

Our Constitution has served us well for over 200 years, but it will continue as a strong, vibrant, and vital foundation for freedom only so long as the American people remain dedicated to the basic principles on which it rests. Thus, as the United States continues into its third century of constitutional democracy, let us renew our commitment to, in the words of our Constitution's preamble: "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity . . ." I know that the Prairie Rose Chapter of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution joins with me in urging all Americans to renew their commitment to, and understanding of, our Constitution, particularly during our current time of crisis, when Americans are fighting overseas to defend our liberties here at home.

RECOGNIZING REPRESENTATIVE
BILL L. RANSBALL

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 2004

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, a distinguished career in the Missouri House of Representatives will soon end. Representative Bill Ransball will be retiring at the end of the year.

Rep. Ransball was elected to the Waynesville City Council in 1978. He dedicated the next 18 years to serving the people of Waynesville, taking the position of Mayor Pro Tem in 1982. He then was elected Mayor, a position he held from 1988 through 1996.

The people of the 148th district first elected Rep. Ransball to the Missouri House in 1996 and reelected him to the maximum four terms allowed under state term limits laws. His leadership was recognized in the legislature and he was elected to the post of Assistant Minority Floor Leader. His advice and counsel have been sought in the legislature and in the administration on the complex issues of the state budget and legislative procedure.

In addition to his legislative work, he has a record of service and leadership in the community—including the United Methodist Church, Association of the United States Army, Masonic Lodge No. 375 AF and AM, Abou Ben Adhem, Scottish Rite, Sojourners, Committee of Fifty, Missouri Cattlemens Association, Farm Bureau, Ducks Unlimited, and the National Wild Turkey Federation. He also has been a successful businessman and farmer.

Rep. Ransball has earned the respect of many throughout his district and the state. He received the Outstanding Civilian Award with Medal by the Department of the Army. He also has been recognized as Legislator of the Year by the Missouri Chamber of Commerce, earned the Legislative Recognition award from the Missouri Association for Career and Technical Education, and received the Missouri Vocational Special Needs Association Distinguished Service for Community Involvement Award.

His tireless work on behalf of his constituents created many opportunities for economic expansion in the 148th district and beyond. He has been an effective advocate for his neigh-

bors in their issues with the state agencies in Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, Representative Ransball's dedication to public service is an example to us all. He has devoted many years of his life to taking care of the needs of others. I am sure the other Members of the House will join me in thanking my friend Bill for his hard work and in wishing him and his wife, Pat, all the best in the years to come.

HAITI NEEDS HELP FROM THE
UNITED STATES—NOW

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 2004

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a human crisis of the highest magnitude. It demands a strong, unequivocal and immediate response from the international community and particularly from the United States.

The latest storm struck Gonaives on Saturday. So far, the only aid from the Bush Administration has been \$60,000 in relief assistance. This is just a drop in the bucket compared to the desperate need of the Haitian people. It is wholly inadequate. The Bush Administration needs to exercise leadership in coordinating immediate assistance from our own country and the international community.

While the Bush Administration is watching the development of this disaster and assessing what its response will be, thousands of Haitians are suffering. This situation demands an immediate emergency response from the United States Government.

As reported in these Miami Herald and the New York Times articles, nearly 700 lives have been lost in Haiti because of the flooding and mudslides triggered by Tropical Storm Jeanne. Already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, this new crisis has made conditions in Haiti even worse. And the desperate situation that Haiti faces today because of this disaster comes on top of the catastrophic floods only 4 months ago with over 3,000 Haitians killed, missing, or presumed dead.

The press has reported widespread human suffering in Haiti, with unburied bodies in the streets; hospitals and hospital equipment rendered unusable because of water and mud, grave shortages of fresh water, food and antibiotics, a very real threat of public health epidemics, and thousands without even rudimentary shelter.

The government of Haiti is totally unequipped and unable to deal with this massive crisis, because they have neither the resources nor the organization. Private voluntary groups are reportedly overwhelmed by the enormity of this crisis.

Given the gravity of this situation, in which thousands of Haitian lives hang in the balance, I call upon President Bush to immediately send significant U.S. emergency assistance to Haiti in the form of food, medicine, fresh water, clothing, and emergency shelter, and to immediately coordinate, with the international community, the manpower, transportation and distribution of these needed commodities to provide immediate relief to the people of Gonaives and the surrounding countryside.

We know from the storm damage in our own country that fast action is imperative in natural disasters; Haiti's poverty and the size and scope of the disaster there makes the need for speed even greater.

If ever there was a time when the people of Haiti need the help and support of the United States Government, it is now. I urge President Bush not to delay this aid any further, but to act immediately.

[From the Miami Herald, Herald.com,
September 21, 2004]

STORM FLOODS KILL MORE THAN 600 IN HAITI
(By Amy Bracken)

GONAIVES, HAITI—Rescuers dug through mud and ruined homes for bodies Tuesday, expecting the death toll of more than 600 from Tropical Storm Jeanne to rise even further, with half the crowded northern city of Gonaives still under water from the weekend's devastating winds and rain.

Gonaives was hardest hit in the latest tragedy to beset Haiti in a year of revolts, military interventions and devastating floods. Bodies, including many children, were stacked at the city's main morgue, where weeping relatives searched for loved ones.

At least 500 people were killed in the city, according to Toussaint Kongo-Doudou, a spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti.

"I lost my kids and there's nothing I can do," said Jean Estimable, whose 2-year-old daughter was killed and another of his five children was missing and presumed dead.

"All I have is complete despair and the clothes I'm wearing," he said Monday, pointing to a floral dress and ripped pants borrowed from a neighbor.

Floods are particularly damaging in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, because it is almost completely deforested, leaving few roots to hold back rushing waters or mudslides. Most of the trees have been chopped down to make charcoal for cooking.

Aid workers were struggling to get relief to victims amid worries over looting and crime, said Hans Havik from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

"Security is little bit tense. We have to be careful with bringing in the materials because we risk looting," Havik said.

Three trucks carrying Red Cross relief supplies rolled into Gonaives Monday, but before they could reach their destination at the mayor's office, two of them were mobbed by people who grabbed blankets and towels. U.N. troops stood by watching.

People tripped over each other to grab tiny bags of water thrown from a Red Cross truck in front of City Hall, where officials said about 500 injured were treated Monday.

Dieufort Deslorges, a spokesman for the government civil protection agency, described the situation in Gonaives as "catastrophic." He said survivors need everything from potable water to food, clothing, medication and disinfectants.

"We expect to find dozens more bodies, especially in Gonaives, as . . . floodwaters recede," Deslorges said.

Floodwaters destroyed homes and crops in the Artibonite region that is Haiti's breadbasket.

"Everyone is desperate," said Pelissier Heber of the Artibonite Chamber of Commerce.

Elsewhere, 56 people were killed in northern Port-de-Paix and 17 died in the nearby town of Terre Neuve, officials said. Deslorges of the civil protection agency reported another 49 bodies recovered in other villages and towns, most in the northwest.