

his trust as Vice President, and subversive of constitutional government, to the prejudice of the cause of law and justice and the manifest injury of the people of the United States. Wherefore Richard B. Cheney, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

□ 1400

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SERRANO). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from Ohio will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

KIDS IN DISASTERS WELL-BEING, SAFETY, AND HEALTH ACT OF 2007

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3495) to establish a National Commission on Children and Disasters, a National Resource Center on Children and Disasters, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3495

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 "Kids in Disasters Well-being, Safety, and Health Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. DEFINITION.

In this Act, the terms "child" and "children" mean an individual or individuals, respectively, who have not attained 18 years of age.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

There is established a commission to be known as the "National Commission on Children and Disasters" (referred to in this Act as the "Commission").

SEC. 4. PURPOSES OF COMMISSION.

The purposes of the Commission are to—

(1) conduct a comprehensive study to examine and assess the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies;

(2) build upon the investigations of other entities and avoid unnecessary duplication, by reviewing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of other commissions, Federal, State, and local governments, or nongovernmental entities, relating to the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies; and

(3) submit a report to the President and Congress on specific findings, conclusions, and recommendations to address the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies.

SEC. 5. COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION.

(a) MEMBERS.—*The Commission shall be composed of 10 members, of whom—*

(1) 1 member shall be appointed by the President;

(2) 1 member, who is of a different political party than that of the member appointed under paragraph (1), shall be appointed by the President;

(3) 2 members shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(4) 2 members shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(5) 2 members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(6) 2 members shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(b) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON SELECTION.—*The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall be elected from among members of the Commission.*

(c) GOVERNMENTAL APPOINTEES.—*An individual appointed to the Commission may not be an official or employee of the Federal Government.*

(d) COMMISSION REPRESENTATION.—*The Commission shall include—*

(1) representatives from private nonprofit entities with demonstrated expertise in addressing the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies; and

(2) State emergency managers and local emergency managers.

(e) QUALIFICATIONS.—*Members appointed under subsection (a) shall include—*

(1) individuals involved with providing services to children, including health, education, housing, and other social services, including grant and entitlement programs;

(2) individuals with experience in emergency management, including coordination of resources and services among State and local governments, the Federal Government, and nongovernmental entities;

(3) individuals with philanthropic experience focused on the needs of children;

(4) individuals with experience in providing donated goods and services, including personnel services, to meet the needs of children and families as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies; and

(5) individuals who have conducted academic research into related issues.

(f) APPOINTMENTS.—*All members of the Commission shall be appointed not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.*

(g) INITIAL MEETING.—*The Commission shall meet and begin the operations of the Commission not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act.*

(h) QUORUM AND VACANCY.—

(1) QUORUM.—*A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.*

(2) VACANCY.—*Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers and shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.*

SEC. 6. DUTIES OF COMMISSION.

The Commission shall—

(1) conduct a comprehensive study that examines and assesses the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies, including specific findings relating to—

(A) children's physical and mental health;

(B) child care, including in private for-profit and nonprofit settings;

(C) child welfare;

(D) elementary and secondary education;

(E) sheltering, temporary housing, and affordable housing;

(F) transportation;

(G) entitlement and grant programs;

(H) juvenile justice;

(I) evacuation; and

(J) relevant activities in emergency management;

(2) identify, review, and evaluate existing law relevant to the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies;

(3) identify, review, and evaluate the lessons learned from past disasters and emergencies relative to addressing the needs of children; and

(4) submit a report to the President and Congress on the Commission's specific findings, conclusions, and recommendations to address the needs of children as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies, including specific recommendations on the need for planning and establishing a national resource center on children and disasters, coordination of resources and services, administrative actions, policies, regulations, financing, and legislative changes as the Commission considers appropriate.

SEC. 7. POWERS OF COMMISSION.

(a) HEARINGS.—*The Commission may hold such hearings, meet and act at such times and places, and receive such evidence as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Commission.*

(b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—*The Commission may secure directly from any executive department, bureau, agency, board, commission, office, independent establishment, or instrumentality of the Federal Government such information, suggestions, estimates, and statistics as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this Act.*

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—*On request of the Chairperson of the Commission, each department, bureau, agency, board, commission, office, independent establishment, or instrumentality shall, to the extent authorized by law, provide the requested information to the Commission.*

(3) RECEIPT, HANDLING, STORAGE, AND DISSEMINATION.—*Information shall only be received, handled, stored, and disseminated by members of the Commission and its staff consistent with all applicable statutes, regulations, and Executive orders.*

(c) ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.—*On request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, administrative support and other services necessary for the Commission to carry out its duties.*

(2) OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—*In addition to the assistance provided for under paragraph (1), departments and agencies of the United States may provide to the Commission such services as they may determine advisable and as authorized by law.*

(d) CONTRACTING.—*The Commission may enter into contracts to enable the Commission to discharge its duties under this Act.*

(e) DONATIONS.—*The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of donations of services or property.*

(f) POSTAL SERVICES.—*The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as a department or agency of the United States.*

SEC. 8. STAFF OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—*The Chairperson of the Commission, in consultation with the Vice Chairperson, in accordance with rules agreed upon by the Commission, may appoint and fix the compensation of a staff director and such other personnel as may be necessary to enable the Commission to carry out its functions, in accordance with the provisions of title 5, United States Code, except that no rate of pay fixed under this subsection may exceed the equivalent of that payable for a position at level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.*

(b) *STAFF OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.*—Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of any executive department, bureau, agency, board, commission, office, independent establishment, or instrumentality of the Federal Government may detail, without reimbursement, any of its personnel to the Commission to assist it in carrying out its duties under this Act. Any detail of an employee shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(c) *CONSULTANT SERVICES.*—The Commission is authorized to procure the services of experts and consultants in accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, but at rates not to exceed the daily rate paid a person occupying a position at level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 9. TRAVEL EXPENSES.

Each member of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 10. FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT APPLICABILITY.

The provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act shall apply to the Commission, including the staff of the Commission.

SEC. 11. REPORTS OF COMMISSION; TERMINATION.

(a) *INTERIM REPORT.*—Not later than December 31, 2008, the Commission shall submit to the President and Congress an interim report containing specific findings, conclusions, and recommendations required under this Act as have been agreed to by a majority of Commission members.

(b) *FINAL REPORT.*—Not later than 24 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President and Congress a final report containing specific findings, conclusions, and recommendations required under this Act as have been agreed to by a majority of Commission members.

(c) TERMINATION.—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—The Commission, and all the authorities of this Act, shall terminate 180 days after the date on which the final report is submitted under subsection (b).

(2) *RECORDS.*—Not later than the date of termination of the Commission under paragraph (1), all records and papers of the Commission shall be delivered to the Archivist of the United States for deposit in the National Archives.

SEC. 12. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3495.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as amended, H.R. 3495 is a bill to establish a national commission on children's needs as they relate

to all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies. I strongly support the creation of this commission because there is no doubt that in dire circumstances the needs of children are different from the needs of adults. This realization is one of the many lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. Almost 5200 children were reported missing or displaced to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children after Hurricane Katrina. This bill is a step in the right direction in identifying the needs of children in such conditions and deserves our support.

Consistent with other commissions, this bill provides that the Chair and Vice Chair be chosen from commission members. The role of State and local emergency managers is acknowledged in commission membership along with private nonprofit organizations. The committee recognizes that State emergency managers and local emergency managers perform complementary but not identical functions and therefore recognize in a commission such as this it is important to have both groups represented. The commission will produce an interim report and a final report with specific recommendations which will be sent to Congress and the President. The commission member will serve without pay and be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act requirements. The amendment authorizes \$2 million for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for the commission work.

I commend my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), for her diligent work on this bill. I strongly support H.R. 3495 and urge its passage.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3495, introduced by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), creates a National Commission on Children and Disasters. First, I thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman NORTON for working with us to improve this legislation. I believe our bipartisan efforts were necessary to ensure a fair and balanced commission. I think it has resulted in a much better legislative product.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3495 establishes a 10-member commission to examine the needs of children and disasters. The commission is directed to report its findings and conclusions and recommendations to the President and the Congress, as Chairwoman NORTON pointed out.

The bill specifically directs the commission to build upon the investigations of other entities to avoid an unnecessary duplication of effort. For example, last Congress the House created the Select Committee to Investigate Hurricane Katrina. Former Subcommittee Chairman BILL SHUSTER served on the select committee.

In its final report, the select committee made a number of findings with respect to children. In response to this

report, we passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, which included provisions creating a national emergency child locator center and a national emergency family registry and locator center.

Finally, H.R. 3495 requires both State emergency managers and local emergency managers to be represented on the commission. This requirement ensures the representation on the commission of the people who may very well be responsible for implementing its recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation. I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), the author of the bill, for such time as she may consume.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of my bill, H.R. 3495, the KIDS WISH Act.

Before I start, I would like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman NORTON for their work in bringing this bill through the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. I also would like to thank Ranking Member MICA and Ranking Member GRAVES for their bipartisan support. Their leadership and their staff have been instrumental in strengthening the merits of the bill and the concept of this commission. Finally, I would like to thank the House leadership for bringing this important bill to the floor so quickly.

The KIDS WISH Act will establish a National Commission on Children and Disasters that will conduct a comprehensive study to examine and assess the needs of children to prepare for, respond to and recover from all major disasters and emergencies. The bipartisan commission will report to the President and Congress on their findings, conclusions and recommendations to address the needs of children and emergencies. In addition, the commission will consider the need for a permanent national resource center on children and disasters that will be a resource for emergency managers, schools, housing agencies, transportation entities and other relevant organizations.

Disaster and emergencies strike all over this country, and they affect children in small and large numbers. This spring, Greensburg, Kansas, which had a population of 1,389, experienced a horrible tornado. Children aged 0-17 make up 25 percent of the population of Kansas. That translates into about 347 children who were affected. This may be a small number compared to Hurricane Katrina, but each of those children's lives were utterly changed after that one tornado.

In the San Diego area, as a result of the recent wildfires, nearly 850,000 people were evacuated. In California, the population is about 26 percent children

0-17, so that translates to roughly 220,000 children who had to be evacuated. On October 24, 2007, FEMA reported that 13,000-plus individuals were housed in shelters. That translates to roughly 3,500 children.

Since Hurricane Katrina, many improvements to our emergency management system have been made, but there is still much work to be done. The basic tenet of disasters and emergencies is to "make a plan." You hear it in public service announcements all over Florida and the Gulf coast, and it is written on many of the materials distributed by FEMA. Make a plan, make a plan.

But, for all of that talk, we do not have a plan for children. Children are one of our most vulnerable populations, and their needs are unique and cannot be easily assumed from emergency plans for adults.

Earlier this year I met with the chief of the Division of Community Pediatrics from the University of Florida and he brought to my attention that emergency evacuation equipment is often brought for adults, but children cannot be transported in adult equipment, and often that type of equipment is missed. From needles and tubing to oxygen masks and ventilators, children need equipment that has been specifically designed for their size.

Do you know if the hospitals in your district are prepared for children in an emergency situation? Hospitals are just one of the many areas where improvements can be made for children in emergency situations and why the commission is needed.

More than 400,000 children under the age of 5 lived in and were evacuated from counties and parishes that were declared disaster areas by FEMA in response to Hurricane Katrina. In addition, 1,100 schools were closed immediately following Hurricane Katrina. Two years later, only 45 percent of New Orleans schools have reopened. Finally, the most startling statistic from Hurricane Katrina is that 5,192 children were missing or displaced and it took nearly 6½ months to unite each child with their parent. However, the effects of disasters on children are not limited to events of this magnitude.

□ 1415

Additionally, in this day and age we cannot keep thinking that children will not be harmed in a terrorist attack. In 1995, nineteen children were killed and more than 80 children were injured at the Oklahoma City bombing.

More than 6,000 children were in the immediate area of Ground Zero during 9/11, and if the attacks were more widespread, it would have reached over 1.2 million public school students.

In the D.C. area we are painfully aware that during the sniper shooting, schools and children are not overlooked by terrorists. We must have a plan for children in the event of another terrorist attack.

I have been working hard to bring this issue to light. I led 23 other Mem-

bers to call on FEMA to have an expert on children and disasters as a member of the National Advisory Council. I offered an amendment to the fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security appropriations bill that will add \$1 million specifically for children and disasters.

Finally, I held an important forum with experts from emergency management, pediatrics and disaster recovery to discuss how to prepare, respond to, and recover from all hazards for children. Over 100 people attended this briefing to show their support for the legislation.

As adults, we may think this is unnecessary; but once again, we must think how children are different. I encourage the commission to think outside the box. Children are a diverse group and the commission should remember children in the context of private schools, preschools, after-school programs, day care facilities, pregnant women, foster children, and orphanages.

Last year, Congress passed the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006. Congress has recognized how pets can slip through the cracks during an emergency, but has yet to have a plan for children in an emergency.

Children should not be forced to suffer through another learning experience like Hurricane Katrina. Congress must look forward and discover a comprehensive strategy for children and emergencies that may happen such as pandemic flu or a terrorist attack or a major earthquake. A national commission is imperative to making progress.

This commission will solidify some of the already good work that other organizations are doing and provide recommendations for better coordination at the local, State, and Federal levels.

I also would like to thank organizations who have supported this bill. I want to recognize the crucial support of Mark Shriver from Save the Children who has led the coalition of children's advocate groups.

Mr. Speaker, I will insert the list of groups into the RECORD at this point, and I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 3495, the KIDS WiSH Act.

Save the Children, Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics, American Association of School Administrators, American Red Cross, Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, Catholic Charities USA, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Health Fund, Habitat for Humanity, March of Dimes, The Midwives Alliance of North America, National Assembly on School-Based Healthcare, National Association of Children's Hospitals, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Association of Certified Professional Midwives, National Association of School Nurses, National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University, Safermaternity.org, and White Ribbon Alliance.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire if Chairwoman NORTON has any other speakers.

Ms. NORTON. This side, I say to the Member, has no further speakers.

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to once again thank the gentlelady from Florida for this very important bill. The tragedy on the gulf coast was a human tragedy at every level, but the most unbearable scenes were those of hapless children, with and without parents. It's almost unimaginable to understand the trauma of a child who had lost her parents during that time.

The committee, our subcommittee, has indeed last year and this year, Mr. Speaker, passed two important bills: the Post-Katrina Management and Reform Act and, more recently, the Katrina and Rita Recovery Act.

But all of this legislation still leaves the gap that the gentlelady's bill would address, and there was probably good reason for it. In a real sense, we don't know what to do yet. We know what the problem is. We saw the problem with our own eyes.

Then the question becomes how do you put together what it takes to make sure it doesn't happen again, and the gentlelady has wisely decided that first we have to find out, with our bill, for a commission to provide us with the expertise to go further. She's done a real service to children of the United States of America because such a tragedy could happen everywhere.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3495, "Kids in Disasters Well-Being, Safety, and Health Act of 2007." My life's work has been to provide for a better future for the next generation, and H.R. 3495 is in keeping with this purpose.

This bill ensures that children will be protected and prepared to respond to a disaster or other emergency by establishing a National Commission on Children and Disasters. This commission will provide a vital assessment of the needs of children before, during, and after all hazards, disasters, and emergencies. This bill addresses many—but not all—of the enhancements to preparedness for children that I have championed on the Committee on Homeland Security. Specifically, I have been exploring how to improve preparedness for children and schools since the committee's inception. I look forward to continuing the committee's work on school preparedness and working with my colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on this critical homeland security issue.

Mr. Speaker, in August 2005, my colleagues and I on the Committee on Homeland Security requested that the Government Accountability Office, GAO, examine the programs at the Departments of Homeland Security, Education, and Health and Human Services that are designed to increase the emergency preparedness of primary and secondary public school officials, teachers, and students. In 2005, I released a report entitled "Reading, Writing, and Readiness: A Survey of School Emergency Plans in the 2nd Congressional District of North Carolina." The report highlighted the following three assessments: first, Federal efforts in school preparedness are uncoordinated and create confusion in the school community; secondly, there is a desire among schools for the Department of Homeland Security to take a leadership role in school preparedness; and

finally, school administrators are feeling the squeeze of Federal budget cuts in emergency preparedness.

Although schools are among the safest places for our children, and school administrators do a great job of preparing for emergencies, we have evidence, both objective and anecdotal, suggesting that schools need more assistance to be fully prepared to respond to any serious crisis, including terrorism.

As the only Member of Congress that served as a school superintendent, I understand the burdens faced by administrators when implementing emergency preparedness plans with limited resources. We need to continue to work to ensure that the Federal Government engages our communities in an effective and efficient manner to mitigate such burden.

Earlier this year, I included language in H.R. 1684, the Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act, that addresses this critical issue. Specifically, it tasks the DHS Under Secretary for Policy to ensure that all policies, programs and activities developed by the Department and its components appropriately take into consideration the needs of and impact on children. Additionally, the Assistant Secretary would then work with the Office of Grants and Training in FEMA to support emergency preparedness activities for schools. Like the current bill, my provision raises awareness in Congress and within Federal agencies to ensure that the needs of children, schools, and other child-centered facilities are sufficiently understood and incorporated into Federal, State, local, and tribal preparedness, response, and recovery plans and activities for natural disasters as well as acts of terrorism.

I am particularly pleased that H.R. 3495 establishes a National Resource Center on Children and Disasters, similar to the "one-stop" shop clearinghouse that Homeland Security Chairman Thompson and I requested from DHS Secretary Chertoff and Education Secretary Spellings. This resource center will be invaluable to school administrators as a single source for Federal grants and training available to develop emergency management plans at their schools and throughout their districts.

I commend my colleague, CORINNE BROWN, for introducing this bill and I am looking forward to working with her to ensure that the needs of children are properly assessed and addressed by the Federal Government. I urge my colleagues to join me in this cause, and in voting in favor of this legislation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3495, the "Kids in Disasters Well-Being, Safety and Health Act of 2007".

The importance of examining the special needs of children in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters cannot be overstated. Approximately one-fourth of the residents of areas damaged or flooded by Hurricane Katrina were under the age of 18. More than 400,000 children under the age of five lived in or were evacuated from counties or parishes declared as disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA").

Hurricane Katrina exposed sobering vulnerabilities in our Nation's ability to meet the needs of children during disasters. As a result of Hurricane Katrina, 5,192 children

were reported missing or displaced to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Stuningly, it took 6½ months to reunite the last child separated from her family. The impact of this prolonged separation on a child, compounded by the other hardships related to dealing with a tragedy, is indeed profound.

In addition, 1,100 schools were closed immediately following Hurricane Katrina. Today, more than two years later, only 45 percent of New Orleans schools have reopened.

H.R. 3495 establishes the National Commission on Children and Disasters ("Commission") to address the needs of children in disasters.

The purposes of the Commission are to: (1) conduct a comprehensive study to examine and assess the needs of children as they relate to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies; (2) build upon and review the recommendations of other government and nongovernmental entities that work on issues relating to the needs of children in disasters; and (3) report to the President and Congress on its specific findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The Commission will investigate special needs related to children's health, child welfare, elementary and secondary education, affordable housing, transportation, and relevant activities in emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The Commission is further charged with identifying, reviewing, and evaluating the lessons learned from past disasters and emergencies relative to addressing the needs of children.

I commend the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) for introducing this important bill. I also thank Mark Shriver, Vice President and Managing Director of Save the Children, and the many children's advocacy groups that strongly support this legislation and have worked with us to bring this bill to the Floor expeditiously.

Children are a symbol of promise and rebirth. Protecting their safety, well-being, and health in the wake of a disaster must be a critically important priority of emergency management and preparedness. This Commission will help advance that goal.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3495, as amended.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3495, the Kids in Disasters Well-Being, Safety, and Health Act of 2007, introduced by my distinguished colleague from Florida, Representative CORINNE BROWN. This important legislation ensures the protection of our nation's most valuable assets, our children, during times of disasters.

As the Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I cannot stress enough the importance of this legislation. Children have specific needs in cases of emergency and this legislation is an important first step towards recognizing and addressing those needs. Special steps must be taken with regards to children before, after, and during all disasters and emergencies, including informing them what they should know in case of emergency and working to reunite them with their families. In the aftermath of the catastrophic events of Hurricane Katrina, some 5,192 children were missing or displaced and it was not until 6 months later that the final children were reunited with their families. This is simply unac-

ceptable. Children are not merely small adults, they are children. They are much more vulnerable to the health and safety hazards that arise during states of emergency and disasters. The American Academy of Pediatric reports that in times of emergencies and disasters:

Children are particularly vulnerable to aerosolized biological or chemical agents because they normally breathe more times per minute than do adults, meaning they would be exposed to larger doses in the same period of time. Also, because such agents (e.g. sarin and chlorine) are heavier than air, they accumulate close to the ground—right in the breathing zone of children.

Children are more vulnerable to agents that act on or through the skin because their skin is thinner and they have a larger skin surface-to-body mass ratio than adults.

Children are more vulnerable to the effects of agents that produce vomiting or diarrhea because they have smaller body fluid reserves than adults, increasing the risk of rapid progression to dehydration or shock.

Children have much smaller circulating blood volumes than adults, so without timely intervention, relatively small amounts of blood loss can quickly tip the physiological scale from reversible shock to profound, irreversible shock or death.

Children have significant developmental vulnerabilities not shared by adults. Infants, toddlers and young children may not have the motor skills to escape from the site of a hazard or disaster. Even if they are able to walk, young children may not have the cognitive ability to know when to flee from danger, or when to follow directions from strangers such as in an evacuation, or to cooperate with decontamination.

This legislation is an important and timely first step in addressing the specific needs of children by establishing the legislative branch the National Commission of Children and Disasters. This commission will better address the needs of children by identifying the specific causes and needs of children before, after, and during disasters as well as evaluating, and if necessary redressing, existing laws relevant to such needs. It further will evaluate lessons learned from the disasters of September 11th, Hurricane Rita, Hurricane Katrina, and most recently the California wild fires and report back to the President and Congress. Furthermore, this legislation directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a National Resource Center on Children and Disasters that will be responsible for creating, maintaining, and coordinating a database to store information relating to the needs of children and disseminating relevant information on such issues to all necessary parties.

Madam Speaker, there is no one more valuable and more vulnerable than our children. As Members of the Congress, mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers, it is our responsibility to ensure the protection and well-being of our children. This legislation is an important first step in ensuring the safety and protection of our nation's children in times of disasters. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this extremely important legislation.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of legislation aimed at protecting children during and after disasters. Our current emergency management system is not

prepared to meet the unique needs of children. The “Kids in Disasters Well-being, Safety, and Health Act” (H.R. 3495) represents major progress in fixing this unacceptable situation.

The most important role of government is protecting the health and welfare of families. This is a role that the government must not privatize, contract out, or provide only to the wealthy and well connected.

Unfortunately, as we all witnessed after Hurricane Katrina, the government failed miserably to protect the most vulnerable, particularly children. It is unclear to me whether this failure was the result of negligence or incompetence. Perhaps it was the natural result of running a government using a radical ideology that believes government shouldn't work.

What is clear to me is that this body has an obligation to make sure government works and finds ways to help families get back on their feet after disasters. My home state of California is no stranger to disasters: earthquakes, fires, flooding, and mudslides—we've got it all. During the last several weeks, wildfires ravaged Southern California. Just after the worst of the fires, 1300 childcare centers were closed, affecting over 16,000 children. These are children of first responders, teachers, and others that have to get back to work to make sure that the community can rebuild.

We should know if we are doing enough to help these families. We should know if FEMA is doing a good job of assisting those childcare centers to reopen. We should know if we are doing a good job of helping missing children to locate their parents. Local communities and governments should have access to the information and resources they need to ensure that children's needs are taken care of.

This bill will help to fill an enormous gap in our disaster preparedness system. There is currently no agency charged with safeguarding children in the aftermath of a disaster or coordinating the efforts of various levels of government. This bill will begin to close this gap by establishing a National Resource Center for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments as well as NGOs to use to address the needs of children before, during, and after disasters. It will also establish a commission to examine our past failures and make specific recommendations on how to correct those.

Our children are looking to us to take action. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. NORTON. With no further speakers, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3495, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXTENSION OF ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE SUBSIDIES

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2265) to extend the existing provisions regarding the eligibility for essential air service subsidies through fiscal year 2008, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2265

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

SECTION 1. ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 409 of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (49 U.S.C. 41731 note) is amended by striking “September 30, 2007” and inserting “September 30, 2008”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on September 29, 2007, and shall apply with respect to any final order issued under subsection (c) of section 409 of such Act that was in effect on such date.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 48103 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (3);

(B) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (4) and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) \$918,750,000 for the 3-month period beginning October 1, 2007.”

(2) OBLIGATION OF AMOUNTS.—Sums made available pursuant to the amendment made by paragraph (1) may be obligated at any time through September 30, 2008, and shall remain available until expended.

(b) PROJECT GRANT AUTHORITY.—Section 47104(c) of such title is amended by striking “September 30, 2007,” and inserting “December 31, 2007.”

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO LIMIT THIRD PARTY LIABILITY OF AIR CARRIERS ARISING OUT OF ACTS OF TERRORISM.

Section 44303(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking “December 31, 2006” and inserting “December 31, 2007”.

SEC. 4. FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONS.

Section 106(k)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (C);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (D) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following:

“(E) such sums as may be necessary for the 3-month period beginning October 1, 2007.”

SEC. 5. AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT.

Section 48101(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (3);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (4) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) such sums as may be necessary for the 3-month period beginning October 1, 2007.”

SEC. 6. RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DEVELOPMENT.

Section 48102(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (11)(L);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (12)(L) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following: “(13) such sums as may be necessary for the 3-month period beginning October 1, 2007.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 2265.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2265, as amended. As you know, the authorization for Federal Aviation Administration programs expired on September 30, 2007. Although the House overwhelmingly passed H.R. 2881, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007, on September 20, 2007, the Senate has yet to pass a long-term FAA authorization bill.

Instead, S. 2265, as passed by the Senate last week, extends a single provision of the expired Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act. Specifically, S. 2265 extends section 409 of Public Law 108-176, the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act, regarding the Essential Air Service program.

Rather than extend just this one provision, our amendment to S. 2265 extends each of the FAA's major programs, as well as section 409 of Vision 100. Without this legislation, the Airport Improvement Program will not be authorized after November 16.

Because the Airport Improvement Program is funded by contract authority, rather than discretionary budget authority, its funding is typically provided by an authorization act. S. 2265 provides \$918.75 million in Airport Improvement Program contract authority to fund the program for the 3-month period from October 1, 2007, until December 31, 2007. This amount, when annualized, equals the fiscal year 2007 amount for the program. This provision will ensure that airport funding continues without interruption through the end of this calendar year.

S. 2265 also authorizes the appropriation of such sums as may be necessary for Federal Aviation Administration operations, facilities and equipment, and research and development programs through the end of the year.

In addition to these program reauthorizations, S. 2265 extends the Secretary of Transportation's authority to