

□ 1600

While these authority changes to the single-family housing program are not limited to disaster situations, they will be very helpful in assisting families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

H.R. 3895 will help ensure that housing assistance continues to be available to those of the neediest individuals and families in the rural gulf region, who have already suffered greatly in the aftermath of the hurricanes.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and, Madam Speaker, point out that the committee, once again, has worked effectively through these issues, these three suspension calendar votes, in anticipation, as the gentleman from Louisiana pointed out, and my friend from Massachusetts mentioned, with a goal of looking at a long-term solution to this problem that is one that will not go away and will be over a period of years, as the gentleman from Louisiana pointed out.

I want to say to the members of the committee and to the House that this committee stands ready to do what is necessary to bring relief to those regions in a fiscally responsible manner. I have every reason to think we will do exactly that.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), a member of the committee.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank our ranking member for yielding. Also I want to thank the ranking member on the Housing Subcommittee for her leadership and for really trying to make sure that these bills before us today have bipartisan support and have become better bills as they move through this process.

People displaced by this horrible disaster deserve clean, safe and decent housing. They should be provided with the opportunity to return home as quickly and as safely as possible. Yet, I do not believe these bills accomplish this goal.

HUD has not received, first of all, nearly enough authority or funding to do what is necessary to provide for the Katrina survivors. First, nowhere do we acknowledge the inadequate response to date of the administration or the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the housing crisis in the gulf.

Secondly, there is no additional funding in any of these bills for the CDBG or emergency housing vouchers for families affected by Hurricane Katrina. There is not enough money at HUD, and we should not redirect funding that is already inadequate in one account, to move it to another account. Indeed, we need more resources to accomplish what we need to accomplish. The bottom line is, there needs to be new money for housing, and we need it now.

Finally, there is not enough thought given to prohibiting the use of substandard housing for Katrina survivors or for the creation of affordable hous-

ing construction programs for new, safe and affordable housing. Although these bills waive the pre-inspection process for about 6 months for Katrina survivors in terms of their housing needs, I really worry that people will find themselves living in substandard and dilapidated housing if we do not monitor this very closely.

What I find also very striking about these bills is that there are no measures to ensure that Katrina survivors can return to the gulf region without fear of housing discrimination from landlords or lenders. There are some serious housing policy issues at stake in these bills. There should be more opportunity for debate and thoughtful legislation.

Madam Speaker, the reality is, these bills do very little for the people who are relying on us to help. Having traveled to Houston and having talked to Katrina survivors; I went to the shelters, like many, and I have heard firsthand the needs and seen firsthand their pain. I know very well that housing, providing affordable decent safe housing, is very central to their recovery.

When I think about how much Katrina survivors have lost, compared to what this administration is willing to sacrifice in their misguided budget priorities, it falls way short, I am sorry to say, of what we should be doing. We need to provide housing bills that create new funding for emergency, flexible, section 8 vouchers. We need to increase the funding and authority of HUD to truly help Katrina survivors and also to take steps to eradicate poverty. Effective housing strategies with full funding would help to begin to address these underlying systemic issues which surface during this tragedy.

I would like to thank our housing leaders again, Congressman BARNEY FRANK and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, for attempting to make these bills better. I welcome the opportunity to continue to work with my colleagues to authorize and to fund significant Katrina housing legislation in the near future.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3895, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3895.

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

There was no objection.

HURRICANE KATRINA EMERGENCY RELIEF CDBG FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2005

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3896) to temporarily suspend, for communities affected by Hurricane Katrina, certain requirements under the community development block grant program, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3896

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Hurricane Katrina Emergency Relief CDBG Flexibility Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. SUSPENSION OF PUBLIC SERVICES CAP.

(a) UNITS OF GENERAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND INDIAN TRIBES.—

(1) SUSPENSION FOR DIRECTLY AFFECTED COMMUNITIES.—The percentage limitations under paragraph (8) of section 105(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(8)) on the amount of assistance under title I of such Act that may be used for the provision of public services by a unit of general local government or Indian tribe that is, or is within, a directly affected community (as such term is defined in section 4 of this Act) shall not apply with respect to any of fiscal years 2005 through 2008 for such unit of general local government or Indian tribe.

(2) AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND FOR INDIRECTLY AFFECTED COMMUNITIES.—For any indirectly affected community (as such term is defined in section 4 of this Act), the Secretary may waive the applicability, for such period during the fiscal years referred to in paragraph (1) as the Secretary considers appropriate, of the percentage limitations under paragraph (8) of section 105(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(8)) on the amount of assistance under title I of such Act that may be used for the provision of public services by a unit of general local government or Indian tribe that is, or is within, such indirectly affected community. In determining the period for which to waive such limitations, the Secretary shall take into consideration the specific economic circumstances of each such indirectly affected community.

(b) NONENTITLEMENT COMMUNITIES.—Assistance provided under title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 may be used for the provision of public services in any directly affected community (as such term is defined in section 4 of this Act) without regard to the percentage limitations under paragraph (8) of section 105(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(8)) on the amount of assistance that may be used statewide in non-entitlement communities for such activities and any such amounts so used in any directly affected community shall not be considered for purposes of such statewide limitations.

SEC. 3. SUSPENSION OF PUBLIC HEARING REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, with respect to a grant under section 106 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5306) for fiscal year 2006 for any unit of general local government or Indian tribe that is, or is located in, a directly affected community, waive or specify alternative requirements for the public hearing requirements specified under subsection (b).

(b) PUBLIC HEARING REQUIREMENTS.—The public hearing requirements specified under this subsection are—

(1) the requirement under section 104(a)(2)(C) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5304(a)(2)(C)) to hold public hearings;

(2) the requirements under subparagraphs (D) and (F) of section 104(a)(3) of such Act to make certifications in the detailed citizenship participation plan regarding public hearings; and

(3) any requirement pursuant to section 106(d)(7)(C) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5306(d)(7)(C)) to hold public hearings.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) DIRECTLY AFFECTED COMMUNITY.—The term “directly affected community” means a unit of general local government or area for which the President has declared a major disaster under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) in connection with Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita.

(2) INDIRECTLY AFFECTED COMMUNITY.—The term “indirectly affected community” means a unit of general local government or area that—

(A) is a metropolitan city, urban county, or Indian tribe (as such terms are defined in section 102(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5304(a));

(B) is not, and is not within, a directly affected community; and

(C) is determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to have been significantly affected economically by the occurrence of Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita (including economic effects from the presence of persons evacuated from an area for which the President has declared a major disaster in connection with Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita).

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) and the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER).

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3896, the Hurricane Katrina Emergency Relief CDBG Flexibility Act of 2005. Many local officials are quite familiar with the provisions of the CDBG block grant program, which enables local communities to meet needs at their discretion. Within the body of the existing rules that govern the applicability of these funds, however, there is a provision that restrains the utilization of money for certain purposes to no more than 15 percent of the total funds made available.

For example, the prohibited areas are limited areas and are known as public

services, would include activities such as crime prevention. If a community wished to spend more than 15 percent of its block grant on crime-related services, it would be prohibited from doing so now under the current rule.

Further defined under the definition of public services are homebuyer down payment assistance, fair housing counseling, health services and child care. So in the affected area of the Katrina disaster, if a community wished to help individuals get access to homeownership with a homebuyer down payment assistance program, they would be limited in the scope of those funds to only 15 percent being made available for that activity.

This bill merely lifts temporarily that 15 percent limitation on CDBG block grants.

I think it is a very good way to provide needed resources within local communities to meet the needs as they best see them. Of course, the grant is still subject to all the normal review and processes, so there is accountability for utilization, but it simply creates more flexibility within local governments to meet the needs of the communities as a result of these dire circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today we stand here in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, considering uses for the community development block grant to address the housing and infrastructure crisis wrought upon us by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Madam Speaker, it is ironic because it was not more than a few months ago that I stood with my colleagues, opposed to the administration's attempt to block grant CDBG to the States and to move CDBG and 17 other programs to the Commerce Department. I am so pleased that did not happen.

Today, based upon the proven merits of this program, based on the effectiveness and consistency of a statutory mission, based on the need to quickly and effectively provide relief, the administration is now looking to CDBG, and I support that. H.R. 3896 attempts to make two major temporary changes to the community development block grant. H.R. 3896 seeks to weigh the public services cap, which is currently set at 15 percent, and which I support, that is, with a caveat, and H.R. 3896 seeks to waive the requirement for public hearings concerning the use of CDBG funds, and I am concerned about that.

Madam Speaker, at the core of CDBG is its original statutory goal to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and suitable living environments and the expansion of economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income.

When I traveled to Baton Rouge and New Orleans, I toured the devastation, the homelessness and the desperation

that had been created by this disaster. This hurricane certainly exacerbated the poverty and lack of education, lack of economic opportunity that has plagued New Orleans and surrounding areas throughout the gulf, specifically the African-American population.

This hurricane has shown a virtual spotlight on problems that are emblematic of inner cities all across this country. I spoke to people about their needs and their hopes for their immediate future. The one thing that was consistent, the one thing that was unchanging, was the determination of people to return home.

Madam Speaker, community development block grant is a proven program that provides critical infrastructure resources, and it is a program that can help Katrina victims in their stated goal of returning home. CDBG is one of the best mechanisms that we can employ to help in the reconstruction of the gulf region, because it puts money in the hands of the community and the city government, and they know what to do with it. Furthermore, it is directed to rebuild critical infrastructure, which is a step or step one in re-establishing community. But, again, that amounts at best to flexibility and at worse a little more than a legislative process, exercise.

H.R. 3896 provides no additional resources to the directly affected areas. Rather, this bill simply creates programmatic waivers which will allow flexibility but not expansion.

Let me just say this: We all agree at this critical moment that CDBG is a great program. Many of us have thought to expand CDBG, because it is such a great program. This program helps large cities, small towns, communities, not only to repair its infrastructure but to provide services that cannot be provided in any other way because there are no other resources to provide these services.

My colleague from Louisiana just identified a number of those services, helping people with down payment, helping with child care, helping with other programs. I would have hoped that we could have expanded this program. We could deal with the identified needs, not only of New Orleans but the other parishes and the surrounding communities and with Mississippi, Gulfport, and Alabama, but because CDBG is proven to be able to help move whole cities and communities from communities and cities where they have disproportionate poverty that they have no resources to deal with.

I am pleased that we have it here today so that we can lift the cap, and they will have a little bit more flexibility. Ladies and gentlemen, I want this to be a lesson for us, a lesson for us all, that we should not only fight to maintain CDBG in HUD and not transfer it out to Department of Commerce, where we would get people who do not know what to do with it, do not know how to administer it and would only mess it up; but that we would expand it

so that we would have the resources to deal with housing crises, because this is a great program to deal with housing needs in every city and every town across this country that is eligible for it.

□ 1615

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), our ranking member, to further support CDBG.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, once again, this is a bill that is broadly, probably unanimously, supported, or overwhelmingly; and it reflects a good deal of conversation. We appreciate the willingness of the Members on the majority side to come together. Obviously, there continue to be some differences between us on some policy issues; but in terms of responding to this emergency, those are not things that should get in the way. I think both sides showed a spirit of co-operation. The majority was very helpful, and we have legislation that can be widely supported.

But, once again, the problem is what it does is good, but what it does not do is not so good. In particular in this case we ought to be substantially increasing the CDBG funding. Now, we are not the Committee on Appropriations. We do have an authorizing power.

Giving the people the ability to spend on more things but not more money is better than nothing, but not nearly good enough. CDBG needs the kinds of things that CDBG does, both for the larger communities of 50,000 or more, called "entitlement cities," but also what we should be doing here is providing to the Governors of the affected States funding which they could use in their CDBG programming, because they get one-third of it, for those communities that are in areas of less than 50,000 population, that is, they are the Small Communities Program, and we should be increasing the funding there. I hope at an appropriate time we will do that, because these communities are going to need a great deal of help.

The CDBG program is one of the logical ways to do it. We know how to spend here. It is a program which has had virtually no scandal, to my knowledge. It is a program which works well, and simply expanding this existing funding mechanism would be one very good way to get money to people very quickly in ways they know how to spend.

But I also should note, as the gentlewoman from California noted, I guess in some ways those of us who have been advocates of an active government role in the housing and community development areas can feel somewhat more supported today than we often are on this floor, because we have now had three bills in a row which take advantage of the existence of federally funded programs which have a lot of critics around here.

We have had proposals from the administration this year, from HUD, to dismantle in their existing form both the voucher program and the CDBG program. There was a proposal to block grant the voucher program. Block granting, by the way is what people do to programs they do not like. I have been here a long time. Nobody in my memory has ever proposed block granting a Federal program which he or she supported.

What we had basically was an effort to cut back on the voucher program. What we are doing now is taking the concept of the voucher program and greatly expanding it, through FEMA funding; but, yes, it is a voucher program that has not only proven its worth but is a lifeline at a time when we need one. It would have been a bad thing if we would have had to invent such a program right now because of all the startup problems you would have.

Similarly, as the gentlewoman from California pointed out, this administration proposed the most hair-brained reorganization of the Community Development Block Grant program imaginable. They took the Community Development Block Grant, which aids communities, they took the Community Services Block Grant, which deals with poverty, they took the Community Development Financial Institutions, which deals with economic development in cities, and decided to put them all in the Commerce Department.

CDBG and CSBG have a particular impact on poverty. I think what happened was they had a contest over there in the administration, maybe one of those lotteries they have when they try to help 1 percent of the people that need housing, and they decided to find the Federal Department that had the least orientation towards helping poor people, so they could take these programs that help poor people and give it to that Department.

So we took it out of HUD, and we took it out of the Health and Human Services Department, and they took programs out of Labor, and they sent them to the Department of Commerce. I think on the grounds that the Department of Commerce really did not know enough about poverty, and this is a way for them to learn. I am all for educating people, but not by giving them Federal programs as their blocks.

So what we have today is an affirmation in this bill of the importance of the Community Development Block Grant program as a proven mechanism for getting aid out.

Again, I want to say, and I suppose this will cause a little friction, maybe some people will have to disassociate themselves, but I do appreciate the difference between the members of our committee on the majority side in their approach to these things and the administration. Unlike the administration, which had as its intention dismantling these things, and we, I think were not going to act on that, we are here trying to build on them.

Of course, there is always room for improvement. We have been having some conversations about how to improve the voucher program, how to streamline it, how to make it more efficient. But substantially diminishing it would have been a mistake. So I am very pleased.

Of course, that was also the case with rural housing, because one of the things I hope we will do in the near future, in the next few months, this year or next year, is to go to the rural housing program and take some steps that will preserve that as a source of affordable housing.

There are trends and various complications that we do not need to go into here now, which, if not confronted, we could lose that housing. So we have a recognition today of the importance of the concept of the voucher program. We have a recognition of the importance of the Community Development Block Grant mechanism in delivering services with Federal funding. We have a recognition of the importance of preserving and using that rural housing stock. I hope all of those will go forward.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I do want to repeat again, these steps are useful. They leave us with a lot to do. The problem is that the Bush administration at this point has zero proposals that will respond to the longer-term needs of these affected communities. I am told these proposals are coming, and I do not doubt some of my colleagues will be coming forward with them.

But we did have a speech from the President of the United States in which he outlined his plans; and the one I looked at very closely was his housing plan, his housing plan consisting of an effort to find existing Federal properties that the Federal Government does not want or need and have a lottery, so a very small percentage, 1 or 2 percent of the people in need, can get Federal property and zero dollars from any source that we control to help make them into housing. And that, let us be clear, that is the sum total of the President's proposal for the longer term. It is wholly inadequate.

We have made a step here today. I look forward to our being back on this floor in coming months to talk about a broader set of proposals for community development, for housing and for other things; and I hope at the time we will keep in mind the importance of building on and improving these existing programs and continue to reject the kind of radical dismantling that the administration has proposed, and instead to try and have their return to the 19th century with the concept of homesteading, which is inappropriate, inadequate, and ill thought out.

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment, but a heartfelt comment, about my appreciation to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), the

gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) as to the true bipartisan manner in which these matters have been debated, considered, and supported.

I also want to make known that the administration has exhibited great concern, the President visiting the affected areas now many times, the various agency Secretaries, an innumerable number of Federal employees, occupying one of the former largest department stores in our community in an operations center that we have never seen anything like before. Although inefficient at times, never meeting anyone's expectations appropriately, many people, volunteers as well as paid employees, have spent now countless hours on the ground in all of the communities that are affected.

It is indeed a disaster beyond one's comprehension, and the remedies offered will take considerable time. There is no magic wand in any Department of the government, State, Federal or local, one can wave and make the hurt go away. This is going to take a decade, if not longer. Restoration of the levees to a category 5 integrity, environmental remediation to remove the siltation that was deposited, restoration of bridges and structures to provide people merely access to the communities in which they once resided, restoration of employer opportunities so people can have jobs, and schools need to be built so kids can get an education, fire stations and police stations must be built to provide for civil order, this is no small task.

So I say to my colleagues in the United States House, I am deeply appreciative of your kind expressions of concern and offers of assistance. In fact, one of the barriers to speeding up assistance, I wanted, along with Chairman NEY, to create a House Intranet, just for House Members. I had Members who went to FEMA with resources they wanted to volunteer to give to us in our communities, and they could not get through the regulatory processes to do it in any reasonable time.

I am now told if I were to propose, which I intend to do, the establishment of a Web page on the official services of the House on which Members could voluntarily list assets which they would make available to communities to be used freely for restoration of services in small towns across the gulf coast, that would be a violation of House ethics, using official resources for a charitable solicitation.

I am asking Members to join on to a letter asking that the rules be waived or, if necessary, an act be passed on this House floor, to allow those Members who have come up to me and said, I would like to offer this, to be able to offer that to the mayors, police systems and those affected across the stricken region.

My point is there is great empathy here in this body when disaster strikes this country. I am very appreciative of

that. I merely ask going forward that we continue to work in a bipartisan manner as we propose remedies coming from those in the affected communities that we believe appropriate and responsible.

I do not wish to leave this day without expressing the view held by all members of the Louisiana House delegation: we understand this is United States taxpayers' money. We understand there are people in jobs across this country working to pay their bills; and we are asking, through you, to take their money and give it to us. Certainly we have need, but we also understand there should be accountability. It should be transparent, and any abusive practice should be held accountable; and people who take advantage of this circumstance should be held to the measure of conduct that is appropriate.

So I say to my Members of the House, continue to work with us. We understand your obligation to protect the public trust, but we have to balance that with the needs of people who are now the victims of the greatest natural disaster in our Nation's history. I assure you, we will do our part. We will introduce a bill to provide for permanent resolution of our housing disaster, and I hope you will give it the care and concern you have demonstrated today.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my colleague on the opposite side of the aisle, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER), that I agree with him that there should be a mechanism by which people who have goods and services to donate to these small towns and these parishes, there should be a way by which they should be able to do that; and I would support such an effort. Because as I traveled throughout my community, in the churches where we talked about this disaster, I had many of the parishioners say to me that they owned land in Louisiana or in Texas and they would like to donate their land for the siting of manufactured housing or even for RVs or something of that nature. They were not sure, but they knew they wanted to put the land to use for the victims of the hurricane. So I think we should find a way by which to do that.

In addition, CDBG is such a good program that I could not help but wonder as I sat here whether or not some of the money that may not be well spent in FEMA should be transferred in some way over to CDBG. Because, again, I wonder about those persons who lost their homes and all of their furnishings and they have no flood insurance. They will receive FEMA assistance of \$26,000, some of which will go toward rent, and then it will run out, but the house is still left there, to be rehabilitated if it can be, or to be rebuilt and furnishings need to be purchased, et cetera, et cetera. It seems to me that CDBG would be a wonderful way by which to do rehabbing of housing and reestablishing of housing and homes.

□ 1630

I am just wondering aloud and hopeful that we will all give it some very, very deep thought, about how we can truly be of assistance to these victims long after the FEMA assistance is no longer operative or the Red Cross assistance is no longer operative.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3896, the Hurricane Katrina Emergency Relief CDBG Flexibility Act of 2005. This legislation would temporarily remove the public services cap on a locality's Community Development Block Grant, CDBG, funds and would waive the program's public hearing requirement for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita affected areas.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Federal and local governments now face the Herculean task of coordinating the relocation of thousands upon thousands of individuals and families whose lives have been torn apart by devastation and rising flood waters.

This bill would allow communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to receive grants under the CDBG program in an expedited fashion. First, temporarily removing the public services cap would give affected communities flexibility in applying grant funds to hurricane affected areas. Second, although the community participation provision is an important part of the CDBG program, it is not currently feasible for affected localities to hold a public hearing. In the interest of time, temporarily removing the public hearing requirement would allow funding to be dispersed more efficiently so that affected communities may begin the rebuilding process.

In times like these, it is more important than ever for Americans to stand united in helping our fellow citizens. The House of Representatives will continue to stand with the people of the gulf coast throughout this effort, and we encourage Americans who want to help to contact charitable organizations in their area. America has overcome challenges in the past. As members of the House and specifically the Financial Services Committee, we are prepared to roll up our sleeves and do the hard work to overcome this tragedy. Giving communities easier access to their CDBG dollars is just one step in the process of helping those who have been affected by Katrina and Rita's waters.

I would like to thank Housing Subcommittee Chairman BOB NEY for his expeditious work in sending this bill to the floor. I would also like to thank Chairman RICHARD BAKER, Congressman BARNEY FRANK, and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS for their bipartisan support in moving this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMMONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3896, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of

those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill just considered.

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

There was no objection.

HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF SIMON WIESENTHAL

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 248) honoring the life and work of Simon Wiesenthal and reaffirming the commitment of Congress to the fight against anti-Semitism and intolerance in all forms, in all forums, and in all nations, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 248

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal, who was known as the "conscience of the Holocaust", was born on December 31, 1908, in Buczacz, Austria-Hungary, and died in Vienna, Austria, on September 20, 2005, and he dedicated the last 60 years of his life to the pursuit of justice for the victims of the Holocaust;

Whereas, during World War II, Simon Wiesenthal worked with the Polish underground and was interned in 12 different concentration camps until his liberation by the United States Army in 1945 from the Mauthausen camp;

Whereas, after the war, Simon Wiesenthal worked for the War Crimes Section of the United States Army gathering documentation to be used in prosecuting the Nuremberg trials;

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal's investigative work and expansive research was instrumental in the capture and conviction of more than 1,000 Nazi war criminals, including Adolf Eichmann, the architect of the Nazi plan to annihilate European Jewry, and Karl Silberbauer, the Gestapo officer responsible for the arrest and deportation of Anne Frank;

Whereas numerous honors and awards were bestowed upon Simon Wiesenthal, including the Congressional Gold Medal, honorary British Knighthood, the Dutch Freedom Medal, the French Legion of Honor, the World Tolerance Award, and the Jerusalem Medal;

Whereas the Simon Wiesenthal Center was founded in 1977 in Los Angeles and named in honor of Simon Wiesenthal to promote awareness of anti-Semitism, monitor neo-Nazi and other extremist groups, and help bring surviving Nazi war criminals to justice;

Whereas, in 1978, inspired in part by the work of Simon Wiesenthal, the Congress enacted a law to deny citizenship and Federal

benefits to former Nazis, and the Office of Special Investigations of the Department of Justice has since conducted more than 1,500 investigations, won 101 cases, and blocked the immigration of 170 individuals, and the work of the Office continues;

Whereas, in keeping with the efforts of Simon Wiesenthal, many governments have responded to the growing tide of anti-Semitism worldwide, elected leaders have spoken out against anti-Semitism, and law enforcement officials and prosecutors have aggressively pursued the perpetrators of anti-Semitic acts; and

Whereas Simon Wiesenthal's legacy teaches that the perpetrators of genocide cannot and will not be allowed to hide from their crimes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) honors the life and work of Simon Wiesenthal to memorialize the victims of the Holocaust and to bring the perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice;

(2) reaffirms its commitment to the fight against anti-Semitism and intolerance in all forms, in all forums, and in all nations; and

(3) urges all members of the international community to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of surviving Nazi war criminals and to continue documenting and collecting information on Nazi war crimes for archival and historical purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 248, I am very pleased to bring this timely resolution before the House today. I thank the sponsor of the resolution, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and the leadership of the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) of the Committee on International Relations, as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), a Holocaust survivor himself, for crafting this measure in honor of an extraordinary man who has passed from our midst, Simon Wiesenthal.

Known as the "Conscience of the Holocaust," Mr. Wiesenthal deserves recognition and the deepest respect by the Congress of the United States.

Simon Wiesenthal died at the age of 97 in Vienna, Austria on September 20, 2005. A Ukrainian architect and civil engineer by training, he survived five Nazi death camps during World War II. Yet, he lost a staggering 89 relatives in the Holocaust.

Mr. Wiesenthal lived by his own words. "There is no freedom without justice," he would say. Living in Europe, almost literally among the ashes of the 6 million victims of the Holocaust, he began the tedious work of tracing and tracking war criminals who had been overlooked by the first waves of prosecutions by the allies and the new European governments. He worked meticulously and judiciously, sticking to the evidence at hand and avoiding any sensationalism. This oc-

casional brought him in conflict with others, but that was his way.

The killers who managed Hitler's factories of death could never rest. Simon Wiesenthal was tireless in his pursuit of them. His dedication and dogged determination was instrumental in the capture and conviction of Adolf Eichmann, the architect of the Nazi plan to annihilate European Jewry, as well as Karl Silberbauer, the Gestapo officer who committed many heinous crimes including the arrest of Anne Frank.

While many Nazis eluded immediate justice at the end of World War II, many did not escape it forever, thanks to Simon Wiesenthal. Today, as we fight anti-Semitism across the OSCE region, Europe and the Middle East and in Asia, we remember his legacy and act on the lessons of the Holocaust. His noble work was fueled by a passion for justice that has and will inspire others.

In the United States, his example and inspiration led to the establishment of the Office of Special Investigations which allowed war criminals who found their way to our shores to be brought to justice.

As noted in the resolution, Mr. Speaker, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which has offices in L.A., Paris, New York, Toronto, Miami, Jerusalem and Buenos Aires, which has become a leading institution in advocating both remembrance and tolerance so as to help prevent future genocides, was named in his honor. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Paris, I would point out to my colleagues, testified at two Helsinki hearings that I chaired, and we inducted Shimon Samuels, who provided expert testimony on the deterioration of respect for Jews in Europe, the United States and Canada. Also, I would point out to my colleagues that the dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center participated this past June in the U.S. delegation to the Cordoba OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, Congress honored Simon Wiesenthal with a Gold Medal, and he won countless other forms of recognition from grateful individuals in governments from around the world.

Simon Wiesenthal confronted humanity with the truth about those who masterminded and carried out the Holocaust. As a testament to the memory of the millions of victims, he gave meaning to the words "never again" by helping us to learn from the lessons of the past. Now that he has passed away, we must resolve to continue his work, as is urged upon us in this resolution, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this very important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 248, a resolution honoring the life and courageous work of my friend, Simon Wiesenthal, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from California (Mr. WAXMAN) for introducing this resolution,