by Congress to fix the problems Hurricane Katrina has exposed.

H.R. 3673—SECOND EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great concern with the situation still being faced by families devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

As needed relief is finally making its way down to the affected region, our thoughts go out to all the victims and their families. Late last week, this body passed a $10.5 billion aid package that will provide initial funding for immediate and long-term responses. Today, we are passing an additional $51.8 billion. This funding will cover only a sliver of the final financial toll taken on communities throughout the Gulf Coast and what will be needed for families to re-start their lives. Yet this monetary cost pales in comparison to the immense emotional and human cost that continues to grow.

At the end of the day, the United States government is constitutionally obligated to ''insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, [and] promote the general welfare'' for all citizens. Particularly during a time of crisis, it is absolutely necessary that these obligations be fulfilled. In that regard, the federal government has failed. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina last week, thousands of families, stranded, injured, homeless, and without basic necessities of water and food waited and waited and waited for emergency relief. For four days, the President, Congress, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) minimized to themselves and to the public the immensity of what was occurring. The very institutions established to serve and protect the American people instead watched and waited as the tragedy grew.

The response of the government to the needs of these communities was demonstrably and woefully inadequate. I am pleased that an investigation has been launched to discover why the government agencies entrusted with providing emergency aid failed to respond in any meaningful way to the grave situation. Ultimately, we must determine what changes need to be made in order to ensure that future relief efforts are not hindered by incompetent management or bureaucratic obstructions, as they were last week. However, we will only find true accountability with a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate what went wrong.

Natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina can never be prevented, no matter how well prepared we may be. However, shifting natural conditions on the planet indicate that we may soon be seeing an increase in such events. In early August 2005, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) released a report stating that environmental conditions guaranteed an increase in destructive and powerful hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. Already this year we have seen an increase in hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. Such a warning has been voiced for some time, and we are now seeing the results if we continue to ignore such information. Additionally, the New Orleans Times-Picayune predicted this very disaster as recently as 2002. President Bush's assertion that ''no one could have predicted'' this disaster is clearly, and tragically, wrong.

Through the generosity of millions of Americans, those families affected by the hurricane are receiving some of the help they need, and I have absolutely no doubt that they will prevail in rebuilding their lives and their community. We must pledge to do all we can to help.

As we proceed with the long-term solutions, we need to make sure we do the right thing here in Congress. It is our job to make choices and these choices reflect our priorities. I hope the majority will acknowledge that many of the choices made in recent years were ill-advised. Together, we need to put the financial resources to work to improve the lives of survivors. It is not the time for business-as-usual, cut-taxes-at-all-costs, short-change-the-working-poor proposals we have come to expect from the majority. We can do better, and we must.

H.R. 3673—SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, in less than a week, we will have passed supplementals providing over $60 billion in emergency aid to respond to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. We have been told we are spending about $2 billion a day in hurricane response efforts. We all want to care for those who have suffered damaged homes and those who have been left homeless, many with literally only the shirts on their backs, by this terrible storm. I realize many face an uncertain future with unemployment gone and only questions remaining.

At the same time, $60 billion spent over 6 weeks creates an opportunity for waste and unwise spending decisions. I want the funds to go to those who need it and those who have and continue to suffer. But we also owe it to our constituents—and indeed perhaps even more to Katrina's victims—that these funds be spent based on careful consideration of what is needed and what is the best and most effective—and cost effective—method for achieving our goals.

Chairman LEWIS has stressed the accountability provisions included in the bill. The Inspector General of the Homeland Security Department will be monitoring the expenditure of these funds. The Appropriations Committee will receive weekly reports on how the funds are allocated.

We all want to respond to this disaster in the most compassionate way possible. But we also have an obligation as elected officials to ensure that funds we spend are carefully considered, used for true critical and emergency functions, and spent wisely.

Once all are out of harms way with immediate needs met, I hope that we will slow down and move forward in a deliberative way as we consider continued response and, most importantly, long-term plans for rebuilding the Gulf Coast. We will be held accountable, as we should be, for the investment of the funds. While the American people want us to be generous, there are many hard decisions ahead. It is incumbent on all of us in the Congress to ensure that we invest our taxpayer dollars in the most responsible way.

SECOND EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers go out to the people of the Gulf Coast and their loved ones who have been so profoundly affected by Hurricane Katrina. My deepest gratitude goes out to all those engaged in relief efforts.

Our nation is grieving. The images and stories broadcast from flooded streets and makeshift shelters will be forever engraved in our minds and hearts. Hurricane Katrina has collectively wounded us. But, out of this anguish, an intense commitment has emerged—to stand alongside the brave survivors during this time of recovery.

While Katrina' s historic rampage of the Gulf Coast can be measured in hours, recovery will likely be recorded in terms of years and billions of dollars. Last week, Congress provided a ''down payment'' of $10.5 billion. We are here today to approve a $51.8 billion disaster relief package to aid further recovery efforts. All support—given recent events—carry grave concerns about how money will flow to those suffering from this natural and man-made disaster.

Like many, I am alarmed over apparent delays, and lack of communication and coordination. But, these frustrations cannot distract us from the work ahead of us. Our priorities are clear: Focus on Katrina's survivors, first.

Many of the survivors have lost loved ones, are homeless, and face the terrifying prospect of starting their lives over. Nevertheless, they have demonstrated a remarkable resiliency in a desire to move forward and need support to do so.

Families have been separated, and must be reunited.

The injured and sick need care and treatment, including a wide array of mental health services.

My office has been in direct contact with local disaster response officials to ensure that San Diego's available resources are aiding those suffering in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Members of San Diego's Urban Search-and-Rescue Taskforce have left for the Gulf Coast to provide assistance, as well as a variety of first responders and military personnel.

After we have seen to the needs of those hurt by Katrina, let's look at the broader picture. There must be a thorough and independent review of the response effort in the coming days. We need to answer the serious questions and concerns Hurricane Katrina raised about emergency planning. Namely, we need to address the care and evacuation for the vulnerable in our communities when emergencies arise.

On a personal note—based on my volunteer experience with the Red Cross after Katrina's landfall—we need to develop an efficient

method of tracking missing family members and reuniting them with their loved ones. I spoke to people who were desperate to learn the whereabouts of their loved ones. The pain in their voices was evident and made worse by the scarcity of available information. A number of websites, registries and other electronic bulletins have sprung up in response. CNN and other cable channels have taken on this challenge. Children are going before the cameras seeking relatives. What is the federal responsibility to ensure a comprehensive emergency database for such catastrophes?

We need to reevaluate existing emergency management practices and policies. What are the skill sets needed to assure those in charge are able to properly and aggressively manage a widespread emergency? How much can we realistically rely on the military? Can and should those capabilities be developed to a greater extent in the civilian population? Do we overextend and over depend on local responders who—by virtue of being personally affected by a cataclysmic event—are unable to provide their talents when needed?

We can, we must, and we will do everything possible to make sure our lack of preparedness and slow response to this catastrophic on-going tragedy never happens again.

REGARDING THE $10.5 BILLION AID PACKAGE FOR THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, "Four years ago this month, the City I represent fell victim to a major disaster now infamously known as 9/11. When that happened we received the world's sympathy and we expected and received the support of the federal government to help us rebuild. Last December, the world came to the aid of Southeast Asian nations when the Indian Ocean leapt upon the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka and other coastal nations. The world responded and the U.S. Federal government stepped up to the plate.

Once again, disaster has struck, this time in the form of hurricane Katrina. Again, thousands of people will have lost their lives and ten times that have lost their homes and livelihood. The world is offering its sympathy and support and Congress is meeting its responsibility by providing the Federal Government with $10.5 billion in initial emergency aid. Certainly more will be needed, and more will be provided.

Additionally, I urge my fellow members of Congress to work with their local communities on neighborhood efforts to provide support for the relief efforts. As Americans we have many differences amongst us. Differences in race, religion and political ideologies to name a few. However, we have two commonalities that supercede those differences—we are all Americans and we are all human beings. As it was four years ago in my City of New York, it is today in our Gulf region. Let us respond today as we did then with overwhelming compassion and support for fellow members of our American-human family".

SECOND KATRINA SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, rescue personnel from across the country are continuing the relief effort while ordinary citizens in cities throughout America are volunteering and giving. They are taking in those who have lost everything. Heroism is winning out. And the funding in this underlying bill will help ensure that it continues to.

But as we work to get this relief effort right, Congress should recognize how we got to this point. That starts with understanding what this Administration has done to FEMA.

Last year, former director of FEMA James Lee Witt told us, and I quote—"Scientists tell us that we are going to be seeing more catastrophic natural disaster events in the 21st Century then we've ever seen. . . And yet we have destroyed the one agency that not only responds to those events, but also works with state and local governments to do pre-disaster mitigation prevention before that risk could ever happen, to minimize that risk."

As long as our nation gazes upon the devastation in this once-vibrant city of New Orleans, it will remain a symbol of this Administration's misplaced priorities—its misplaced values. The Obey Amendment would have gone a long way toward restoring FEMA to the efficient, non-political agency it was during emergencies like the Oklahoma City bombings in the 1990's. In doing so, we would ensure that never again in the face of a national disaster will the Federal government and the agency responsible for emergency relief fail to act or fail to lead. We owe the victims of Katrina and the heroes of this rescue effort nothing less.

BEATRICE AVINA: WINNER OF THE 2005 JOHNS RETIREE OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, by the time Bea began her career in 1984 with the AFL–CIO Community Services Department with United Way of San Diego County, she had already learned that families have special needs due to unexpected events and circumstances. Those things she learned while she was a member of UFIWU and Seafarers International.

Addressing those special needs gave her an advantage when chairing the Federal Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program, Catholic Charities' SDG&E Utilities Program, and working in cooperation with the San Diego Food Bank. Under her leadership, the Adopt a Family Program and the Toy & Holiday Food Drive were developed and still continue to be a success.

Bea Avina has always been dedicated to bringing her fellow brothers and sisters social and economic justice. She is a prime example of a person who always puts her neighbor's needs first.

Since retiring in December 2003, Bea has not sat idle. She currently volunteers approximately four to six days a month as a Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) for the San Diego Police Department and remains energetic in church and family activities.

I am proud to salute Bea Avina on her recognition as the Johns Retiree of the Year.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT TROY A. STEWART

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise before you today to recognize the accomplishments of an American hero, Master Sergeant Troy A. Stewart of Essexville, MI, which is in my district. On September 10, the United States Marine Corps will join family and friends to pay tribute to Master Sergeant Stewart, as he retires from active service after 20 dedicated years.

Troy Stewart was born August 29, 1966, in my hometown of Flint, MI. He enlisted in the Marine Corps on June 27, 1985, and was assigned to 29 Palms CA for Communications Center School, where he graduated as the Academic Honor Graduate. By August 1986, Private First Class Stewart was promoted to Lance Corporal, and reported to Marine Wing Communications Squadron-28, Marine Air Control Group-28, 2nd Marine Air Wing in Cherry Point, NC, where he worked as a Field Message Center Operator. Two years later, Corporal Stewart reported for duty as the Divisions Enlisted Assignments Non-Commissioned Officer at Headquarters and Service Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, in Okinawa, Japan.

In 1989, Corporal Stewart returned to the United States, stationed first at Camp Lejeune, NC, and later back at Cherry Point, where he also attended Non-Commissioned Officers School. Corporal Stewart graduated a few days before the rest of his class, due to his deployment as a Top Secret Courier with the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade in support of Operation Ahaus Tara in Honduras. Corporal Stewart returned again after that mission, and served as SORTS Non-Commissioned Officer, Platoon Sergeant, and the Squadron's Training Non-Commissioned Officer.

From 1990 through 1993, Sergeant Stewart attended Communications Systems Chief School as well as Drill Instructors School. In July 1995, he received a Meritorious Promotion to Staff Sergeant. Following his Drill Instructor duty, he reported to Quantico, VA, where he completed Air Crew School and operated as a Marine One Communicator. In January 2002, Master Sergeant Stewart assumed the duties as the Staff Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the Recruiting Sub-Station in Saginaw, MI, the position he holds to this day.

I would also like to acknowledge Master Sergeant Stewart's wonderful family: his wife, Corporal Kimberly Stewart, and their daughters, Desireé and Tory.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to acknowledge the life and career of Master Sergeant Troy Stewart. He has served his country with dignity and honor, and has been recognized