

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.

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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

we experienced in 2005 because this Nation continues to have a reactive policy to disasters, and it is something that we have got to change.

We could have taken the hundred-plus billion dollars that Congress appropriated following the 2005 hurricanes to help recover, to help get these communities back on their feet across the Gulf Coast. We could have taken a fraction of those dollars, and we could have invested it proactively and prevented it from happening.

Mr. Speaker, any city on our coast could experience the same disaster we saw; and I remind you, just in 2012, we saw Hurricane Sandy cause profound consequences in New York, New Jersey, and other communities on the East Coast. I will say it once again, disasters that were preventable, and so this is something that we all need to be paying attention to.

While in New Orleans, while in south Louisiana and Mississippi and in Alabama, there were amazing stories of communities coming together, of people coming together, of resilient families coming together to ensure that while this did knock them down, they were getting back up again, and they were going to recover—strong resolve from these communities all across the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Speaker, one other thing that was truly amazing is watching the incredible outpouring of support not just from the Gulf Coast, but from all over this Nation and countries around the world, committing to come help us recover across the Gulf Coast.

It was an amazing opportunity for people to come together, to put down differences, and to all come together in support of the recovery of these communities, the recovery of these families, the recovery of these businesses, the recovery of the hopes and dreams of these communities across the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to see this play over and over again. We are going to continue to see these types of disasters over and over again until we turn the policies around in the United States, until we see fundamental changes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pivot back to the recovery; I want to pivot back to New Orleans; I want to pivot back to Plaquemines Parish and St. Bernard, St. Tammany; I want to pivot back to lower Jefferson Parish. These communities, in many cases, were destroyed.

Everything was underwater, everything. I will say it again, the homes, the businesses, the schools, the hopes, the dreams, the future underwater—and 10 years ago, 10 years ago, unbelievable. I think that most people would have told you these communities aren't coming back; they can't come back. They have been so profoundly impacted that they simply can't recover from this, but that is not what happened.

As you just heard Mr. SCALISE discuss, people came together. We now

have an amazing progress, amazing recovery of our schools in south Louisiana, amazing recovery in our economy.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we now have tens of billions of dollars in economic development projects on the horizon while, in other areas, you are seeing people losing jobs, you are seeing businesses close, you are seeing small businesses shut down and a trend of more small businesses closing and opening across the Nation; but in Louisiana, Mr. Speaker, tens of billions of dollars in new economic development projects on the horizon.

As a matter of fact, we have the largest foreign investment in U.S. history committed to projects in south Louisiana. We are seeing a manufacturing renaissance, and it is happening because our people are so resilient because we have come back, because we have come together, and because we have plotted a path to the future using the resources that Louisiana is so blessed with, the Louisiana maritime transportation system that we have, and the amazing natural resources in regard to the inexpensive, readily available natural gas, oil, petrochemical industry, the rail lines, the intermodal transportation facilities.

We have been able to accomplish a manufacturing renaissance not in Mexico, not in Asia, but right here in the United States in south Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to say I pray that there is not another community, that there is not another city, that there is not another State in this Nation that has to experience, that has to go through the tragedy, the travesty that we experienced in south Louisiana, the loss of over 1,200 of our friends, our relatives, and our neighbors, to see the type of recovery, to see people come together.

To see us finally help to build a resilient protection system, resilient ecosystem to ensure that the next storm isn't going to cause the same devastation to New Orleans as we saw 10 years ago, I pray, Mr. Speaker, that that doesn't have to happen again.

The only way we prevent it from happening again is if people learn from the lessons of Hurricane Katrina, from Hurricane Rita, if they actually apply the lessons learned that we so painfully went through in south Louisiana, in Mississippi, and in Alabama, that we apply those lessons around the United States to make our communities more resilient; to make our economy more resilient; to make our businesses more resilient; to make our families more resilient; and, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, to ensure that we can all accomplish the American Dream.

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 Jan-

uary 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND) for 30 minutes.

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I want to just thank my colleagues from Louisiana for also talking about the devastation that we received in hurricanes, both Katrina and Rita, which we call the "sister hurricanes" because they were only separated by a couple of days and what damage that Hurricane Katrina caused. Just a few days later, Hurricane Rita came right behind it and exacerbated that damage.

Let me just hit on a few of the misperceptions of Katrina. Well, actually, since I have had a little time and I want to make sure that everyone involved has a chance to have time to speak on this, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), my good friend, who at the time was chair of the Homeland Security Committee, who made sure that some of the deficiencies in FEMA and some of the other places that caused us undue headaches during the rebuilding, that those headaches were relieved a little bit or eased a little bit because of the hard work of BENNIE THOMPSON, whose State also incurred some damage.

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Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. I appreciate the gentleman from New Orleans for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise for two reasons—one, to talk about what it is to be in the eye of a hurricane and to be without basic necessities for over 10 days because of a hurricane and, two, what it is that our government should do when those situations occur at the Federal, State, and local levels.

In my comments, initially, I will talk a little bit about what happened in August of 2005—how, in fact, so many people were impacted as well as what we have done as a government, what we didn't do, and what we should do in going forward.

As the gentleman from Louisiana has said, for the most part, both Hurricanes Rita and Katrina ravaged Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and a little bit of Florida, but I will limit my comments to Katrina. In Hurricane Katrina, there were over 1,800 people—from Florida to Texas—who died.

In my home State of Mississippi, 238 individuals died. Basically, what we had after that is over 1.2 million housing units damaged, and in my home State, almost 120,000 were completely destroyed. In southern Mississippi, that meant that over 60 percent of the single family dwellings were either destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, and the statistics were worse for rental units. Along the Gulf Coast—the beautiful Gulf Coast where we have the largest manmade beach in the United States—there were over 1 million people displaced. One month after the storm, 600,000 families were still homeless, and, ultimately, 114,000 were housed in FEMA trailers.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have to tell you what happened with the FEMA trailers. It was a mess. The government's