

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Original Budget Resolution	2,888,691	3,001,311	1,653,682
Revisions:			
For the Congressional Budget Office's reestimate of the President's request for discretionary appropriations (section 422(0)(1))	3,766	2,355	0
For the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (section 423(a)(1))	0	818	0
For an act to protect the public health by providing the Food and Drug Administration with certain authority to regulate tobacco products . . . and for other purposes (section 324)	10	13	46
For revisions for House-passed appropriations bills (sections 422(a) and 423(a)(1))	0	3,521	0
For an act to make technical corrections to the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes (section 322)	32	36	0
For revisions for final appropriations bills (section 423(a)(1))		-1,579	

Revised Budget Resolution 2,892,499 3,006,475 1,653,728

⁶ S. Con. Res. 13 includes \$10,350 million in budget authority and \$5,448 million in outlays as a disaster allowance to recognize the potential cost of disasters; those funds will never be allocated to a committee. At the direction of the House Committee on the Budget, the budget resolution totals have been revised to exclude those amounts for purposes of enforcing current level.

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office.

Note: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CBC HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. LEE of California. As Chair of the 42-member Congressional Black Caucus, let me first begin by saying that our thoughts and our prayers go out to the people of Haiti and the Haitian-American community, those Americans and others in Haiti affected by this devastating earthquake.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus are continuing to monitor the situation in Haiti, and are committed to providing whatever emergency humanitarian assistance is needed. The Congressional Black Caucus has a long history of working with the Haitian people and the Haitian-American community on a variety of issues. We share a close and long-standing relationship. Many members of the Congressional Black Caucus, including myself, have visited Haiti many, many times.

Since learning of the devastating earthquake yesterday, my staff and I have been in contact with the State Department and other officials to assess the situation on a regular basis. Congressman DONALD PAYNE of New Jersey chairs the International Affairs Task Force of the Congressional Black Caucus, and has held several meetings today to coordinate our legislative and humanitarian assistance efforts. The CBC is working to help to ensure that the United States can and will continue to do everything it can to provide emergency humanitarian assistance. The President has quickly deployed all available assets and resources to respond to this emergency.

Over the last several years, Haiti has experienced an extraordinary set of challenges, from high food prices and food shortages, to natural disasters. Haiti will need increased attention and resources from the international community to help it recover during this very difficult time.

United Nations reports say thousands of people may have died in this earth-

quake. At least 100 people are believed to be buried in the rubble of the United Nations headquarters building in Port-au-Prince. The head of the United Nations Mission is among the missing. Search and rescue teams have been sent to Haiti from several countries. A United States military official says tentative plans are underway for the hospital ship USNS *Comfort* to dock off the coast of Haiti to assist with sick and wounded. We are asking the global community to help us with these efforts.

In response to the earthquake in Haiti, the U.S. Agency for International Development is dispatching a disaster assistance response team, and has activated its partners the Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue Team and the Los Angeles County Search and Rescue Team. Now, more than ever, Haiti needs our help.

Haiti is the poorest, least developed country in the Western Hemisphere, with an average per capita income of \$500 per year. But the Haitian people are resilient and proud people. The country ranks 146 out of 177, lower than Bangladesh and even the Sudan on the United Nations Human International Development Index. And also one in eight children will die before the age of five. That is one in eight.

Over the last 2 years, Haiti has been devastated by a triple blow of rising food and energy prices, the succession of hurricanes and tropical storms, and the global economic downturn. In May of 2008, the former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK of Michigan, and I, led a Congressional delegation to Haiti to examine the conditions on the ground. We were joined then by 10 members of the Congressional Black Caucus and one member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Later that month, the House passed an emergency supplemental that included funding for international food aid, and also other food security initiatives. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, we worked to ensure that Haiti's needs were addressed in the context of the global food crisis.

Thanks in large part to the leadership of many members in the Congressional Black Caucus, in September 2008 President Bush signed H.R. 2638 into law, which amended the Department of Homeland Security Act to include 100 million in additional disaster relief to the Caribbean, of which 96 million was appropriated to Haiti. During Haiti's

time of need then Congress stepped up to lend support. And of course we expect no less this time around.

□ 1700

As we deliver urgent and immediate support to the people of Haiti and all of those who have been affected by this earthquake, we must also identify long-term solutions to Haiti's problems. Haiti's food shortages, severe deforestation, poor sanitation, lack of family planning and health care services, high unemployment and underdevelopment, and also the lack of an agricultural sector, these issues, these problems cannot be solved by emergency assistance alone. And so that is why, working with Chairman ENGEL, many of us are working on my bill, H.R. 417, which is called the Next Steps for Haiti Act of 2009.

This bill would provide technical expertise and build human capacity to help Haiti address its own problems. Many Haitian Americans living in the United States have technical expertise in areas such as agriculture, education, health care, and infrastructure and would like to return to Haiti to assist their people. My bill creates a mechanism to transfer this knowledge in order to meet the needs and the goals of Haiti.

Beyond that, we need to ensure that we find innovative ways to build human capacities, such as educational exchanges, programs such as I have proposed and other Members in H.R. 416, the Shirley Chisholm U.S.-Caribbean Educational Exchange Act.

Now more than ever Haiti needs the support of its neighbor to the north. Even as we deal with our own problems during these tough economic times, we must not turn a blind eye to the untold human suffering just off our shores. Today, we express our continued support for Haiti. We stand in solidarity with the Haitians and the Haitian Americans who have lost loved ones, with the United States citizens still trapped on the island. We stand in solidarity with the rescue workers who have devoted their time and their treasure to help people they do not know. We stand hand in hand with them today and renew our continued support.

Our thoughts and our prayers go out to the Haitian people and to all of those who have been affected during this very trying time. We are asking everyone in our country to help in this assistance with the Haiti effort. Of

course individuals can go online, USAID.gov, for more information. The administration is urging cash donations. There are many, many efforts taking place by our administration in this immediate emergency response in terms of a search-and-rescue effort at this moment.

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to speak tonight. I would like now to turn the floor over to Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Virgin Islands, who has led on many efforts as it relates to the Caribbean, who knows Haiti very, very well, who knows what natural disasters mean in terms of the dislocation and the tragic deaths that occur and what we have to do as a country to help respond to such a tragedy of this magnitude.

Thank you, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And thank you, Congresswoman and Chairwoman LEE, for your leadership of the caucus through every event that we've had to deal with, but especially for the way that you have answered the call to action for the people of Haiti and have called us to action as well within the caucus and within the Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening with my colleagues to express our deep sense of concern for the plight of the Haitian people after yesterday's devastating earthquake, the most devastating some people have observed in 200 or more years. I want to again thank our chair lady and the past years of the Congressional Black Caucus for the leadership they have given over the years on behalf of the nation of Haiti.

Last year, we began this administration and this Congress with hope for this country because of the promised engagement of President Obama, the demonstrated commitment of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the work on the ground of former President Clinton. But today, after beginning to rebuild after an onslaught of hurricanes in years past, this country, which is poor in resources but never has been poor in spirit, has been dealt a devastating blow once again.

So on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands who are Caribbean neighbors of the people of Haiti, I express my condolences on the loss that has not yet been counted and for a sorrow not yet fully expressed because of the shock at the sheer magnitude of the loss that affects us all as fellow human beings.

I would like to express special concern for the Haitian Americans in my district and across the country who are worried and devastated as they try to get some word about the status of their loved ones back at home.

Mr. Speaker, Haiti has always had a special place in my heart and the hearts of all of us in the Congressional Black Caucus as me and my colleagues have tried over several administrations to impress upon those administrations the need for assistance for a people who

crave economic opportunity, political stability, and social advancement. Many Haitians have migrated to our shores and have made significant and magnificent contributions to our country, but many still yearn for a better future for the country that they left behind.

As we ponder how to help Haiti in this time of disaster, which has followed many other disasters, and the difficulty of daily living for many of her residents, I hope that we will look at how we can help this neighbor to turn the corner and be more able to grow and develop in a way that can be helpful and more supportive to her citizens and help them to build for the future. Haiti needs debt forgiveness, investment in infrastructure, assistance in health care and education, and many of the things that we take for granted that would create that brighter future for its people.

I commend President Obama for his quick response in getting first responders there to help those trapped in the rubble, medical assistance to help those who have been hurt or injured, and military assistance to help maintain the stability that is necessary to make sure that those most in need get the help. And we know that his commitment and our commitment as Members of Congress is there for the long term.

Mr. Speaker, this disaster has touched the lives of rich and poor, educated and not, Haitians and others. And as we fellow human beings who care stand ready to assist in this time of need, I join my colleagues tonight in the Congressional Black Caucus and pledge our help in this disaster and in the long term for their recovery. Right now the need is for monetary donations to credible organizations like the International Red Cross and others operated by churches and not-for-profit organizations that work with the people of Haiti on a regular basis. News reports last night told us that the people of Haiti, devastated by the disaster, took to the streets last night and hugged and prayed while trying their best to dig their friends and neighbors out of the rubble. We want them to know that we join in their prayers for relief and mercy and will do what we can as neighbors, as friends, as family, and as Members of Congress to assist them in their time of need.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN.

Now I would like to yield to the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus' International Affairs Task Force, Congressman DON PAYNE, who also chairs the Africa and Global Health Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Congressman PAYNE today has been working hour by hour coordinating an emergency response strategy for the House of Representatives. Thank you very much, Congressman PAYNE, for being with us here tonight and for your leadership.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. And let me commend the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, BARBARA LEE, for her continued leadership, stellar leadership, bringing issues that are current to us before the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congress and the Nation.

Once again, we are here to talk about an issue that is very close to us. As has been indicated, I chair the International Task Force of the CBC and others on the Western Hemisphere Committee and so forth. Haiti has been a longtime concern to many of us, and we certainly wish to express our concern for this disaster, this catastrophe that has stricken Haiti.

As you know, Haiti was hit by four devastating hurricanes and tropical storms recently, a year and a half ago. And Haiti was recovering, recovering from the mudslides, recovering from the floods, working its way back for the past 15 months. Then of course last night we were just shocked when we heard that a 7.0 earthquake on the Richter scale, an earthquake that was only 5 miles from the surface of the Earth, therefore giving it a magnitude of strength that is rarely felt in an earthquake because many earthquakes go down 100 miles, 150 miles deep into the Earth. However, this being 5 miles from the surface meant that the shock and the aftershocks were as individual earthquakes would be because of the proximity to the surface. This was a tremendous setback again for Haiti.

From reports, we have heard that few buildings are left standing in Port Au Prince. The Parliament building, schools, hospitals, houses are destroyed. We have known that there has been a problem in Haiti with deforestation, with the need for firewood and heating fuel, cooking fuel, and therefore the denuding of the topography, therefore making it very difficult for the environment to move forward. And so this unbelievable earthquake is certainly another tremendous setback.

We know that the U.S. had a quick response. Our Secretary of State from Hawaii early this morning indicated that the U.S. would be there in full force with all of our support. Then we recall this morning the President of the United States addressed our country, indicating that the U.S. will do all within our authority to ensure that everything is done that we can.

There has been a tremendous amount of coordination. We heard from Cheryl Mills from the Secretary of State's office recently on a conference call where she updated us about all of the military and humanitarian, USAID programs that are going on. We have ships that are going to Haiti. We have Mercy Hospital ship that's on its way. We have helicopters that will be deployed from our aircraft carriers. We have the Coast Guard that is coming down.

And so we have a tremendous amount of immediate—there was never any

hesitation on the part of our government, and I commend the Obama administration. In my State of New Jersey, we have many, many Haitian Americans, and my office has been inundated with calls of people who want to know what they can do and concerns about their family and loved ones and what will the next steps be.

In concluding, Haiti has been a strong ally to the United States of America throughout its history. Haiti sent troops to fight with the American patriots who were fighting for their independence against Great Britain. In Savannah, the Battle of Savannah, many Haitians lost their lives, which was one of the turning points of the colonists turning the tide against the British Army. Many valiant Haitians died for our independence. And actually, during history, when the Haitian military had a 12-year war with Napoleon's army, Haiti defeated the great Napoleon's military and therefore, France was in need of finances. And France at that time controlled the Louisiana territory. It was because of Haiti's defeat of France and their need for cash that the United States was able to buy the Louisiana territory in the famous Louisiana Purchase, which therefore opened the West to the United States, and Lewis and Clark then went throughout the continent.

□ 1715

So, if you look at it, Haiti has had a tremendous amount to do with our development as a Nation, and so we now owe a responsibility, I believe, to our longstanding friend in Haiti. So I know that we are on the right track. The Congressional Black Caucus will continue to monitor and ensure that we have a thorough and efficient response, as we have seen. We have been pleased up to this point, and we will be at the forefront.

So, once again, let me commend the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus and all of the members who have joined shoulder to shoulder to say that we will march until we ensure that Haiti will, once again, be able to come back again. They have the resilience. They have the spirit. They have the determination. So we know that it will come back, but it will have to be with the assistance of the United States and of many other nations around the world who are willing to help.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much, Congressman PAYNE. Let me thank you for that presentation and also for putting Haiti in a historical context. It is important that we recognize and remember the history of how our foreign policy and our relations with Haiti have been so important in the past, which now has brought us to this day.

So, today, we are talking about how we can respond in an emergency way and in a manner that will help the Haitian people take care of the sick and that will help with these search and

rescue efforts. I also thank you for reminding us that we have to help Haiti to move forward and to rebuild and recover.

Now I would like to ask Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE to speak. Congresswoman JACKSON LEE is a member of the Homeland Security Committee, but also she was very instrumental in the Katrina response. She provided many, many ways and vehicles for Katrina survivors to live and to have a decent place to stay until they could return home, and she ensured that FEMA was responsive to their needs. She really took on many, many issues as it relates to hurricane survivors. Now she is working very hard as it relates to the earthquake in Haiti.

So thank you again, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE. Let me just remind you, and I was listening to Congressman PAYNE, that I come from an area that is earthquake-prone. It is hard to imagine what a 7.0 or a 7.1 earthquake is on the Richter scale given our experience with, maybe, a 4 or a 5 or a 6. So this is really an earthquake of enormous magnitude that those of us who come from earthquake-prone regions recognize and understand.

Thank you, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Let me thank Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, our chairperson, who raised the red flag and who let out the siren and gathered us together, and I want to respond to what she just said about the earthquake.

It rocks you in your soul; 7.0 on the Richter scale is hair-raising. I would also argue that it puts your hair on fire. I still have a sense that I am trembling because it's unimaginable. As you have just indicated, we look to California, and we get very nervous about our friends and family who are there when we hear of a 2, of a 3 or of a 4. I recall in the northern California area when there was an earthquake that impacted the baseball game and the baseball stadium, and it was all over the news. It was not a 7.0.

So I would just simply say that we rise here with all solemnness. We are not speechless, but we are trembling for those who are now in the eye of devastation.

I, too, rise to thank the Congressional Black Caucus, of which I am a member, to thank all of those who have been in meetings, as we have been throughout this morning and yesterday, and on a conference call that occurred. Work is going on as we speak and the concern that we have for those who we have been able to see only through, to a certain extent, still pictures, though I know many of our cable networks in particular have been making their way there, and other networks, to be able to deliver the devastation to us.

I express my appreciation to the President of the United States, who moved swiftly. There was no hesitation

on the commitment that President Barack Obama had. In fact, he quickly offered his prayers, but he acknowledged the devastation, making note of the fact that he had seen collapsed hospitals, crumbled homes, men and women carrying their injured neighbors to the streets. He acknowledged that it was truly heart-wrenching, sufficient to make you tremble. So, moving swiftly, he directed his administration to coordinate in an aggressive manner to save lives.

The people of Haiti will have the full support of the United States in the urgent efforts to rescue those trapped beneath the rubble and to deliver the humanitarian relief—the food, the water, and the medicine—the Haitians will need. He has authorized that USAID and the Departments of State and Defense work closely together, and he has mobilized large numbers of individuals, including our military efforts.

I also want to take note that the Secretary of Homeland Security has indicated that our resources, including the United States Coast Guard and FEMA, will be there, which we have jurisdiction over—my committee has jurisdiction over—and Chairman THOMPSON will be intimately involved in pushing the efforts of making sure that FEMA and the U.S. Coast Guard are there.

Google “7.0” and get a sense of how deeply devastating that is and that it hit one of the most populated areas, Port-au-Prince. It damaged buildings extensively. We saw the palace collapse, not riddled by bullet holes, but literally collapse. How fortunate we can say we were, the fact that this came at 6 o'clock when we understand that many of the workers in the palace and the government were already gone, but we know that government officials may have lost their lives. It is said that many of the United Nations personnel and peacekeeping troops have lost their lives, and so we can't put this at a level of seriousness by just our voices and our words.

Let me thank the U.S. Southern Command that is deploying a team of 30 people to Haiti to support U.S. relief efforts in the aftermath of yesterday's devastating earthquake. Let me also mention that the team will include U.S. military engineers, operational planners, a command-and-control group, and communications specialists. They will arrive in Haiti on two C-130 Hercules aircraft. For those who don't know or who can't imagine, those are huge, boat-like aircraft which can carry an enormous amount of equipment.

Chairman LEE, I think one of the important issues that I am very concerned about and would like to get a report on is how many aircraft—let me just use the right terminology—large ships can carry heavy equipment. We know in the war zones that there are large aircraft that can carry heavy equipment, and the equipment I am thinking of in particular would be the Earth-moving machines, the machines that can assist in finding the loss.

As we understand, many are still living or are still trying to live who are in the crushed buildings. Time is of the essence. It is imperative because of the crush injuries that can kill. Even if they are alive, the fact that some parts of their bodies are crushed, whether it is a leg or an arm, can cut off circulation, and they can die. Some of the large equipment is so very important, and I would like to get a report on how fast that equipment can move.

We do understand that a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter already evacuated four critically injured U.S. Embassy staff to the naval station at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, hospital for further treatment. Elements of the U.S. Air Force First Special Operations Wing are deploying today to the international airport of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to provide air traffic control capability and airfield operations.

That is very important, which will allow Members of Congress—and might I thank Congresswoman LEE in working with the Congressional Black Caucus. I would like to push for a codel on Friday, but I realize the difficulty of moving Members during a time of great uncertainty. So I encourage, as you have already dictated, that the CBC have a codel, and I know there are many members who are looking to do that and who would do that at the appropriate time. I want everyone to realize that the Congressional Black Caucus is leading on this, and we are attempting to get to Haiti as quickly as we can, making sure that the operations of rescue go forward first.

A U.S. Navy P-3 Orion aircraft from the forwarding operational location at El Salvador took off early this morning to conduct an aerial reconnaissance of the area affected by the earthquake, and the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, the USS *Carl Benson*, is under way and is expected to arrive off the coast of Haiti. I might imagine that they will be bringing in what is necessary in the heavy equipment. Many countries around the world are also coming, and I do believe it is crucial that we acknowledge that.

The Red Cross is receiving dollars. The White House has a Web site, Madam Chair, which I would like to recite if I could find it.

Ms. LEE of California. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I will be happy to yield.

Ms. LEE of California. I believe the Web site is USAID.gov.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Yes, that's one of them.

There was a WhiteHouse.gov, and that is an excellent one to use if I find it. Then of course I would like to state the number for American family members who are trying to find their family in Haiti, and that number is (888) 407-4747.

What I would like to conclude on is to give comfort to Haitians who are here and to ensure that they can reach out to the offices of their Members of

Congress. I'll give my number, which is (202) 225-3816, for constituents in my area, but it is important to note that all Members of Congress and the Congressional Black Caucus members will all be going home to their districts, meeting with the Haitian Americans in their constituencies. In particular, I will be meeting with Haitian American constituents, and I am calling for a weekend of prayer that will culminate on your days of worship, that you will offer up a weekend of prayer for the people of Haiti, for their families and, of course, for the Haitian Americans who are now here struggling to help their loved ones.

It is also important for Haitian Americans and for others to note that the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security have put a hold on any deportations. Let me say this because that always raises hairs, but we in the Congressional Black Caucus have been in the forefront for acknowledging that, really, the deportations of Haitians have really fallen upon the backs of hardworking Haitians who came here, by and large, simply to work and to achieve opportunities. They came alongside of the Cubans, but did not have the same status. We have not found danger in the Haitian community. In fact, a story that appeared in the Houston Chronicle is of a Haitian American whom I helped. She was a schoolteacher with two children and a husband, and she is being switched off.

I am glad that she is now in the midst, Chairwoman LEE, of the Haitian relief effort in Houston.

So we have been advocating, and the Trans Africa Forum has advocated for TPS status, but I think it's important to note that we have gotten the quickest response and that that response is that the deportations of Haitians—and I want to repeat it again—are now on hold as ordered by the President of the United States and the Secretary of Homeland Security. I can't imagine any Member of Congress is going to rise to his feet to challenge that humanitarian act by this government, and I am very proud of them.

I do want to take note of the fact as well that I am very pleased that Major Washington has been detailed to my office, and his firsthand knowledge has already been helpful. One of the things that, I think, we should emphasize in the immediate hours, tragically, is to secure units from the military which are able to set up temporary morgues. We hate to say that, but we understand that that is what we are going to face, and let me tell you why.

□ 1730

In listening to the leadership in Haiti, Haiti's Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told CNN that he believes there are well over 100,000 dead. We don't know that, but these are government officials who have said that number, and a leading Senator estimated the number as possibly as high as

500,000. Again, we don't have an affirmation of these numbers, but these are leaders who are on the ground, and I believe it is very important.

Eight American employees working at the Embassy were injured; three were medevaced. We believe there are three U.S. citizens who have died, currently reported by the individual.

I think I started out by saying the Houston Rotary Club, downtown Rotary Club has a delegation in Haiti as of yesterday, and we are working to ensure their return.

Let me say thank you for the U.S. Embassy. The building, we understand, is intact. We thank those workers there. We encourage them as they are helping to be part of the solution. We are encouraging them as we work with them for those constituents of ours that are still there that we will be looking for.

I hope that the long journey of recovery will be a bipartisan effort. I am thankful that the Congressional Black Caucus, meeting with their constituents as we go home, will be able to be the harvesters of information and bring back information that can be very helpful.

The Congresswoman, Congresswoman LEE, mentioned a number. I want to cite the American Red Cross, who is also accepting public donations to support the Haitian response, to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which is used to respond to disasters such as the Haitian earthquake. The American Red Cross made an initial contribution of \$1 million from these funds for relief activities within hours of the earthquake, and they are prepared to send relief supplies for 5,000 families from their warehouse in Panama. The United Nations is releasing \$10 million from its emergency fund.

And as I close, let me just cite very quickly the Irish telecommunication company is helping. European Commission has approved 3 million euros. Spain has committed dollars in euros. Netherlands has committed 2 million euros. Germany committed 2 million euros. China will donate 1 million. Sweden, 6 million kronor, \$850,000.

Venezuela has sent doctors, firefighters, and rescue workers. Mexico will send doctors, search and rescue dogs. France is sending two planes. Britain has sent 64 firefighters.

And, by the way, that is a component that we believe does not exist, firefighters. My plea to our brave firefighters across America, I believe we should facilitate your going, if you desire. And I certainly will look forward to reaching out to my firefighters in Houston for opportunities.

Taiwan, Israel, and of course the United States State Department is in full force, which we hope they will be coordinating all this.

Lastly, I know that Cuba will be sending doctors. They have been especially supportive in crises, and I am in advance thanking them for their medical team.

Congresswoman LEE, Chairwoman LEE, I am touched by this devastation in ways that cannot be expressed, as all of us are, and the reason is because we work with Haitian Americans in our constituency. We have been to Haiti. We have watched it get on its feet. We have visited political prisoners in its jails. We have now been grateful for a new day in Haiti.

And I also want to thank former President Bill Clinton, who has been appointed by the President some many months ago to help chart the recovery for Haiti. We have got a whole new task now, but we are up to the task. And what we will say is, my brothers and sisters, have faith. Never give up the faith, for in this time of need you will find that the human community will rally toward you and they will be your wind beneath your wings. They will be your Good Samaritan. They will be your brother. They will be your sister. And as a good songwriter often said and many of us like to sing, just lean on me. Just lean on me, and we will make a difference.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for your leadership and that of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, there are certain facts, I would like to discuss:

EARTHQUAKE

A massive, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti near the capital of Port-au-Prince on Tuesday, January 12th. The damage to buildings is extensive and the number of injured or dead is estimated to be in the hundreds, even thousands.

Several eyewitnesses reported heavy damage and bodies in the streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, where concrete-block homes line steep hillsides. There was no immediate estimate of the dead and wounded on Tuesday evening.

Haiti sits on a large fault that has caused catastrophic quakes in the past, but this one was described as among the most powerful to hit the region. With many poor residents living in tin-roof shacks that sit precariously on steep ravines and with much of the construction in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in the country of questionable quality, the expectation was that the quake caused major damage to buildings and significant loss of life.

The dimensions of the disaster are still unfolding. Haiti's Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told CNN that he believes there are well over 100,000 dead, and leading senator Youri Latortue estimated the number at possibly as high as 500,000, according the Associated Press.

U.S. DEATH TOLL

Eight American employees working at the Embassy were injured; 3 were medivaced. There are 3 U.S. citizens deaths currently reported but toll expected to rise.

U.S. AIDE RESPONSE

President Obama vows immediate response and aid.

The State Department, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard, USAID—has worked overnight to ensure that critical resources are positioned to support the response and recovery effort, including efforts to find and assist American citizens in Haiti.

U.S. Southern Command will deploy a team of 30 people to Haiti to support U.S. relief efforts in the aftermath of yesterday's devastating earthquake.

The team includes U.S. military engineers, operational planners, and a command and control group and communication specialists, will arrive in Haiti today on two C-130 Hercules aircraft.

The team will work with U.S. Embassy personnel as well as Haitian, United Nations and international officials to assess the situation and facilitate follow on U.S. military support.

The American Red Cross is accepting public donations to support the Haitian response through the American Red Cross International Response Fund—which is used to respond to disasters such as the Haiti earthquake. The American Red Cross made an initial contribution of 1 million dollars from these funds for relief activities within hours of the earthquake and we are prepared to send relief supplies for 5,000 families from our warehouse in Panama.

INTERNATIONAL AIDE RESPONSE

The United Nations is releasing \$10 million from its emergency funds.

Irish telecommunications company Digicel said it would donate \$5 million to aid agencies and help repair the damaged phone network.

European Commission has approved C3 million (\$4.37 million) with more funds likely.

Spain has pledged C3 million (\$4.37 million), and sent three planes with rescue teams and 100 tons of emergency relief equipment.

Netherlands has donated C2 million (\$2.91 million) and will send a 60-person search-and-rescue team.

Germany gave C1.5 million (\$2.17 million) and sent an immediate response team. Another team with 20 rescue dogs is on standby.

China will donate \$1 million.

Sweden has offered 6 million kronor (\$850,000) along with tents, water purification equipment and medical aid.

Venezuela has sent doctors, firefighters and rescue workers.

Mexico will send doctors, search-and-rescue dogs and infrastructure damage experts.

France is sending two planes with doctors, food and medical equipment.

Britain has sent 64 firefighters with search-and-rescue dogs and 10 tons of equipment.

Iceland is sending 37 search-and-rescue specialists.

Taiwan is flying in 23 rescue personnel and 2 tons of aid and equipment.

Israel is sending an elite army rescue unit including engineers, rescue workers, doctors and medics.

The U.S. State Department Operations Center set up the following number for Americans seeking information about relatives in Haiti: (888) 407-4747. The department cautioned that because of heavy volume, some callers may hear a recording. The State Department said those interested in helping immediately may text 'HAITI' to '90999' and a donation of \$10 will be made automatically to the Red Cross for relief efforts. The donation will be charged to your cell phone bill. The department also suggested contacting agencies such as the Red Cross or Mercy Corps to help with relief efforts.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much. And thank you for that very powerful statement, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, and also for re-

mindings us that this is a global response and the United States is leading.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEE of California. We, tonight, would like to ask the Speaker if we could keep the record open for 5 days for those who would like to add their statements to the record.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. LEE of California. Once again, our thoughts and our prayers go out to the people of Haiti, to the Haitian American community, to all of those, our American citizens, all of those who have been impacted by this horrible, horrific earthquake.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I was absolutely devastated to learn of the earthquake that struck Haiti late yesterday afternoon. I fear that an earthquake of this magnitude, with its subsequent aftershocks, has dealt a serious blow to the livelihoods and lives of many Haitians and to the important economic, political and social developments that were underway in the country.

Haiti is already the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. I have traveled to Haiti many times, and I have seen the poverty and desperation of the Haitian people with my own eyes. There is widespread unemployment and underemployment, and more than two-thirds of Haitian workers do not have formal jobs. There is a high risk of infectious diseases, including diarrhea, hepatitis, typhoid fever, dengue fever and malaria. The infant mortality rate is nearly 6 percent, and almost half of the adult population cannot read and write.

Many people have worked hard over the years to assist the people of Haiti. I have worked with officials in the U.S. Government and international organizations to bring economic development to Haiti. Meanwhile, dedicated people working with charities and nongovernmental organizations are on the ground in Haiti trying to end poverty and help the Haitian people build a brighter future for themselves and their children.

I have also worked very hard over several years to bring debt cancellation to Haiti, which owed over one billion dollars in debts to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other multilateral financial institutions. Last June, the World Bank announced that all of these debts would be completely canceled.

Yet for the people of Haiti, every step forward seems to be followed by three steps backward. In August and September of 2008, Haiti was struck by four hurricanes and tropical storms in rapid succession: Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and Ike. The loss of life and the destruction of infrastructure as a result of these storms were devastating. The storms destroyed more than 22,000 houses and damaged an additional 84,000 houses. Almost all of the agricultural land in the country was flooded, causing more than \$200 million in damage to the agricultural sector alone and exacerbating hunger throughout the country. The storms also damaged or destroyed roads, bridges and other essential infrastructure.

I had hoped that this year would be a year of recovery for Haiti. Yet this earthquake appears to be far more damaging than the

storms of 2008. We do not yet know the full extent of the damage, but certainly thousands of Haitians have lost their lives, thousands of others have been injured, and many survivors have most likely lost their homes or livelihoods.

Despite the devastation that has occurred in Haiti, I am encouraged by the prompt actions of President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, and other government officials to mobilize available resources and coordinate relief efforts. I urge the U.S. Government, the international community, nonprofit organizations and individual people to take all appropriate actions to respond to this earthquake and help the Haitian people recover from this terrible tragedy.

My heart is with the people of Haiti at this dark hour, and I commit myself to doing everything I can to help them through this terrible disaster.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is beyond devastating that our friend and neighbor, the Republic of Haiti, has been hit with yet another terrible natural disaster. My thoughts and prayers are with both the Haitian people during this time of incredible hardship, and my constituents in South Florida whose family and friends have fallen victim to this tragedy.

As you know, the people of Haiti are now experiencing the death, destruction, and aftermath of a 7.0 magnitude earthquake.

Just 600 miles off the coast of Florida, Haiti stands as the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Its nine million people are no strangers to hardship. In its tumultuous recent past, Haiti has experienced violent uprisings and floods that killed thousands of people and wiped out much of their food and infrastructure systems. As a result, they stand at a severe disadvantage and are ill equipped to deal with a tragedy of this scale.

Sadly, many Haitians have been unable to recover from the turmoil of their past, and therefore, remain exceedingly vulnerable to the repercussions of yesterday's powerful earthquake.

Recovery must be our first priority.

I am proud that the United States Government has offered immediate assistance to the people of Haiti.

Both President Obama and Secretary Clinton have pledged America's unwavering support for Haiti during this crisis.

Military officials have said that plans are underway for the hospital ship USNS *Comfort* to dock off the coast of Haiti to assist the sick and wounded.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is dispatching a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and has activated its partners; the Fairfax County Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team and the Los Angeles County Search and Rescue Team.

We must continue to work with the Obama Administration and federal agencies to help marshal necessary humanitarian relief efforts.

In addition, now more than ever, it is clear that Congress must work to enact Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals living in the United States.

TPS would allow Haitians to remain in peace and security in the U.S. while the island recovers.

In 1998 the U.S. government set a precedent when it granted TPS to nationals from

Central American countries affected by Hurricane Mitch, and I would like to see the same fairness applied to Haiti.

The United States must continue to provide assistance to bring Haiti out of poverty. I strongly support Congress appropriating robust emergency funds to assist Haiti in the wake of this catastrophe. Such funding is vital to providing stability in that fragile country, and is in our own national security interest.

Mr. Speaker, it is our moral responsibility to help our neighbors in Haiti however we can, and the residents of South Florida can be sure that I will continue to use my position as a Member of Congress to advocate policies that will promote stability and security in Haiti during this time of need.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bear witness to the reports of the remarkable response I know is taking place in Chicago and other parts of the United States in the aftermath of the 7.0 earthquake that struck Haiti yesterday.

Thankfully, that response is being led by a fully engaged Obama Administration who, right now, is rapidly transporting critically needed food, supplies and relief workers—both civilian and military—in an aggressive effort to save lives within the next, critical 24 hours.

My prayers are with the departed souls who lost their lives, yesterday, and for the families and loved ones they left behind. I pray that their loved ones find the strength to carry on in spite of the horrific circumstances they face.

I come from a city that was founded by a bold Haitian explorer, Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable. My hope is that the people of Haiti will tap into a boldness of spirit, and determination, that will help them find the collective will to rebuild. My hope and prayer for Haiti is that this nation will emerge even stronger than they were before yesterday's devastation.

I commend CBC Chairwoman BARBARA LEE and the rest of the leadership of this caucus, and others, who are marshalling our combined resources to help the people of Haiti rebuild.

May God bless the people of Haiti and those who are risking their lives to help them.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the people of Haiti who have lost family, friends and loved ones in yesterday's earthquake. I understand that the island as a whole has been devastated, and that the capital city of Port-au-Prince was particularly severely hit. I greatly appreciate the efforts of the Administration and many non-governmental organizations who are working tirelessly to provide emergency aid and assistance.

However, as I have long worked in partnership with Haiti to assist in the development of the country, I strongly believe that the Administration's efforts to ameliorate the damage suffered by Haiti should not be limited to simply initial emergency response and aid. The recovery of Haiti will be a lengthy process, particularly since yesterday's earthquake served to further exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis that was the result of crippling damage inflicted by four hurricanes and tropical storms in late 2008. In this environment, Haiti is simply not in a position to adequately provide for the safety of Haitian nationals upon their return to the country from the United States.

Therefore, I will, along with a bi-partisan group of Members of Congress, be asking the Administration to designate Haiti for Tem-

porary Protected Status, or TPS. TPS will allow Haitian nationals currently in the U.S. to remain until this time of crisis has passed and Haiti is adequately able to handle the safe return of its nationals. I hope that the Administration recognizes that TPS designation for Haiti will be a significant step towards rebuilding after yesterday's tragedy. Again, I would like to extend my most sincere condolences to the Haitian people, and reassure them that I will do everything in my power to ensure that the U.S. government will provide any and all necessary assistance towards the rebuilding of Haiti.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart and sincere condolences for the victims of yesterday's tragic earthquake. Yet another natural disaster has devastated this country and its people.

My heartfelt sympathy and prayers go out to the people of Haiti, those injured and unaccounted for, including Americans and U.N. personnel, and those who have lost loved ones.

I commend the swift response by the Obama Administration, especially USAID, the State Department, and DOD, as well as the international community to quickly mobilize humanitarian and disaster relief in a complex humanitarian disaster.

The devastation this earthquake has wrought is particularly tragic for the people of Haiti, who have endured not only destructive storms and hurricanes, but crushing poverty and political turmoil. Americans and people around the world have answered the call to support Haiti with time, talents, and charitable assistance in Haiti's great time of need.

I stand committed to help the Haitian people recover from this disaster through emergency and humanitarian assistance as well as through long-term development assistance. I'm hopeful that a unified coordinated effort, in collaboration with the Haitian people, will result in a successful effort to rebuild their beautiful country.

Ms. LEE of California. I yield back the balance of my time.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, we are clearly in a technical revolution in our country. People now have more information available to them than literally at any other time in probably the history of our country. They know more about what is going on in their government than they ever have before. I think that is one of the reasons we are seeing people all across America rise up and start to make such bold statements and attending these TEA parties and attending these Members that are having meetings in their districts, and they are coming in record numbers.

Back this August, I had an opportunity to have a number of town hall meetings in my district, and thousands of people came to voice their opposition to what they think is happening to