment services and job training to individuals looking for a new or better job. The centers were developed to increase access to Federal and State resources available to help individuals obtain employment of their choice.

While WIA funds are available for occupational training, there are numerous other Federal programs that provide employment assistance. These programs, including adult education, vocational rehabilitation, veterans employment programs and more, must make their services available through the centers. WIA created One-Stop Career Centers to provide a single point of access for individuals desiring services through these programs. The one-stop delivery system also provides labor market information regarding the kinds of jobs currently available in a local area, data on growing industries and job listings to assist individuals in making informed career choices.

Over 2,000 one-stop centers across the Nation have connected millions of individuals with the tools they need to find their next employment opportunity, while helping employers find the workers they need.

The economy is dynamic, and research shows that the types of growing industries are changing. The Nation's job training programs are critical to our ongoing effort to equip Americans with the resources and skills they need to find a new or better job in today's knowledge-based economy. Local workforce investment boards have responded to these challenges by creating comprehensive services to assist our workforce.

Approximately 5.2 million new jobs have been created since August of 2003. With solid and consistent job growth in high-wage, high-skill occupations, renewing and strengthening the Federal investment in workforce development and job training is more critical than ever. Last year, this House approved legislation to reauthorize WIA and renew the one-stop delivery system, and we hope for further action on that legislation to build upon the success already attained. Yet in the interim, we know our local community leaders remain committed to providing the best services possible for the Nation's job seekers.

I commend the chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, Congressman RIC KELLER of Florida, for introducing this measure to highlight the critical assistance that the local boards and the one-stop delivery system provide.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of National One-Stop Month. For over 30 years, Congress has worked hard on a bipartisan basis to create a job training system that works well for both employers and employees.

During the Clinton administration, job training advocates developed the idea of a universal system, a one-stop job training system that would provide needed job search, placement and training services to all job seekers who walked through its doors. The system would also be a one-stop system for employers, providing outreach and matching services to enable employers to find workers with the job skills that they need.

Approximately 2,000 one-stop centers and the workforce boards that oversee them now exist in all of our communities, providing a 21st century resource for all. This system is an investment in our economy and in our country.

But that investment is also under attack. For the past 6 years, the administration and this Congress have been cutting funding for the one-stop system. The one-stops have not had a single inflation adjustment in 6 years. The