

face can be daunting, from employment difficulties, to financial challenges, to depression and family stress.

Very often, though, with just a little bit of assistance, they can continue to be extraordinary caregivers and fulfill all of the other challenges and responsibilities that a family requires.

That is why I have introduced and I have championed the Lifespan Respite Care Act, Mr. Speaker, with my friend and former Republican colleague, Mike Ferguson from New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, that law, it passed into law in 2006 and has already provided grants to 32 States and the District of Columbia to help set up respite care networks for families in need.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to push for that program's reauthorization, and I included it in the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act that I introduced in April to strengthen the support services for family caregivers of injured and disabled veterans. I think this is an important thing that we can do for our veterans.

We have come far, Mr. Speaker, since the passage of the ADA, but we still have much more work ahead. Disabilities don't discriminate on the basis of party affiliation, income level, or gender; instead, they can happen to anyone at any time. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that they also have the unique ability to unite us in common purpose.

As we celebrate the silver anniversary of the ADA together, we must use this as a call to action and to reaffirm our commitment to equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities everywhere.

Let me close, Mr. Speaker, by thanking the many champions and the advocates and many unsung heroes who made the ADA possible and saw it through the legislative process and put it on the desk of President George H.W. Bush, who signed it into law and changed the lives of people with disabilities everywhere forever.

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

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, August 29 of this year will mark the 10-year anniversary that Hurricane Katrina

struck ground, causing massive devastation throughout southeast Louisiana, as well as other parts of the Gulf Coast, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, we are going to talk about the devastation that was caused by Hurricane Katrina, and of course, it starts with the more than 1,800 lives that were lost, people from Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Georgia who all lost their lives through this devastating storm.

Mr. Speaker, we are also going to talk about something else, and that is the strength and resiliency of the people of the Gulf Coast who persevered, who rebuilt. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we are going to talk about the recovery of the people of the Gulf Coast from this devastating storm.

First, I will yield to my friend from the great State of Alabama, Mr. ROBERT ADERHOLT.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I want to just mention to you that it is hard to believe that it has been 10 years ago, in the early morning hours of August 29, just a month from today, that Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast as a category 3 hurricane.

With sustained winds up to 140 miles an hour and a storm surge over 9 meters high in some places, the impact to the gulf region was very devastating.

While the economic cost of the storm is very difficult to measure, some estimates have put the damage over \$100 billion. Hundreds of thousands of refugees scattered across the country. Most importantly, no price tag can be assigned to the loss of the nearly 2,000 lives that were lost.

In the aftermath of the tragic storm, there were many hearings; there were many inquiries, studies, investigations, reforms, and policy changes that were conducted, and most of those were for good reason.

The initial emergency response to Katrina was far less than what should be expected of our Federal, State, and local governments.

However, this evening, I do want to thank my colleague for his allowing this, putting together this time. As he said, we are not here to talk about the failures, so much as we are here to talk about the spirit of the people that were affected.

It is easy to sit back and to point fingers and to place blame, but this evening, we want to talk about and bring attention to the spirit of the people that were affected, both directly and indirectly by Hurricane Katrina.

In the days after the hurricane, when it became clear that thousands of people would not be able to return to their homes, work began to find permanent shelter for these individuals.

Thousands of refugees from Louisiana were given housing in manufactured housing that was purchased by FEMA and was stationed, actually, in my home State of Alabama in the State parks.

The outpouring that came the following days of support from the local

community was, I think, best described as just overwhelming. As soon as the people found out that the refugees were headed into our area, supplies were starting to be gathered together, and drives were started immediately as they were being organized.

A member of my own staff organized one of those numerous drives on his own initiative. Thousands of pounds of food, of clothing, and personal hygiene products were collected. They were distributed to the people, and these people that were helped had little more than just the clothes on their back.

I am also proud that, after this show of support, that many of the refugees decided to make the Fourth District, the district I represent, their home. In one particular case, a refugee from Louisiana ended up working for Desoto State Park, where she had been housed.

Finally, the resilience of Alabamians who lived along the Gulf Coast was also inspiring as well.

□ 1845

Though the Gulf Coast of Alabama was not the hardest hit of the region, the Gulf Coast of Alabama was severely impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

While there is still some healing that needs to be done, the Gulf Coast is not only back in business, but it has returned to life as usual and it is thriving.

New shipyards are being constructed, new businesses are opening up, and tourism has returned to the region. This, I believe, is a testament to the spirit of the people of the State of Alabama as well as our neighboring States, Mississippi and Louisiana.

As we move forward as a country and as a region, I hope that we will not only look to the lessons we have learned from the failures of this response, but also to the lessons we learned about kindness, the lessons of charity, being a good neighbor, and, actually, the spirit of this great Nation.

So I want to thank my colleague from Louisiana for putting this time together to draw attention—again, not to place the blame on the individuals or organizations that we could point blame to this evening, but to the spirit and to the greatness of all those that were involved and to the kindness, the charity, and the spirit that arose from that occasion.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank you. I appreciate my colleague from Alabama's (Mr. ADERHOLT) comments.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, so much of the national attention on Hurricane Katrina focused on the city of New Orleans.

We all remember the pictures, the visuals, of people that were displaced, of floodwaters that sat, in many cases, for 2 or 3 weeks.

But then, of course, we also remember the many things that happened along the way for people who rebuilt, who came back, who persevered.

My colleague and friend who represents the city of New Orleans along

with me obviously was deeply involved in a lot of those recovery efforts.

I want to yield now to my colleague from New Orleans (Mr. RICHMOND).

Mr. RICHMOND. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), who represents the neighboring district from me in part of the metropolitan area of New Orleans.

Let me just start off by saying something about New Orleans and the people of New Orleans. Now, the people of New Orleans are a very, very resilient people, and it started from the beginning of the history of New Orleans up until today.

We started off—you can go back to 1788, when there was a fire in New Orleans that burned 856 of the 1,100 buildings that made up New Orleans. So that was 80 percent of the city burned. Then 6 years later another 212 buildings burned.

But the good thing about the people of New Orleans is that we always pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and continue to do the work to rebuild and make a better life.

Then you can go to 1853, when we had a yellow fever outbreak and epidemic. In 1853, almost 8,000 people died of yellow fever.

And if you look at the time between 1853 and 1905, 41,000 people in the city of New Orleans lost their lives due to yellow fever. But again the city picked itself up, dusted itself off, and worked to make a better New Orleans.

Then fast-forward to 1965. That was the year that Hurricane Betsy devastated the city of New Orleans. That was the first storm to rack up a cost of \$1 billion in damage.

And then, of course, I will talk about Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that hit New Orleans and devastated the entire Gulf Coast, but significantly damaged New Orleans.

Let me just say for the record, even after we picked ourselves up and dusted ourselves off and started to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina, a few years later then comes the BP oil spill.

And again the people of New Orleans—we picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off, and we started to create a better New Orleans and a better Louisiana.

Now, going back to Hurricane Katrina, which my good friend STEVE SCALISE already talked about, the total loss of life in Hurricane Katrina was over 1,800 people, and 1,577 of those people were from Louisiana.

Let me just break down some of the causes of death: 40 percent of the deaths were caused by drowning; 25 percent by injury and trauma; and heart conditions caused another 11 percent.

If you remember the devastation and destruction on the TVs that covered it, you will understand the anxiety that the people that were down there suffered.

Let me take a second before I go into some of the other statistics to just say many people always say that Hurricane

Katrina was the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States.

Well, I appreciate the sentiment. But, factually, that is just not correct. Hurricane Katrina was the result of a manmade disaster combined with a natural disaster.

The Army Corps of Engineers had great notice that the levees that protected New Orleans and the metropolitan area were not sufficient. When the storm hit, the levees washed away.

Then there was something called the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, which we call MRGO. It was designed by the Corps of Engineers to allow ship traffic to the great Port of New Orleans all the way up to America's heartland. It was designed to be almost 100 yards wide to allow ship traffic.

By the time Katrina hit, almost 30, 40 years after it was built, it was not 100 yards wide anymore. It was almost a mile wide in its largest sections. And that water coming out of the Gulf of Mexico caused a lot of the devastation.

So I wanted to clear up the fact that this was not a natural disaster. It had a large part to do with mankind having their hand in it and inadequate building by the Corps of Engineers.

Before I finish and yield back to Congressman SCALISE, let me also say that, when Katrina hit, although the government response was lacking, the American people stood up, recognized the situation, and opened their hearts to the people of Louisiana, the people of Mississippi, and some of the people of Texas.

Baton Rouge alone handled 300,000 to 400,000 displaced individuals from the New Orleans area.

Houston, Texas, handled right around 250,000 people in terms of bringing them into shelters and other places so that they could be safe and have some housing.

Now you still have 111,000 people in Houston that are from the greater New Orleans area. I remember traveling to Houston after the storm and going to the shelters and watching the extraordinary work of SHEILA JACKSON LEE and AL GREEN to provide for New Orleans and New Orleans-area evacuees.

100,000 evacuees in Atlanta, in shelters and in homes, with HANK JOHNSON and the Honorable JOHN LEWIS helping. Now Atlanta still is home to 70,000.

San Antonio, Texas, held almost 35,000 people at the time of the storm, and now they still hold 15,000 to 18,000.

Then that brings me to Birmingham which right after the storm housed 20,000 people, and now they house in between 1,500 to 13,000.

So the magnitude of this storm was great.

I just want to cover the population decrease. And then the other things with Hurricane Katrina I will cover more in depth with my good friend and colleague from Mississippi, BENNIE THOMPSON, whose district was also impacted.

But I will just say the population of New Orleans was 484,000 before Katrina.

Right after Katrina it was right around 230,000 people. And that is a decrease of almost half of the city's population.

So when you look at that damage and you look at the fact that we lost 134,000 housing units, 70 percent of all occupied housing units of the city, you will understand the magnitude and the depth of the devastation that our district suffered.

But once again the people of New Orleans and the people of Louisiana—we pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and we start building a better New Orleans and a better future.

However, we still have many needs. We still have many things that we need to right that didn't go right during the storm.

But, as of now, I just wanted to talk about how resilient the people of New Orleans were during the storm and the outpouring of love from the rest of the country.

Mr. SCALISE. Thank you, Congressman RICHMOND.

Of course, as the gentleman talked about, the devastation and those 1,833 lives that we lost throughout the Gulf Coast still live with us. We still remember the people who gave their lives, who lost their lives, in this devastating storm.

But, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that you saw from the people of southeast Louisiana—I know I saw firsthand the strength, the resiliency, of the people back at a time not long after the storm hit when there were people questioning whether or not the city of New Orleans would be rebuilt or should be rebuilt. You saw that conversation start around the country.

But, Mr. Speaker, that didn't last long before you saw the Nation come together and make a commitment, and you saw the people of New Orleans make a commitment that the city would be rebuilt.

But I think this is where the story of recovery comes out so bright and strong, Mr. Speaker. That is how the people of the Gulf Coast, how the people of New Orleans, responded.

People didn't say they were just going to rebuild what was broken. You saw people demanding, demanding, Mr. Speaker, that we rebuild better, stronger, more efficient. People started demanding that government work differently, that government work better.

Those levees that failed, Mr. Speaker, caused so much of that devastation. People said: We need to reform the way that levees are built. You saw a citizen uprising, in fact, that led to dramatic changes in State law.

I was a State representative at the time. We actually changed the constitution of Louisiana to require that people who serve on levee boards actually have experience in things like engineering, hydrology.

You saw citizen groups like Women of the Storm emerge, where over 50,000 people signed a petition not long after that demanded that laws be changed, Mr. Speaker, to make those kinds of reforms in levee boards.

And when you look at the levees that were rebuilt today with the help of our colleagues up here in Congress and the work of FEMA and other agencies—when you look at those levees, they are dramatically better.

The flood protection systems are better in southeast Louisiana. That didn't happen by accident. That happened because the people demanded those kinds of changes.

You look at the political reform. As we all know, every State has got its problems. But Louisiana had a bad history of political corruption going back over 100 years.

The people of Louisiana demanded a better political system. You actually saw citizens picking up the telephone, calling the FBI if they saw an ounce of political corruption.

There became a zero tolerance for political corruption in the city of New Orleans and the surrounding regions. People went to jail.

But it was because the public said: We demand better. And, ultimately, that helped lead to the recovery that we see today 10 years later.

Just look at the school system, Mr. Speaker. Before Katrina struck, New Orleans had one of the most failed and corrupt public school systems in the country.

There were kids that were graduating—we had a high school valedictorian who couldn't pass the State exit exam.

After Katrina, again people said: We are going to rebuild, but we are going to demand a better public school system.

And you saw sweeping reforms move through the State legislature, setting up a system of charter schools in the New Orleans area that are now touted as the model for reform for urban education systems.

That didn't happen by accident. That happened because the people demanded better from government. We saw government fail at every level, Federal, State, and local. It is well documented.

□ 1900

The story of New Orleans today, 10 years after the storm, is the story of a strong and resilient people who said: We absolutely will rebuild, but we are not going to rebuild the same way that it was before with all of the flaws and problems that existed; we are going to demand better.

You can see better today, you can see the recovery. It is not over. There are still some neighborhoods that are working to rebuild, but there are so many neighborhoods that are stronger today, that are more thriving today. Young people coming in from other States to be a part of this renaissance, to be a part of this recovery.

It is an exciting time to be in the New Orleans region today; but obviously, as we reflect upon the devastation of Katrina 10 years ago, we know how far we have come and how much it took people pulling together, working

with groups like the Pastors Resource Council, pastors from all around the country that came together to say that, while government had its failings, individuals, communities came together, churches came together, faith-based groups stood up like we have known that they do in so many other disasters to help get food to people, get shelter to people, and help people recover.

We, obviously, reflect on and pray for the lives that were lost and remember the devastation that was so horrific, but we also celebrate the recovery that is still so evident in the people of Louisiana.

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

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, nearly 10 years ago, the scenes flashing across our television screens showed what appeared to be a Third World country—literally bodies floating in the streets, people that were homeless, homes washed away—one of the worst natural disasters in America's history.

Mr. Speaker, over 1,200 of our brothers, our sisters, our mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, our neighbors, our friends perished in the disaster on August 29, 2005. We lost over 1,200 people, Mr. Speaker.

These vulnerabilities were not vulnerabilities that were unknown. As a matter of fact, Mark Schleifstein with The Times-Picayune published a series known as "Washing Away" in 2002, years before Hurricane Katrina hit our State and caused all this devastation.

That series accurately predicted, the vulnerabilities accurately predicted the outcomes of a direct hit by a storm like Hurricane Katrina upon our communities. We saw what had happened. Homes, businesses, monuments, schools, our history, our dreams, our hopes, our future were all flooded as a result of Hurricane Katrina 10 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, this wasn't a Third World country; it was one of America's great cities that was underwater. Many people look back at Hurricane Katrina, and they view the impacts as being parochial, things that impacted Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama, not something that impacted the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. When the Mississippi River was shut down and all the ports associated with it across the Gulf Coast as a result of the devastating impacts, the farmers in the Midwest had no way of getting their crops out to market. There was no ca-

capacity within other transportation mediums to get these crops out; therefore, the farmers in the Midwest suffered as a result of Hurricane Katrina's impacts on the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Speaker, rail lines, Louisiana is only one of two places in the United States where we have all six class I rail lines. In many cases, the rail lines and the associated infrastructure was destroyed, therefore, once again, severely impacting America's intermodal transportation system.

The economy, one of the places that has these amazing natural resources, has an amazing energy industry, petrochemical industry, agriculture industry, and many, many others, severely impacted, causing impacts not just again to the regional economy, but to the national economy.

Mr. Speaker, one great example of that is gasoline prices. Following Hurricane Katrina, we watched gasoline prices spike 75 cents a gallon; but let me be clear, not in Louisiana, nationwide—75 cents a gallon is the national average price increase as a result of those 2005 hurricanes on the Gulf Coast—75 cents a gallon.

As I recall, I believe that translates into \$450 million in higher consumer payments per day as a result of the impacts those storms had, the 2005 hurricanes—Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita—had on the Gulf Coast and had on, really, the Nation.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, the deficit, much of the recovery that was funded by the Federal Government, in fact, the far majority of it, was funded by deficit spending, funded by deficit spending. This wasn't spending that was offset; this wasn't reserve dollars that the Federal Government had sitting there waiting for this unbelievable disaster. This was deficit spending.

Our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren will be paying for decades for this. I want to be clear, Mr. Speaker, this was preventable, which I am going to talk about in a minute.

Also the impact to the environment, here you see the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and you see the EPA out there talking about the importance of wetlands and the importance of waters of the United States and writing all of these extraordinary rules to grant themselves more aggressive jurisdiction, larger jurisdiction over our private lands; yet as a result of those storms alone in 2005, we lost over 200 square miles of coastal wetlands in the State of Louisiana alone.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to say again, a lot of people looked at this and watched it on TV and saw it as being a parochial problem, a problem of the Gulf Coast, a problem of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, you could cut and paste that situation; you could paste virtually any other coastal city, any other coastal State in this Nation, and they potentially could face the same repercussions, the same outcomes as