

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 449

To create a select committee to monitor and investigate the awarding and carrying out of contracts related to the relief and reconstruction efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2005

Mr. TIERNEY (for himself and Mr. LEACH) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Rules

RESOLUTION

To create a select committee to monitor and investigate the awarding and carrying out of contracts related to the relief and reconstruction efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina.

Whereas Congress has already dedicated tens of billions of dollars in emergency assistance and is expected to commit additional sums as necessary to support the relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region;

Whereas Congress has a responsibility to see that such funds are expeditiously and efficiently received by the individuals, families, communities, parishes, cities, and states affected by Hurricane Katrina;

Whereas the magnitude of such funds together with the speed with which these funds have been approved presents a challenge to the traditional functions of Congress;

Whereas the awarding and execution of contracts related to the relief and reconstruction efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina must be conducted in a way that is transparent, verifiable, and which gives confidence to the American people that their tax-dollars are being effectively and judiciously spent;

Whereas Congress has a constitutional responsibility to ensure comprehensive oversight of the expenditure of United States Government funds;

Whereas oversight should not be considered a partisan activity but viewed solely in the context of preserving public resources and bolstering people's confidence in the Government;

Whereas the Truman Committee in World War II stands as a constructive precedent for bipartisan oversight of contracting;

Whereas the Truman Committee is estimated to have saved the taxpayers of the United States 15 million dollars and potentially thousands of lives by eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy and ensuring transparency and prompt delivery of necessary war supplies;

Whereas the Truman Committee was established within a Congress controlled by the same party as the Executive;

Whereas in the bipartisan spirit of the original Truman Committee, and in recognition of the great challenges currently confronting the country, Congress should ensure that contracts awarded for relief and reconstruction ef-

forts in response to Hurricane Katrina are appropriately awarded and properly executed: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That there is hereby created a select com-
 2 mittee to investigate the awarding and carrying out of con-
 3 tracts related to the relief and reconstruction efforts in
 4 response to Hurricane Katrina.

5 MEMBERSHIP AND FUNCTIONS

6 SEC. 2. The select committee is to be composed of
 7 15 Members of the House, to be appointed by the Speaker
 8 (of whom 7 shall be appointed upon the recommendation
 9 of the minority leader), one of whom shall be designated
 10 as chairman from the majority party and one of whom
 11 shall be designated ranking member from the minority
 12 party. Any vacancy occurring in the membership of the
 13 select committee shall be filled in the same manner in
 14 which the original appointment was made. The select com-
 15 mittee shall conduct an ongoing study and investigation
 16 of the awarding and carrying out of contracts by the Gov-
 17 ernment to rebuild communities devastated by Hurricane
 18 Katrina and make such recommendations to the House
 19 as the select committee deems appropriate regarding the
 20 following matters—

21 (1) bidding, contracting, and auditing stand-
 22 ards in the issuance of Government contracts;

23 (2) oversight procedures;

1 (3) forms of payment and safeguards against
2 money laundering;

3 (4) accountability of contractors and Govern-
4 ment officials involved in procurement;

5 (5) penalties for violations of law and abuses in
6 the awarding and carrying out of Government con-
7 tracts;

8 (6) subcontracting under large, comprehensive
9 contracts;

10 (7) inclusion and utilization of small businesses,
11 through subcontracts or otherwise; and

12 (8) such other matters as the select committee
13 deems appropriate.

14 RULES AND PROCEDURE

15 SEC. 3. (a) QUORUM.—One-third of the members of
16 the select committee shall constitute a quorum for the
17 transaction of business except for the reporting of the re-
18 sults of its study and investigation (with its recommenda-
19 tions) or the authorization of subpoenas, which shall re-
20 quire a majority of the committee to be actually present,
21 except that the select committee may designate a lesser
22 number, but not less than two, as a quorum for the pur-
23 pose of holding hearings to take testimony and receive evi-
24 dence.

25 (b) POWERS.—For the purpose of carrying out this
26 resolution, the select committee may sit and act during

1 the present Congress at any time and place within the
2 United States or elsewhere, whether the House is in ses-
3 sion, has recessed, or has adjourned and hold such hear-
4 ings as it considers necessary and to require, by subpoena
5 or otherwise, the attendance and testimony of such wit-
6 nesses, the furnishing of information by interrogatory, and
7 the production of such books, records, correspondence,
8 memoranda, papers, documents, and other things and in-
9 formation of any kind as it deems necessary, including
10 classified materials.

11 (c) ISSUANCE OF SUBPOENAS.—A subpoena may be
12 authorized and issued by the select committee in the con-
13 duct of any investigation or series of investigations or ac-
14 tivities, only when authorized by a majority of the mem-
15 bers voting, a majority being present. Authorized sub-
16 poenas shall be signed by the chairman or by any member
17 designated by the select committee, and may be served by
18 any person designated by the chairman or such member.
19 Subpoenas shall be issued under the seal of the House
20 and attested by the Clerk. The select committee may re-
21 quest investigations, reports, and other assistance from
22 any agency of the executive, legislative, and judicial
23 branches of the Government.

24 (d) MEETINGS.—The chairman, or in his absence a
25 member designated by the chairman, shall preside at all

1 meetings and hearings of the select committee. All meet-
 2 ings and hearings of the select committee shall be con-
 3 ducted in open session, unless a majority of members of
 4 the select committee voting, there being in attendance the
 5 requisite number required for the purpose of hearings to
 6 take testimony, vote to close a meeting or hearing.

7 (e) APPLICABILITIES OF RULES OF THE HOUSE.—
 8 The Rules of the House of Representatives applicable to
 9 standing committees shall govern the select committee
 10 where not inconsistent with this resolution.

11 (f) WRITTEN COMMITTEE RULES.—The select com-
 12 mittee shall adopt additional written rules, which shall be
 13 public, to govern its procedures, which shall not be incon-
 14 sistent with this resolution or the Rules of the House of
 15 Representatives.

16 ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

17 SEC. 4. (a) APPOINTMENT OF STAFF.—The select
 18 committee staff shall be appointed, and may be removed,
 19 by the chairman and shall work under the general super-
 20 vision and direction of the chairman.

21 (b) POWERS OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER.—All
 22 staff provided to the minority party members of the select
 23 committee shall be appointed, and may be removed, by the
 24 ranking minority member of the committee, and shall
 25 work under the general supervision and direction of such
 26 member.

(c) COMPENSATION.—The chairman shall fix the compensation of all staff of the select committee, after consultation with the ranking minority member regarding any minority party staff, within the budget approved for such purposes for the select committee.

6 (d) REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES.—The select
7 committee may reimburse the members of its staff for
8 travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred
9 by them in the performance of their functions for the se-
10 lect committee.

(e) PAYMENT OF EXPENSES.—There shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House such sums as may be necessary for the expenses of the select committee. Such payments shall be made on vouchers signed by the chairman of the select committee and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Administration. Amounts made available under this subsection shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Administration.

REPORTS

SEC. 5. The select committee shall from time to time report to the House the results of its study and investigation, with its recommendations. Any report made by the select committee when the House is not in session shall be filed with the Clerk of the House. Any report made by the select committee shall be referred to the committee

1 or committees that have jurisdiction over the subject mat-
2 ter of the report.

