

entire supply of ground equipment is now deployed in the Middle East. The constant demands of combat and the treacherous terrain are wearing out equipment at up to nine times the usual rate.

America's military is overburdened, and now our Nation must seriously discuss how to best deploy our depleted forces against the dangers of our day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In response to one of the earlier 1-minute speeches, the Chair must note that Members should direct remarks in debate to the Chair and not to the President.

GULF COAST HURRICANE HOUSING RECOVERY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 254 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1227.

□ 1039

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1227) to assist in the provision of affordable housing to low-income families affected by Hurricane Katrina, with Mr. CARDOZA (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, March 20, 2007, amendment No. 53 printed in part B of House Report 110-53 by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), as modified, had been disposed of.

□ 1040

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. NEUGEBAUER

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part B of House Report 110-53.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 6 offered by Mr. NEUGEBAUER:

Strike section 306 (relating to transfer of DVP vouchers to voucher program).

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 254, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) and a Member opposed each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, this is a pretty simple and straightforward amendment. It just simply just strikes section 306 from this bill.

What we do in this legislation already is we extend many of the vouchers for the disaster voucher program. But what we are trying to do in this bill is not only just say we want to extend them, but that we want to make them permanent.

Actually, this is not the place to debate whether we need to add additional vouchers to the voucher section 8 program. One of the concerns I have about this is that the scoring on this is an additional authorization of \$735 million, nearly three-quarters of \$1 billion. We are not opposed to debating whether we need to add additional vouchers or change the formula in the future, but this is not the place to do that.

What I said yesterday and continue to say is we are using these disaster programs to push forward things that other people have been working on in other agendas and trying to do this on the backs of the people that have suffered a great disaster.

One of the things I want to go back to is the fact that we stated yesterday that it's not like this Congress has not responded to the people in Louisiana and Mississippi; \$110 billion has been authorized by this Congress for the disaster relief, and \$116.7 billion in CDBG money has been provided to give flexibility for the housing needs of the people in this area.

When we go back to the city of New Orleans itself prior to the hurricane, we had 7,000 public housing units in New Orleans, and 2,000 of those were already scheduled to be torn down, and 5,100 were online, and not all of those occupied. Now approximately 2,000 units already have been repaired, 1,200 have been returned.

Ten billion dollars has been allocated to the Road Home Program in Louisiana. Let me repeat that, \$10.5 billion authorized, \$300 million spent, a full 3 months after the hurricane.

The problem making these vouchers permanent is we are giving preference to folks that are living in communities where other people have been in line. One of the things that I think there is a misconception on is we have talked the last few days about what is going on in New Orleans and what the future is. In 2019 or thereabouts, New Orleans will celebrate its 300th anniversary. For 300 years, that community has been building to what it was pre-Katrina.

There is some misconception in the next 6 months by extending some of these programs and moving forward that all of a sudden everything is going to be back to normal in New Orleans. That is not going to be the truth.

What we need to do is begin to build the housing back, letting that go forward. I know that yesterday, the distinguished chairman said, well, the reason we have to go back and get the units back in order is so that is not keeping them from building new units. In fact, it is. The fact is, we can't tear down some of those units. That is the very land that we are talking about

going back and reusing. It doesn't make sense to me to go back and rebuild all of these units or remodel them, only to come back eventually and have to tear them down so that we can do the new planned communities.

We should go back to the basic tenets of this bill. The basic tenets of this bill was to hopefully get off high center those few glitches that, quote, the leadership in New Orleans and Louisiana say is keeping them from moving their reconstruction forward. It hasn't stopped the people in Mississippi, but for whatever reason, it has stopped the people in Louisiana and moved forward.

Mr. Chairman, we should not extend permanently these vouchers. This is not the form for that. It's not appropriate, it's not fiscally responsible for us to do that. We have extended those vouchers to meet the current needs of some of the folks. We really don't even know how much people will think about returning. But one of the things about making these vouchers permanent, I believe you will ensure that some of these people don't return because many of them have moved on to other places.

Now, we are saying we are going to make your vouchers permanent. We are going to put you in front of people that have been in those communities for a number of years and have been waiting in line to be eligible for this very assistance.

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Texas once again referred to an earlier amendment from yesterday, but trying to understand this particular amendment has nothing to do with whether you construct or destruct or replace public housing. What this says is the following: There were people who were living in the gulf area who were receiving some form of assistance under HUD programs. Some of them lived in public housing, some of them were in vouchers, some of them were living in subsidized housing for the elderly and the disabled. The places where they were living were washed away in the most literal, physical sense.

We all agree that we have not yet, in the gulf area, replaced that housing. It's true there have been slowdowns, for instance, in Road Home money in New Orleans. But in Mississippi earlier this year, the Oreck Vacuum Company, which to its credit had tried to help the people in the gulf by reopening a factory that the company had in the gulf, shut the factory down because, they explained, the shortage of housing made it impossible for them to recruit

people. There was a physical shortage of housing, and we have people who were once living in the area who have moved to other places. Some of them may still be in the area.

We know that employment in the gulf area hasn't yet returned to its prior level, and we have this chicken-and-egg problem of housing and unemployment. We have now about 12,000 people, who were affected by this amendment, who were previously receiving HUD assistance. Because of the hurricane, the form of assistance they were receiving is no longer possible. They are the ones who were on these disaster vouchers.

Now, before we brought this bill out, those people were legally going to lose those vouchers as of the end of this fiscal year, September 30, an uncontested part of the bill. I appreciate the minority's acquiescence in that. There is some agreement here between us. An uncontested part of this bill extends into November.

The amendment today says that those people who were on HUD assistance before, they have to have been eligible before and still be eligible by various income and other qualifications for HUD assistance, that if as of December 31 of this year they have not been able to find alternative housing, we will not administer what my friend from Texas called "tough love" by kicking them out.

I do not think these are appropriate candidates for tough love. These are not people who are in some situation through their own lack of character. They are people who were displaced by a great physical disaster.

Now, I will acknowledge that the minority side in our committee offered an amendment in particular or raised an issue that we thought was correct. As originally drafted, this particular language would have not only extended the vouchers for those who have been in the disaster situation, but would have continued them, adding to the stock.

Now, we did that because the gentleman from Texas correctly said you don't want to put these people ahead of other people who might be necessarily, who might have a need. So we wanted these to be additional vouchers, not to bite into the other section 8. But we incorrectly, in my judgment, drafted this originally so that even after the current recipients, the current recipients of the disaster vouchers, the victims of New Orleans, as they no longer needed the vouchers or were no longer eligible for them the vouchers would continue to be part of the overall number.

We offered an amendment, unanimous in the committee, that said, no, they will be what we call disappearing vouchers. That is, there is a fixed number of people who now have these vouchers.

As those people die, find other housing, become economically ineligible, as we hope many of them will be as they are able to return to jobs, for whatever

reason, as they no longer need the vouchers or are eligible for them, the vouchers will cease to exist.

□ 1050

So they are permanent in one sense, but not in another. They are permanent as long as this universe of 12,000 recipients of HUD help before the hurricane still need them. But as the people in that category no longer need them or are ineligible, they will disappear. So they are not permanent in that sense.

Now, again, we have acknowledged that there have been slowdowns in trying to rebuild the housing. So the question is, if we cut this off as of December 31, what will happen to those people? How many thousands of them will have no place to live?

And then, by the way, they will become competitors with others for section 8. This is a separate category of vouchers for people who were victims of disasters. Some of them live now in other parts of the country. Abolish this separate category as of December 31, and then these people will be competing with other people.

And again I want to go back to a point I made yesterday. I don't understand the resistance to reaching out to these people. They were living in their homes, and a hurricane wiped their homes out. They are not wealthy people. They are not middle-income people. They are people who were otherwise eligible for HUD programs. They were people who were complying with the terms of those programs because they hadn't been expelled from them, and their homes were destroyed.

And we had hoped that by now we would have done a better job collectively of helping them relocate. We haven't. There is plenty of blame to go around. One place that does not seem to me the blame sticks is with these people, these people who had vouchers, who had public housing residences.

And the question now is, do we say to these victims of the hurricane, we are sorry that it has taken us 18 months to get things organized? But you know what? You have only the rest of this year to find a new place to live.

There are elderly people here. There are disabled people here. There are others. They came from a place where we know employment hasn't come back. Why the insistence on treating them as people who are somehow looking for something they don't deserve? Why the refusal to say, you know, we haven't done the right thing in terms of overall. We hope we will, but as long as you are in this situation where you were displaced physically by a disaster, and as long as back in your home area there isn't sufficient replacement housing, and you know, in Mississippi and it is true, Mississippi has done better on the CDBG than Louisiana. But you just have to pick up the paper to read about the insurance fights. There hasn't been a massive amount of rebuilding in Mississippi either.

You then are telling the people who were the recipients of these vouchers as of December 31 you are on your own. Find the housing, or compete with a number of other people for limited stock.

These vouchers go only to people who had previously been on HUD assistance who were physically displaced by the hurricane, and the vouchers are only for them. And as they begin to find other housing, as they die off, as they will, as people get new jobs and aren't eligible, the vouchers will disappear.

I very much hope that this amendment is defeated.

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, just to clarify a couple of things. What I think the question is here is not the fact that this Congress has reached out. We have reached out. I think we have all acknowledged that these families and folks in this area have suffered a tremendous disaster.

The problem is, the question today, is how long is the disaster relief going to be extended to these people. I mean, when is the disaster over? And the problem I have with this bill is it says we are going to do it permanently.

Now, the gentleman from Massachusetts stated that they disappear. Well, the scoring that the CBO did on this did an 8 percent attrition rate, saying that 8 percent of these are going to begin to roll off over a 10-year period, and that is how they came up with the scoring of \$735 million. So that attrition has taken place in there.

What I would submit to you is we temporarily extended these. We may need to extend a piece or a portion of them in the future. But what we are saying with this bill is we are going to make disaster assistance permanent by making these vouchers permanent.

At this time I would like to yield to the distinguished ranking member of the Housing Subcommittee on Financial Services, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for all his hard work on this bill as well as on this amendment, which I support.

My problem with it is that right now we are doing a lot of housing law on these disasters, and what we are doing is setting precedent. And if this trend in the weather continues, I think we'll probably see a lot more. So I think we have to be very careful in how we move on this, because if it is made permanent, then the disaster voucher program will serve as a model for the future disasters, forcing Congress to act similarly time and time again.

Assisted families will continue to receive this rental subsidy for several months. This is to continue allowing time to transition to other types of housing, including home ownership. And I think that what we are doing is really making, prematurely making these DVPs permanent, so that as long

as the recipient remains eligible for assistance it eliminates other approaches.

Authorizing this, according to the Congressional Budget Office, puts the cost at about \$11,900 per voucher per year. And I really wonder, we all have the goal of really getting the people, the victims of this disaster, back where they want to be, back in a home. And I don't know that by extending the time more, we have got until December, will encourage them, give them the incentive then to get moving. I think extending it through December 31 of 2007 allows Congress and HUD to assess the appropriate long-term solutions.

What we have been talking about with all of these vouchers, we have got other ways to do this. And we put in the bill the survey, and until this survey is completed, it may be difficult to identify the need for a permanent disaster voucher program extension, as the disaster voucher program provides assistance to many of these former HANO tenants. So I think we are kind of putting the cart before the horse. We really need to know where the people are, if they are coming back, and what their future plans are. And until HUD has the opportunity to do that, which they have said they would do soon, but not soon enough in time for this bill. So I think that this is premature, making these vouchers permanent, so long as the recipient remains eligible for their assistance.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER), a member of the committee.

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Chairman, I want to first express appreciation to the ranking member and the maker of this motion for spending time down in New Orleans with the committee at Dillard University and then going over into Mississippi. I think it was very important for the people of Mississippi to see Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle coming into that devastated region, expressing concern and interested in putting forth legislation to help them out of something that has devastated their lives, yet they are not responsible for.

I have got to oppose the gentleman from Texas' amendment. Let me just say that there are good and decent people who are poor. That is about the only thing good I can say about poverty.

□ 1100

I know it personally. We are on a first-name basis. I grew up with poverty. I know it well. And so I had a clear picture of what happened after Katrina and Rita.

Only one in six New Orleanians owns an automobile. One in six. That means that this city is a city of poverty. And when you think about the individuals at the Dome begging for help, probably 95 to 98 percent of them had no automobiles.

My son was in New Orleans when the flood hit, a student at Dillard University. He had an automobile, and even with an automobile, he had difficulty getting out of New Orleans, ended up spending the night on a Wal-Mart parking lot. But he had a car, and he was able to get out.

This is a very, very poor city. We are told that the poor shall be with us always, but then there is a transition word: "unless." And the "unless" is something that I think this bill addresses. Unless men and women are willing to do what is necessary to enable people who are in poverty to escape.

One of the things that this amendment does not take into account, for example, is 202 housing. I know the program well. I served as mayor of Kansas City. We did about 10 section 202 projects during my administration.

Section 202 projects are designed to accommodate the elderly. In some instances HUD has allowed for 202 housing to be used by people who suffer from extremely difficult ailments, physical problems. So the people who live in 202 are either elderly, certified already as elderly with low income or no income, or they suffer from some malady, some physical, maybe even mental, malady. If this amendment is approved, it would mean that the people who are elderly and poor who were displaced from their 202 housing and are now living with a relative someplace or in some temporary housing, they end up being punished again because this means that there would be no opportunity for them to even return to the conditions under which they lived.

These are not people who are somehow refusing to work or people who somehow don't want to find permanent housing. This was, in fact, permanent housing. Section 202 housing is permanent housing. And if you look at the HUD statistics, you will find that people who leave 202 housing generally leave it for the funeral home. They die in 202 housing. These are the elderly, and this Congress should exercise all the care we can conjure to take care of the poor and the elderly, particularly those living in section 202 housing.

Now, my hope is that the gentleman from Texas would consider in his amendment, even though I would still oppose it for other reasons, at least eliminating 202 elderly housing.

Additionally, HUD has a program, 811 housing, for the disabled. The same thing would apply for the disabled. These are people who lost housing because of Katrina and Rita, and then they end up being told, if this amendment were to pass, that they still will not be helped even to return to the conditions under which they lived prior to the flood, even if those conditions were not at the highest living standard. The disabled are all just saying, we want to return to where we lived. And, yes, it is permanent housing. It is not temporary. It was designed by HUD

and approved by Congress as permanent housing. Sections 811 and 202 are permanent housing projects. We cannot do additional damage to the elderly and the poor.

Now, I think one of the things that we need to consider here as well is that this amendment would strike 1,200 vouchers to families who actually need them. And during our committee debate, I think the gentleman and the ranking member will remember that there was a discussion about substitute language, a compromise, if you will, using the word "sunset." And if we had used the word "sunset," and if it had been placed in the language of the bill, perhaps that would have satisfied Members on the other side who have difficulty with the term "disappearing vouchers." But that is exactly what would happen. That would be a sunset on the vouchers when they are no longer needed.

Striking 1,200 vouchers from families who need them is very, very wrong. It certainly is unintentional in terms of wreaking havoc on those families, but that is exactly what would happen if this amendment is approved. Its impact would only hurt families who need the housing assistance.

Now, the one thing I would like to leave in terms of what I hope can happen from this discussion today is that if we are unwilling or unable to continue assistance for previously, previously federally assisted individuals and families in public housing section 8, 202 or 811 projects for the disabled, we are going to do immense damage and hurt families who don't deserve to be hurt further.

If you can imagine living in a 202 housing project and realizing that you are never going to live in your dream home. There is no such thing as sitting down one day with an architect and designing your dream home. It won't happen. If you live in a 202 or an 811 HUD project, you are already in nirvana. That is as far as you are going to go. And we cannot tell those residents that they cannot return to those living conditions.

The point I am trying to make, and perhaps poorly, is that we are hurting people who would have no other way of living. And if you are opposed to permanent housing, you are opposed to the 202 program not only in New Orleans, but all around this country. In every major city in the country there is at least one, and perhaps several, 202 project, and in every community there is at least one 811 project. And if it is wrong in New Orleans, it is wrong anywhere and everywhere.

My hope, to the gentleman who has proposed the amendment, is that you withdraw the amendment and express appreciation for the debate, acknowledge that you were trying desperately to make sure that we don't overspend any taxpayer money that we don't have to expend. And I will lead a delegation from this side to congratulate the maker of this amendment for a valiant effort to do the right thing that is

not quite as right as, in his heart, he would like for it to be.

□ 1110

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri for his eloquent comments about the poor and the elderly. First of all, I want to make a couple of points. One, I understand when he speaks about that, he shared his family's story with me, it is a great story. It is an American success story, and I know that he knows a lot about public housing.

One of the things I want to say about my amendment, my amendment does not show a lack of support for 202 housing or any other housing. I believe in and have supported housing proposals that this Congress has put forward. We have a number of wonderful, affordable housing programs that are administered through HUD, and we need to continue those. In fact, we are trying to get those programs off high center down in New Orleans in the hurricane area, because that is, long term, a better housing solution for many of the victims of the hurricane.

The other thing that I think needs to be clarified, and I know the gentleman didn't intend to misrepresent this, this bill does not take away any benefits from any poor or elderly people. This bill extends that. My amendment does not take that away. What my amendment says is it is probably not good policy just to permanently extend this disaster program.

What we do in the bill is already extend this program to many of our senior citizens. In fact, prior to the hurricane, there were 8,500 people on section 8 vouchers. Today there are about 12,000 people using these emergency vouchers.

So what we are really trying to do with this bill, if we go back again, sometimes we get off track, what is the purpose of this bill? The purpose of this bill is to get permanent housing back in New Orleans and Mississippi for all income groups; poor, elderly, the families that were residing there. We have allocated a substantial amount of resources to do this. But what we are saying with this amendment is we should not make disaster assistance permanent. We were extending it in this bill, and that makes sense, because, unfortunately, the folks in New Orleans are way behind schedule. They need to get off high center and get back on schedule.

This amendment does not, and people listening to this debate today need to be clear, this amendment does not take away vouchers from anybody. What it doesn't do is just write a continuing blank check.

In many of the cities and places where people that were displaced from this disaster are living, there are housing units available to them. It may be that they decide to make a permanent

decision to reside in those communities that they have gone to. Many of them have gone back to cities closer to maybe their children or their families. We need to give them the opportunity. But what we don't need to do is create a whole new voucher program with this disaster.

As the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Housing said, we are setting precedent every time we get up with one of these disasters and we try to outdo the last disaster. I think the American people have said, why don't you all come up with a plan and stick with it? We came up with a plan. We executed that plan. We sent the resources down to those areas. From a Federal perspective, I don't know how much more money we can throw at that initiative to get it off high center.

One of the things we need to be clear on about this amendment, it doesn't take anything away from elderly people, it doesn't take anything away from poor people, it doesn't make a statement that we shouldn't have a permanent housing solution. A permanent housing solution is a better solution. But when you extend and make permanent some of these other side programs, you keep taking away resources that could go to the permanent housing.

As I made the statement yesterday when we talked about going back and building maybe some housing for elderly and other folks down there, we don't need to go back and do it where they were before, because I have seen those units, and I know why a lot of people haven't gone back, because the thought of having to go back to those units, and I don't care how much money you spend on them, it wasn't a good situation before, it won't be a good situation today.

You need to support this amendment because it is fiscally responsible. It meets the needs of the people. But it does say before we begin to create a whole new level of voucher programs, we need to have that debate in another forum, not on the backs of the resources needed for the people to rebuild after Katrina.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to transfer control of the time from the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) to myself.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield to myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I have worked with Mr. NEUGEBAUER, and he has been exceptionally cooperative, understanding the plight of the poor and those people who have been displaced who were victims of Katrina and Rita, and I am convinced, having listened to this discussion and this debate, that there is simply a misunderstanding, because I don't think that he intends for those

people who were already assisted by HUD, those people, for example, who were living in section 8 housing, they were renting from landlords and the building was destroyed, to somehow not be permanently assisted and get back on their section 8.

I don't think that he means that those people who were in public housing units who were assisted by HUD, if their unit does not get repaired, I don't think he means that they should not have a section 8. I don't think he means that for the disabled. I don't think he means that for the homeless.

So I am going to chalk this up to a misunderstanding and miscommunication, and, as we continue this debate, I hope that we are able to help my colleague on the opposite side of the aisle understand what he is proposing.

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the distinguished ranking member of the full committee.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, let me start by saying that the minority is not opposed to a debate on section 8 vouchers for evacuees. We understand, and we have said on this floor that they have left New Orleans, they are in other cities, and there is a temporary need. We don't know how long that temporary need is. There is a temporary need for housing. Some of them will drop off in eligibility, and we are hearing that may be 8 percent. But this is a 10-year permanent program.

One of my concerns is they won't want to return to New Orleans with this section 302 housing that we are creating, a more or less permanent program where they can stay in Houston or they can move from Houston to Dallas.

Now, yesterday we talked about what I consider is a rush to go back and take some of these dilapidated units, units that weren't habitable even before the hurricane, and fix them up. We say we need to do that because we needed to get everybody back to New Orleans as soon as we could.

What we said yesterday, we talked about East Lake in Atlanta, where they took a large public housing project which was, as I said, 56th out of 56. It was the most dangerous precinct in the city of Atlanta. Seventy percent of the youth in some of these public housing projects ended up in the State penitentiary. There was an article in the New York Times about that in New York. We wanted to replace that with mixed-income units. That is going to take time. For that to happen, we will have to have some people stay in other cities.

But we don't think that we can determine right now what we need 10 years from now and commit to spending \$735 million. At the same time, if we are

going to do that, why do we go back and replace all these units? These people are either going to come back, or they are not. They are not going to do both. But it seems as if we are creating public housing for everyone in New Orleans that has a potential of coming back, and, at the same time, we are creating a program over here where everybody can stay away from New Orleans.

The end result is, I think, a lack of planning. I think we ought to, instead of replacing the failed public housing in New Orleans that we all agree was a disaster, we ought to replace it with something where people have a safer home, a better community, more quality of life. While we do that, we determine how long that is going to take and fashion this program around what we think is a better day for people in New Orleans, a better public housing system there.

Instead, I think we are creating two stand-alone programs, both designed for the same group of evacuees. It simply is going to create a disincentive to come back. At the same time, we are creating housing in New Orleans that is really not suitable for anyone, replacing units that need to be torn down and replaced with better units.

As I have said, this is the greatest natural catastrophe this Nation has faced. That, if anything, ought to lead us to do this right, and not just throw money at it, but to spend it wisely.

□ 1120

This amendment by Mr. NEUGEBAUER is a way to do that. Section 302 is a duplication of effort, and I think it is ill conceived.

I will close with this: Yesterday, if I heard it once, I heard it a hundred times. And we agree, we want people to come back to New Orleans as long as there is suitable housing there and to do so as soon as possible. This section 302, which the gentleman from Texas would strike, is a disincentive to New Orleans recovering as soon as possible.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Chairman, I think our friends on the other side of the aisle have framed this in a way that I think is legitimate, which is, how long will this relief be extended. We talked about this in committee. And my feeling is the relief has got to be extended until we actually get on the job.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER mentioned the fact that there has been a substantial amount of money appropriated and obligated to repairing and reconstructing these homes in New Orleans, but a very small portion of it has yet to be extended.

We had a debate over a couple of sections; one, that vouchers, it has been 18 months or 19 months now, shouldn't be available for people outside of New Orleans; and now we are saying those same vouchers shouldn't be available

for them in New Orleans. The problem that we have here, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that the job hasn't been done. There have been mistakes, missteps, miscommunication. Eighteen months seems like a long time, but very little has been done to reconstruct or renovate or rebuild the homes for so many people that were displaced. That is the bottom line here.

The bottom line is, coming from Colorado, coming from my background, my faith, we want to help people who are poor, we want to help them if they have been displaced by a huge natural disaster. They haven't been able to return because, through no fault of their own, things haven't been rebuilt or reconstructed. I can't see why we would want to strike section 306 because we haven't gotten the job done. Not through any fault of the people who have been dispersed throughout the country, but because of some problem either between the administration and the State of Louisiana or whatever. That is what has got to be straightened out here. We can't cut out this section and look ourselves in the mirror thinking that we have done the job.

The people that were displaced are entitled to return to New Orleans, they are entitled to return to these homes, and that is what this bill is about. That is why we brought this bill. You know, in a perfect world, everything should have been done by now, but it has not been finished, not anywhere near it. So we have got to step forward again.

We aren't trying to outdo ourselves. We are trying to finish what all of you started 18 months ago; but for whatever reason, we can blame the administration, we can blame the State, we can blame a lot of things, but it hasn't been finished. Our job is to finish the job and allow people to return to their homes in New Orleans as quickly as possible and not to cut this section 306.

So I am going to urge the House to defeat this amendment. I understand Mr. NEUGEBAUER's desire to be fiscally responsible, I couldn't agree with him more. But the fact of the matter is the money is out there, things haven't been finished, and these vouchers are important to keep for the people.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate the gentleman from Colorado's remarks. I think what you hear from both of us is frustration that things haven't moved along faster.

What I would point out to the gentleman and to the folks on the other side of the aisle is the point that we have been making that we believe that this keeps people in limbo, causes them not to begin to make some kind of a permanent housing decision. I use the example that in New Orleans today there are about 2,000 units of public housing that are available today, but they have about 400 or 500 vacancies that people are not applying for.

Secondly, they have had to go back on a number of occasions because those

units have been vacant so long, they had to go back and make them ready again. In that climate, when a unit sits vacant for a short period of time or an extended period of time, the unit gets stale and they have to go back and do some mold mitigation and some other things because there is not someone occupying it.

The point here is we have extended the benefits. The benefits are in this bill for all of the people that have been talked about here this morning. But what we are saying is two things: One, we are trying to permanently increase the amount of section 8 vouchers available in a bill that is about disaster. Secondly, we are talking about extending things where people do not have to come to some kind of a decision about what they want to do.

We want them to go back to New Orleans. I think the people of New Orleans want the people to come back, they want to have the community and the sense of community that they had prior to the storm. But I will tell you that I think we are being the enemy here by not bringing some deadlines and definition to this disaster program. At some point in time the disaster piece is over and the recovery piece has to begin.

We have made an allowance for the transition to do that, but when you make something permanent, even when you say, well, it disappears, what we know about Federal programs is they don't have a history of disappearing. Once we put them on the books, they generally stay with us.

We have the ability down the road, this Congress will, if in fact there needs to be another extension, and in fact the administration has some flexibility. But when you put the word "permanent" on anything, it is permanent.

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

Ms. WATERS. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO).

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I don't get it. I am just reading section 306 as being stricken now, and it says, this is a direct quote, blah, blah, blah, "for the period that such household is eligible for such voucher assistance." Once the household is no longer eligible, the voucher disappears. What is permanent about that? Subsection 3 says, "Such vouchers shall not be taken into consideration for purposes of determining any future allocation of amounts to such tenant-based rental assistance for any public housing agency." What is permanent about that?

Now I don't know, if you just don't like the section 8 program, I respect that. That is a respectful and honest difference of opinion on how to help people have a home, have a roof above their head. But let's just try to get rid of the entire section 8 program. Let's not just pick on the people that got hurt the most in this entire country and have been shafted from the day of the hurricane until now.

I haven't looked at the numbers, but your own numbers a few minutes ago where there were 8,000 before the hurricane and now there are 12,000, maybe I missed something. That is not as big an increase as I would have suspected would happen if there was such a big sham going on.

And by the way, if it is all about a sham, you have got to give these people in New Orleans credit. They had a house, they were poor, they qualified for a Federal program that has been around for years, and they somehow mysteriously worked it so that their houses would be destroyed so they could stay on this program. Their houses and their jobs, by the way; that is why you have 12,000 people eligible because they have no jobs. The economy hasn't come back. When they get their jobs back and the economy comes back, they will no longer be eligible and they will be off the rolls and we will be back to 8,000. This is not a permanent program.

Again, if you just don't like the section 8 program, I respect that. We will have a legitimate difference of opinion on that; that's above the board. I understand that that is a philosophical view that I don't share, but I respect it. But you can't just go and take the people in this country that got hurt the worst, for no cause of their own, and somehow think they are trying to scam the system because they happen to live in the path of the worst hurricane this country has seen in my lifetime.

You can't pretend that this is a permanent program when the language itself says it is temporary. As long as these people are eligible, they would have a section 8 certificate. If they get their jobs back and the economy comes back and they make enough money to no longer be eligible, they will be off the rolls, we will be back to the 8,000. And then maybe we will have the discussion we should be having, which I would disagree with then, but it is an honest one; we just get rid of the section 8 program altogether and that is the end of it.

In the meantime, quit trying to pick on the people that got hurt the most in this country, no cause of their own, no fault of their own. I can't imagine anybody down there, any little old lady is sitting there trying to figure out how to scam the system so they can rebuild the house that shouldn't be rebuilt, so they don't have a job. If that is happening, find me the three people that are doing that, and I will agree with you and we will get them off the rolls.

□ 1130

Other than that, let's get on with fixing New Orleans so we can get back on track for this country and for this world.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate the gentleman from Massachusetts' point. One, I don't see anywhere in here where there is any

expression on my part or have I made the point that I am against section 8 vouchers. What I am for, and as the gentleman mentioned, if we have an opportunity and a place and a forum to debate the section 8 program, many of us believe that there can be some things done to the section 8 program to actually make it a more effective program.

The other piece of the deal is that we are not taking away any section 8 vouchers with my amendment. In fact, as I mentioned a while ago, there were 8,500 section 8 vouchers in New Orleans prior to the storm. Anybody that is living in Houston or Oklahoma, anywhere else right now, that wants to come back to New Orleans, there is a section 8 voucher, if they qualify, available for them today.

I don't understand this. I think the other side is trying to somehow argue against my amendment because they know what making something permanent means. It means permanent. They want to try to say that we are somehow depriving people of the ability to have vouchers. If people qualify for vouchers in Houston, they can qualify for them in Houston. If they want to come back to New Orleans, they can come back to New Orleans. There are vouchers available for them there. We made sure, and I thought it was the right policy, and the gentlewoman from California made this point, I believe, in the hearing, that we need to make sure that we keep New Orleans' hold on the programs that they had available. I believe this bill takes steps to do this.

Really what we are talking about, we need to get back to what this amendment does. It just says, you know what, it doesn't make sense in this bill to make this disaster relief permanent when it goes to section 8 vouchers. It doesn't take vouchers away from anybody. It doesn't say anything about 202 housing. It doesn't say anything about rebuilding the affordable housing projects in New Orleans. It just says it is not appropriate policy to start using disaster bills to make other programs permanent.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Orleans (Mr. JEFFERSON).

Mr. JEFFERSON. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

I am having a great deal of trouble connecting the debate here to the reality that people are facing back home. Starting out, you have to know, and just look back to what the conditions were in New Orleans before the storm. Before the storm there wasn't enough affordable housing there even then. There were 18,000 people on a waiting list, 10,000 or so for public housing, 8,000 or so for section 8 vouchers. There were people on waiting lists for 202 housing. All sorts of needs were there. The folks who were down and out then are worse off now. And the folks who

were doing a little bit better then are worse off than they were. And so the need has expanded for more assistance there rather than less.

With respect to the issue of permanency, which seems to be the gravamen of the gentleman's objection here, we are talking about people who were eligible for section 8 or 202 or whatever the programs might have been before the storm, who were displaced to other places, and who will remain eligible there in these new places. We passed laws early on after the storm to make sure that people were eligible who otherwise might have lost their eligibility because of the fact they were just physically in another place. We took care of that.

Now, none of us here would have anticipated it would have taken so long to get people back in their places, to get folks back to New Orleans, to get this whole thing fixed. But it has. For whatever reason, it has. We can cast blame here or there, but whatever the reason is, people have not been able to come back home.

I can tell you this much. There aren't many people I have met, and I have been all over the place, in Memphis and in San Antonio and in Houston and in Atlanta, just above in Baton Rouge and up the river. There aren't many people out there who do not want to make their way back home. They are trying desperately to get home. Many of them are close in, doubled up and tripled up in houses, trying to find a way back home. They do not want to be outside of New Orleans. They do not want to be away. We don't need to worry about creating a disincentive for people who return. They want to return home right now, already. Believe me, at the bottom of it all, people want to come back home.

Our objective here is to say as long as they are displaced through no fault of their own, as long as programs aren't working to get them back home right now, we have got to make sure that they have a chance to live decently and in some order outside of the city. That is really all that is going on here. You need to understand that the need remains, and it is even greater than it was before the storm for the programs we are talking about here.

As to this notion of setting a deadline, we have tried this before in almost every program. All we do is just kind of make people's lives unsettled. We say to people who are in assisted housing in someplace in Houston that by deadline X, you must be out of your place. This is, simply put, to put pressure on people to hope they'll find a way to find a house somewhere. They can't, and so the deadline gets moved anyhow. If we set a deadline here, it can only be arbitrary. We don't know that by December such and such there won't be a need for these programs. We don't know that. What this legislation does is take the more reasonable view that so long as they need the program, then they remain eligible. When they

don't need it, then the eligibility disappears, and the people are no longer on the program.

That is the only sensible way to deal with this, because no one of us knows, no one of us here can say today when this disaster will be at its end, when recovery will be done. We need to see this through and be logical about it.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, can I inquire as to the time both sides have left here?

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Texas has 6 minutes remaining. The gentlelady from California has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for having this amendment. I have called this Congress the smoke-and-mirrors Congress because of the way the majority party has presented their case to the public, and it has been a process of smoke and mirrors. This seems to be a fuzzy math program.

If you have 7,000 section 8 homes in New Orleans, and it's funny, we haven't heard from the people in Mississippi or Florida or some of the other places. This is specifically for the New Orleans housing. Seven thousand section 8 homes. Only 5,000 of them were occupied before the hurricane, and now we are wanting to put all 7,000 back. Yet in New Orleans today, there are 500 that is uninhabited that they can't get people to come back to. So somewhere there is a need to help people that don't seem to be taking that first step to helping themselves.

We have people from New Orleans in Atlanta and in a lot of places in Georgia. If they want to go back to New Orleans, I am sure that we want them to be back in their hometown, and that probably the Federal Government would give them some assistance to get back to New Orleans and to know that there are 500 vacant section 8 houses for them to go to.

I think the other interesting thing is that if you were in a section 8 house prior to Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Katrina destroyed your home that you were living in under the section 8 program, then you would now be entitled to section 8 for the rest of your life. Maybe for the gentleman from Texas that we would need to say that anybody, and I feel sorry for these people, but anybody that has an unfortunate situation happen to them in their life, that they could come to the government and just give us a list of things that they would need for the rest of their life.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for offering this amendment, and I hope that this House will see fit to support it.

□ 1140

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on behalf of the people of New Orleans and of the gulf coast who are

having such a difficult time, who have not really gotten all of the assistance that I think we could have given them from the very beginning.

I think when the gentleman spoke, he said the people did not seem to be taking the first step to help themselves. That is an insult. I reject it. I speak on their behalf. We were there, and we know how hard they have been working, and they deserve to be seen in a better light than the gentleman just described them.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Well, I just want to reiterate what this bill does and what it does not. We have heard a lot of things about what people think it does, but I think we need to go back and review what the bill does. Reviewing what the bill does, it strictly strikes section 306. What the bill doesn't do is it doesn't take away benefits to elderly and benefits to the poor. In fact, we have a number of people who are on these emergency vouchers who actually don't qualify for section 8.

It doesn't say to people that we don't care. But what it does say is that this is not the appropriate form. As the gentleman from Louisiana stated, there is a waiting list. For all kinds of housing in many cities all across the country today, there are waiting lists for section 8 vouchers and there are waiting lists for housing for the elderly. All across this country there are those opportunities.

Our job here is not to fix preexisting conditions. Our job here is to help with disaster relief, bringing that community back to some semblance of what it was prior to the hurricane and not to try to fix problems that were existing in that community before.

There are opportunities within this relief to fix some of the issues that were going on. We had housing projects that were massive, that had a huge accumulation of poor people and a lot of crime and a lot of things going on in those that we don't find acceptable in our country.

With this disaster recovery money we have appropriated, we have an opportunity to go back and make those communities better. But we should not be trying to fix preexisting conditions with this legislation. And by making these vouchers permanent, we are trying to say we had a problem before and we want to fix that.

What we want to do, and I think what I heard from the testimony from the mayor and from the Governor and from the community leaders down there, we are trying to rebuild our community.

But when you make these disaster vouchers permanent, people can stay in Houston and they can stay other places, and they don't have to come back to this community. As we stated, there are housing units available here. There are vouchers available here. To the point we can, we need to focus our

money and our resources on bringing people back and giving them the ability to come back.

I urge Members to support a fiscally responsible bill that is compassionate in that it doesn't take away anything, but it just says this is not the appropriate forum to be adding vouchers to the section 8 program. It is not appropriate to use a disaster bill to have the dialogue about whether we should increase the amount of section 8 vouchers.

I know that the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Financial Services is going to have a hearing on that, and I welcome that discussion as we talk about it, and it shouldn't be just about section 8. When we sit down and talk about housing for our poor and our elderly, we ought to talk about a comprehensive look at it. Is section 8 the best way to do that, or are more permanent housing projects better?

But that is not the debate here on this bill, nor should we be trying to have that debate and to make that policy within this bill.

I urge Members to vote for my amendment.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Texas has given us a good example of the meaning of true conservatism.

He had a speech written on this amendment when the bill was first introduced. We have amended the section he is talking about, but he still likes that speech so much he won't get rid of it. He keeps talking about permanent section 8s. They were permanent when the bill was introduced, I agree. When the bill was introduced, they were not just disaster vouchers for the people who were displaced from their homes by a flood in New Orleans, but even after those people no longer used the vouchers, they would remain on the books. He objected to that and we agreed to that part of his objection.

We adopted an amendment that says they disappear when the people disappear. So let me put it this way: These vouchers are permanent only if 12,000 refugees from the New Orleans hurricane are permanent human beings. If they live forever, so does the voucher program. But I do not think that every recipient of elderly housing is going to be permanently with us. I will lament their passing, they are undoubtedly decent people, but they are not permanent. And so the gentleman's politics and theology are both incorrect in this case. They are by no means permanent.

He said anybody who had a voucher in New Orleans can go back and get it, but they were people who lived in public housing. They can't have a voucher. Public housing was physically destroyed. There were people who lived in

202 housing for the elderly, and housing for the disabled; that housing has been destroyed.

What we are doing here is providing a replacement not just for the vouchers in New Orleans but for physical housing that was destroyed in New Orleans.

Finally, the gentleman said they can go to Houston if they are eligible in Houston; but previously he said we don't want them competing. So either they compete with the people of Houston, who have already been very decent, or they get nothing. I hope the amendment is defeated.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in part B of House Report 110-53.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 7 offered by Mr. PRICE of Georgia:

Strike section 103 (relating to elimination of prohibition of use for match requirement).

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 254, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, as I begin, I do want to set the record straight a little bit. I think it is important for us to appreciate and for America to appreciate that the comments by Members on the other side, who have stated over and over that there seems to be a resistance by Members on our side of the aisle to helping individuals out after Katrina, simply is not borne out by either the facts or history, and it is not an appropriate reflection of history.

The heart of the American people is immense, and we all poured out our hearts and we helped immensely when Katrina occurred. We opened our homes and our communities. In my district in the north side of Atlanta, we opened up shelters and provided great assistance, as I know men and women and boys and girls did all across this Nation. The heart of America is huge.

I offer my amendment today in an effort to try to prevent further waste and

fraud and abuse of Federal spending on Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts in Louisiana.

Mr. Chairman, as a condition of Federal assistance, Federal grants oftentimes require State and local governments to match Federal grants or to provide a portion of matching funds with State or local spending contributions, oftentimes in the range of 10 percent. This is in order to encourage the efficient administration of the assisted activities giving local recipients an incentive for good management.

Why do we do this? Mr. Chairman, I would suggest it is analogous to a copay when you go to your doctor. As a former physician, I am familiar with those, and most Americans are familiar with those. When you go to your doctor, you have a bit of a copay. And what that does is provide for you an opportunity to encourage appropriate and proper attention and oversight. It actually increases the responsibility of individuals and it increases the financial soundness of the entire system. This amendment would provide that same type of responsibility.

□ 1150

Striking section 103 would prevent the use of Federal CDBG funds, these are Federal funds, these are hard-earned taxpayer dollars, for the local match requirements and maintain much-needed local incentives to maximize Federal assistance.

I think it is also important for Americans to appreciate that Congress has already promised over \$100 billion, that is with a "B," since Katrina and Rita have occurred. To put that in some context, the Louisiana State budget prior to Katrina was \$16 billion.

Although we have held over 11 hearings and four briefings and questioned over 137 witnesses, what is needed is increased oversight of that Federal assistance. The underlying bill weakens that ability to provide that oversight. Why, I would ask, would we want to weaken that ability?

In fact, a report by Representatives WAXMAN and CARDOZA and OBEY and TANNER and HOLMES-NORTON and TIERNEY by the Democratic staff on the Committee on Government Reform in August of 2006 itself identified 19 contracts that were offered or that were given during Katrina collectively worth over \$8.75 billion that they themselves say have been plagued by waste and fraud and abuse, citing wasteful spending, lack of competition, mismanagement, et cetera.

Examples from a GAO audit provided to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in testimony in December of last year stated just as an example nearly \$17 million in potentially improper and/or fraudulent rental assistance payments to individuals, nearly \$20 million in potentially improper or fraudulent payments went to individuals who are registered for both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, using the same property. Mil-

lions of dollars of improper and potentially fraudulent payments went to nonqualified aliens, including foreign students and temporary workers.

Why is it, Mr. Chairman, that we would want to lower the threshold of due diligence that should be applied to spending Federal assistance when waste, fraud and abuse has already been so well documented?

It is obvious to everyone that better oversight of Federal spending is needed. This amendment would assist in providing that oversight and making certain that local and State individuals would have a greater responsibility, a greater incentive to make certain that the programs and the grants that they receive, those moneys are spent in a responsible way.

It is an effort to be better stewards of the American taxpayers' money, and I would urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIRMAN. For what purpose does the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) rise? Does the gentlewoman wish to claim the time of the opposition?

Ms. WATERS. I do.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman from California is recognized.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I am so overwhelmed with the gentleman's statement that would deny to the people of New Orleans basic assistance that would allow them to use their Community Development Block Grant money as match, no new money, but simply the money that has already been allocated to them to be used as a match to FEMA money in order to help the area move forward with reconstruction, redevelopment and getting people's lives together.

I do not think that most people in America would believe that there was something wrong with giving this basic kind of assistance. Here we have cities where the city halls have been destroyed, water systems have been destroyed, schools, hospitals, roads, sewer systems, police departments, and we would then deny them the opportunity to use money that has already been granted as matching money so they could make use of the FEMA money that they are eligible for? I cannot believe that the gentleman would want to do that.

I am adamantly opposed to this amendment. It is one of the most mean-spirited amendments that I have heard that has been attempted to be attached to the bill that I have introduced. I would ask my colleagues to reject it out of hand. It does not make good sense. We do not gain anything from it.

We have not heard anybody come to this floor from the opposite side of the aisle, and certainly this gentleman, talk about fraud and abuse by Halliburton or any of those companies that are known to be ripping off the government, and here we have a Member of

this floor who would come to the floor and a Member of this Congress who would come to the floor and suggest to us that they may misuse it, they may abuse it. I do not think we want to entertain that. I do not think we want to be a part of denying basic help to people who need it so desperately.

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments. However, the hyperbole and the emotion brought with it is curious, again in light of the remarkable assistance that the American people have provided out of their own generosity privately and the generosity that this Congress has provided to the tune of greater than \$100 billion of assistance to individuals who have suffered from the greatest devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

The purpose of this amendment is an attempt to move in albeit a small direction, but a small direction of fiscal responsibility. We hear comments by the Members on the other side all the time about how they want to bring new fiscal responsibility to Congress. Well, Mr. Chairman, in fact, what we have had is a step in the opposite direction ever since they have taken charge.

So I would hope that Members would appreciate that this bill, again, is a small step in the direction of financial and fiscal responsibility. It does not preclude the use of previous moneys prior to this bill. If \$110 billion is not enough then to provide for allowing individuals to have some local assistance use, I am not certain how much will be.

So, Mr. Chairman, I again state that this is a small step for fiscal responsibility and encourage my colleagues to adopt this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT).

Mr. WATT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia for the way he has framed this issue as a fiscal responsibility issue; although I think he frames it incorrectly in this case.

There really is no precedent in disaster situations if you go back throughout all the disaster situations for even requiring a local 10 percent match, and I think in another bill there will be language that would actually waive the 10 percent local match.

This component of it disallows the use of Federal money that has been granted to the local communities to provide that 10 percent match. I think the issue is going to go away in another context anyway, but it is counterintuitive to say to local communities whose complete tax base has been destroyed that they should somehow provide a 10 percent match for Federal funds that are given, and historically in disaster situations, there really has never been a 10 percent match at all because we have recog-

nized that the distress situation that is created by a disaster makes it highly unlikely, improbable, impossible in many circumstances, that the 10 percent match would be able to be met by the local community.

You take that and multiply it times five, because this is five times the worst natural disaster that our country has ever had. So we should reject this five times, not just once.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I reserve my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON).

□ 1200

Mr. MELANCON. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Chairman, first let me talk about the fraud. The fraud was perpetrated by people throughout this country in Florida, in California, in Colorado, that used addresses in Louisiana. The money that was spent was spent by the Federal agencies, and not misspent by the State of Louisiana.

I am speaking today to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the Gulf Coast Recovery Act and against the Price amendment, which would keep in place a major roadblock to Louisiana's recovery from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Rebuilding in the wake of these two hurricanes is the biggest challenge people on the gulf coast and, for that matter, in this country, have ever faced.

Katrina was the worst natural disaster ever in the United States history. Rita, which has been dubbed the forgotten storm, was the third worst catastrophic event in this country. Local governments are valiantly moving forward to try and rebuild, but without the ability to have the tax base that they need just to do day-to-day operations. If you have lived in a gulf coast community, you know the communities come back under normal circumstances. That is not happening.

This was devastating, totally devastating. Bureaucratic red tape is holding us back. Our local tax base in south Louisiana is gone. Local governments have no way of coming up with money for the 10 percent match. For some parishes, the cost of local match for projects is many millions of dollars and could go as high as \$1 billion across the devastated area. Ninety thousand miles, square miles, of devastation was caused by these two storms the size of Great Britain. We are sitting here and worrying about a 10 percent match that was harmful to these small communities and the City of New Orleans but has devastated this entire area.

One thing that I need to point out: The President has the authority to waive the local match requirements with the stroke of his pen. In fact, this authority has been exercised 32 times since 1985 for other major disasters.

In 1992, George H.W. Bush waived the requirement when the per capita recovery cost of Hurricane Andrew reached

\$139 per person. It was also waived for New York City following the attacks of September 11, \$390 a person.

But despite a \$6,700 per capita recovery cost following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the administration has refused to waive the local match, despite repeated requests. How is this fair to Louisiana? I am a fiscal conservative, but this policy is ridiculous. It is dooming the recovery to failure, and it's time we correct it.

I emphatically urge you to defeat the Price amendment, and pass the Gulf Coast Recovery Act, which will help thousands of people return home and begin rebuilding their lives.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. May I inquire of the Chair, do I have the right to close?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady has the right to close.

Ms. WATERS. I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) for 2 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR. First let me tell the gentleman from Georgia I appreciate him trying to save some money. I think his efforts, though, are a year late. If you want to look for Katrina fraud, look for Katrina fraud that was perpetrated by the Bush administration.

In south Mississippi we had 40,000 people at one point living in FEMA trailers. We are grateful for every one of them, but those trailers were delivered by a friend of the President, Riley Bechtel, a major contributor to the Bush administration. He got \$16,000 to haul a trailer the last 70 miles from Purvis, Mississippi down to the gulf coast, hook it up to a garden hose, hook it up to a sewer tap and plug it in; \$16,000.

So the gentleman never came to the floor once last year to talk about that fraud. But now little towns like Waveland, Bay Saint Louis, Pas Christian, that have no tax base because their stores were destroyed in the storm, a county like Hancock County where 90 percent of the residents lost everything, or at least substantial damage to their home, he wants to punish Bay Saint Louis, he wants to punish Waveland, he wants to punish Pas Christian.

Mr. PRICE. I wish you would have the decency, if you are going to do that to the people of south Mississippi, that maybe you ought to come visit south Mississippi before you hold them to a standard that you would never hold your own people to and that you failed to hold the Bush administration to.

With that, I yield back my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIRMAN

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Chair would ask Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I would inquire as to whether or not those words are eligible to be taken down.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Chair cannot render an advisory opinion on that point.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I demand that his words be taken down.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Would the gentleman specify the words?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. The words accusing this Member of action unbecoming of the House as it relates to having Members of my district not be held to the same account.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Members will suspend, and the Clerk will report the words.

□ 1232

The Acting CHAIRMAN (Mr. HOLDEN). The Clerk will report the words.

The Clerk read as follows:

“Mr. PRICE, I wish you would have the decency, if you are going to do that to the people of south Mississippi, that maybe you ought to come visit south Mississippi before you hold them to a standard that you would never hold your own people to and that you failed to hold the Bush administration to. With that, I yield back my time.”

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR) having assumed the chair, Mr. HOLDEN, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1227) to assist in the provision of affordable housing to low-income families affected by Hurricane Katrina, when certain words used in debate were objected to and, on request, were taken down and read at the Clerk's desk, and he herewith reported the same to the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union reports that during consideration of H.R. 1227 certain words used in debate were objected to and, on request, were taken down and read at the Clerk's desk and now reports the words objected to to the House. The Clerk will report the words objected to in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

The Clerk read as follows:

“Mr. PRICE, I wish you would have the decency, if you are going to do that to the people of south Mississippi, that maybe you ought to come visit south Mississippi before you hold them to a standard that you would never hold your own people to and that you failed to hold the Bush administration to. With that, I yield back my time.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair holds that remarks in debate that question the decency of another Member improperly descend to personality. The words are not in order.

Without objection, the words are stricken from the RECORD.

There was no objection.

Without objection, the gentleman from Mississippi may proceed in order on this day.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, is it in order to move that the gentleman from Mississippi's right to address the House be restored?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That motion may be offered.

MOTION TO PERMIT TO PROCEED IN ORDER ON THIS DAY

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I move that the rights of the gentleman from Mississippi to speak during the remainder of the day be restored.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the gentleman from Mississippi be permitted to proceed in order.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 265, nays 160, answered “present” 0, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 167]

YEAS—265

Abercrombie	Clyburn	Gonzalez
Ackerman	Cohen	Gordon
Aderholt	Conyers	Green, Al
Allen	Cooper	Green, Gene
Altman	Costa	Grijalva
Andrews	Costello	Gutierrez
Arcuri	Courtney	Hall (NY)
Baca	Cramer	Hare
Baird	Crowley	Harman
Baldwin	Cuellar	Hastings (FL)
Barrow	Cummings	Herseth
Bartlett (MD)	Davis (AL)	Higgins
Bean	Davis (CA)	Hill
Becerra	Davis (IL)	Hinche
Berkley	Davis, Lincoln	Hinojosa
Berman	DeFazio	Hirono
Berry	DeGette	Hobson
Bilbray	Delahunt	Hodes
Bishop (GA)	DeLauro	Holden
Bishop (NY)	Dent	Holt
Blumenauer	Dicks	Honda
Bonner	Dingell	Hooley
Boren	Doggett	Hoyer
Boswell	Donnelly	Hunter
Boucher	Doyle	Inslee
Boyd (FL)	Edwards	Israel
Boyd (KS)	Ehlers	Jackson (IL)
Brady (PA)	Ellison	Jackson-Lee
Braley (IA)	Ellsworth	(TX)
Brown, Corrine	Emanuel	Jefferson
Butterfield	Emerson	Johnson (GA)
Capito	Engel	Johnson (IL)
Capps	Eshoo	Johnson, Sam
Capuano	Ethridge	Jones (NC)
Cardoza	Farr	Jones (OH)
Carnahan	Finer	Kagen
Carney	Flake	Kaptur
Carson	Frank (MA)	Kennedy
Castor	Franks (AZ)	Kildee
Chandler	Gerlach	Kilpatrick
Clarke	Giffords	Kind
Clay	Gilchrest	Klein (FL)
Cleaver	Gillibrand	Kucinich

Lampson	Nadler	Shea-Porter
Langevin	Napolitano	Sherman
Lantos	Neal (MA)	Shuler
Larsen (WA)	Oberstar	Sires
Larson (CT)	Obey	Skelton
Lee	Oliver	Slaughter
Levin	Ortiz	Smith (NJ)
Lewis (GA)	Pallone	Smith (WA)
Lipinski	Pascarell	Snyder
LoBiondo	Pastor	Solis
Loebuck	Payne	Space
Lofgren, Zoe	Perlmuter	Spratt
Lowey	Peterson (MN)	Stark
Lungren, Daniel E.	Pickering	Stupak
Lynch	Platts	Sutton
Mahoney (FL)	Pomeroy	Tanner
Maloney (NY)	Porter	Tauscher
Markey	Price (NC)	Taylor
Marshall	Putnam	Thompson (CA)
Matheson	Rahall	Thompson (MS)
Matsui	Ramstad	Thornberry
McCarthy (NY)	Rangel	Tierney
McCollum (MN)	Renzi	Towns
McDermott	Reyes	Turner
McGovern	Rodriguez	Udall (CO)
McIntyre	Rogers (MI)	Udall (NM)
McNerney	Rohrabacher	Van Hollen
McNulty	Ross	Velázquez
Meehan	Rothman	Visclosky
Meek (FL)	Roybal-Allard	Walz (MN)
Meeks (NY)	Ruppersberger	Wamp
Melancon	Rush	Wasserman
Michaud	Ryan (OH)	Schultz
Millender-McDonald	Salazar	Waters
Miller (NC)	Sánchez, Linda T.	Watson
Miller, George	Sanchez, Loretta	Watt
Mitchell	Sarbanes	Waxman
Mollohan	Saxton	Weiner
Moore (KS)	Schakowsky	Welch (VT)
Moore (WI)	Schiff	Wexler
Moran (KS)	Schwartz	Wicker
Moran (VA)	Scott (GA)	Wilson (NM)
Murphy (CT)	Scott (VA)	Wilson (OH)
Murphy, Patrick	Serrano	Woolsey
Murtha	Sestak	Wu
	Shays	Wynn
		Yarmuth

NAYS—160

Akin	Feeney	McCotter
Alexander	Ferguson	McCrery
Bachmann	Forbes	McHenry
Bachus	Fortenberry	McHugh
Barrett (SC)	Fossella	McKeon
Barton (TX)	Fox	McMorris
Bigert	Frelinghuysen	Rodgers
Bilirakis	Gallegly	Mica
Bishop (UT)	Garrett (NJ)	Miller (FL)
Blackburn	Gillmor	Miller (MI)
Blunt	Gingrey	Miller, Gary
Boehner	Gohmert	Murphy, Tim
Bono	Goode	Musgrave
Boozman	Goodlatte	Myrick
Boustany	Granger	Neugebauer
Brady (TX)	Graves	Nunes
Brown (SC)	Hall (TX)	Paul
Brown-Waite,	Hastert	Pearce
Ginny	Hastings (WA)	Peterson (PA)
Buchanan	Hayes	Petri
Burgess	Heller	Pitts
Burton (IN)	Hensarling	Poe
Buyer	Herger	Price (GA)
Calvert	Hoekstra	Pryce (OH)
Camp (MI)	Hulshof	Radanovich
Campbell (CA)	Inglis (SC)	Regula
Cannon	Issa	Rehberg
Cantor	Jindal	Reichert
Carter	Jordan	Reynolds
Castle	Keller	Rogers (AL)
Chabot	King (IA)	Rogers (KY)
Coble	King (NY)	Ros-Lehtinen
Cole (OK)	Kingston	Roskam
Conaway	Kirk	Royce
Crenshaw	Kline (MN)	Ryan (WI)
Cubin	Knollenberg	Sali
Culberson	Kuhl (NY)	Schmidt
Davis (KY)	LaHood	Sensenbrenner
Davis, David	Lamborn	Shadegg
Davis, Tom	Latham	Shimkus
Deal (GA)	LaTourette	Shuster
Diaz-Balart, L.	Lewis (CA)	Simpson
Diaz-Balart, M.	Lewis (KY)	Smith (NE)
Doolittle	Linder	Smith (TX)
Drake	Lucas	Souder
Dreier	Mack	Stearns
Duncan	Manzullo	Sullivan
English (PA)	Marchant	Tancredo
Everett	McCarthy (CA)	Terry
Fallin	McCaul (TX)	Tiahrt

Tiberi	Walsh (NY)	Whitfield
Upton	Weldon (FL)	Wilson (SC)
Walberg	Weller	Wolf
Walden (OR)	Westmoreland	Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—8

Baker	Johnson, E. B.	Sessions
Davis, Jo Ann	Kanjorski	Young (FL)
Fattah	Pence	

□ 1301

Messrs. MILLER of Florida, SUL-LIVAN, WELDON of Florida and Ms. GRANGER changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Messrs. CARNEY, SAXTON, ROTHMAN, LOBIONDO, PORTER, OBERSTAR, SHAYS, JOHNSON of Illinois, FLAKE, PLATTS, ROHRBACHER, JONES of North Carolina, GILCHREST, DENT, DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, and MORAN of Kansas changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEADERSHIP FROM BOTH SIDES MUST COME TOGETHER

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

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, first I appreciate your recognizing me.

Mr. Speaker, the process we have just gone through where we had a vote whereby a significant majority voted to overrule the ruling of the Chair would suggest to me it is very important at the highest level our leadership come together from both sides of the aisle and discuss how this kind of thing can happen in the House. It is not good for the body. It does not allow us to go forward with our work effectively.

I thank the Speaker.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, is it not the case that the vote did not overrule the Chair? Is it not the case that the Chair's ruling that the words were out of order was not challenged, and was it not the case that the motion was simply to restore the right of the gentleman from Mississippi to speak and in no way overruled the ruling of the Chair?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PAS-TOR). The gentleman is correct. The motion was to allow the gentleman from Mississippi to proceed in order on this day.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. We just had a vote to restore the floor privileges for a Member who had his words taken down. Is it not true that the Democratic leadership, Speaker PELOSI, made the comments that we were going

to have a more civil House and that we—

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The gentleman has not stated a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state a parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Parliamentary inquiry: Is it true that we did not pass rules in this House that talked about civility?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The rules that have been adopted address order in the House.

The gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

I am not sure everyone heard you. I would appreciate it, so the vote we just voted is clarified, would you please restate the vote and also indicate whether or not that was an overruling of the Chair? Would you restate it for the full body, please?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. By motion, the gentleman from Mississippi was allowed to proceed in order on this day.

The gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 1 minute.

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

Mr. ISSA. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. STEARNS. Parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire of the Rules of the House, when the words of a Member is taken down and the Speaker rules that these words were incorrect and not within the decorum of the House and that these words would be stricken, is the normal procedure, notwithstanding the motion from Mr. FRANK, is the normal procedure that the Member is no longer allowed to debate for the full day in the House? Is that the procedure? I want to confirm that procedure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The answer is yes; the presumptive sanction is a disability from further recognition on that day; but in this case, by motion, the gentleman from Mississippi is allowed to proceed in order on this day.

Mr. STEARNS. I have a follow-up question, Mr. Speaker.

If that is the normal procedure, when is the last time we have allowed someone to speak on the floor after his words were taken down and stricken from the RECORD? Would the Parliamentarian please provide it to this Member? When was the last time we allowed someone to continue to debate on this floor after his words were stricken from the RECORD?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot place today's proceedings in historical context. That is not the role of the Chair.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Mississippi be recognized for 1 minute out of order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. BUYER.

In the course of the debate I encouraged, with words that were a little bit too strong, my colleague from Georgia to come visit south Mississippi and see the aftermath of Katrina. I used the word “decency” when I should have said “the courtesy.” If I have offended his decency, then I apologize for that.

But the offer stands. The gentleman was good enough to admit privately that he has not visited south Mississippi since the storm, has not seen that the town of Waveland is virtually gone, that Bay Saint Louis is virtually gone, that Pass Christian is virtually gone. To the point of his amendment: How does a town that is gone come up with matching funds to restore itself?

So I appreciate the gentleman yielding. I hope I have made my point to the membership, and I thank the body.

GULF COAST HURRICANE HOUSING RECOVERY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 254 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1227.

□ 1308

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1227) to assist in the provision of affordable housing to low-income families affected by Hurricane Katrina, with Mr. HOLDEN (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, 5 minutes debate remained on amendment No. 7 printed in part B of House Report 110-53 by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) has 3½ minutes remaining and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) has 1½ minutes remaining.

Who yields time?

□ 1310

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate the apology of the gentleman from Mississippi. It should be noted that it was an offer from this Member to forego what occurred over the past hour in this House to the gentleman from Mississippi during the process, and that offer was declined. But I appreciate his apology, and I accept his apology.