

and daughters go to foreign lands to fight wars. It is why we pay our taxes. It is why we obey official laws and orders.

But last week this trust was breached. Whether it is because we are not used to seeing poverty so visible or the results of institutional racism so stark or because of just pure incompetence, it was criminal to abandon thousands and thousands of men and women, mothers and children and grandparents to rot in the squalor of complete government neglect. There has to be an immediate, rigorous and harsh determination of accountability for this criminal neglect.

But there must also be a response worthy of a great and prosperous and noble Nation. A person of the caliber of a Colin Powell, perhaps, must be given singular authority and responsibility to resettle when necessary, to rebuild where possible, and to return eventually New Orleans to its status as one of America's great cities. The people of New Orleans are asking for no more and the American people should demand no less.

#### HOPE FROM HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, throughout the past week, Americans have watched scenes of devastation that we never imagined would occur in our country. Lives have been lost, families have been separated, and communities have been demolished in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. As rescue workers search for survivors and permanent shelter for evacuees, the severity of this disaster continues to shock all Americans.

As a former National Guard liaison to the Governor's office during hurricanes in South Carolina, I see that our Nation grows more hopeful every day. Federal, State, and local officials are working together to save lives, deliver relief and restore order in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Last Friday, Congress passed a \$10.5 billion emergency relief package to immediately help American families.

Across our country, Americans are opening up their homes and their checkbooks to help their neighbors. I would like to encourage South Carolinians to join this effort by contacting the Red Cross at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or by calling 1-800-HELP-NOW. Now more than ever, Americans must do what we do best: help each other.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

#### HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. McGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to express, first and fore-

most, my sincere sympathy for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are dealing with a catastrophic event; and they deserve whatever it takes from the Federal Government. The mismanagement of the Federal response to this disaster is beyond comprehension. The victims and the rest of America deserve answers to their questions, not excuses, because there is no excuse for the slow Federal reaction. There is no excuse for the lack of preparedness. There is no excuse for this absence of leadership.

Why were Federal funding requests by Louisiana for flood control perennially denied? Why was the New Orleans district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers budget for levee construction slashed by a record \$72 million? Why was the head of FEMA, Michael Brown, hired despite having zero background in disaster management and was actually fired from his previous job for mismanagement?

It is clear now that we need to re-vamp FEMA, and that starts with firing Michael Brown as director who has been an absolute embarrassment. Louisiana Governor Blanco has hired former FEMA director James Lee Witt to direct Katrina recovery efforts. I encourage President Bush to follow Governor Blanco's lead and to hire someone new, this time based on qualifications, not political patronage.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Government needs to get the best people possible working on the rescue, recovery, and rebuilding efforts. Anything less is unacceptable.

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#### ENCOURAGING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS FOR VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my heartfelt condolences to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. My thoughts and prayers are with those who suffered through the storm and continue to suffer through its aftermath. I especially pray for those who have lost loved ones and hope they can find some comfort in this time of distress.

I commend the many volunteers, health care workers, law enforcement officials and military personnel who have been working selflessly around the clock to help those who have been devastated by this hurricane.

I hope that my constituents in North Carolina's Fifth Congressional District and other Americans will join me in making a contribution to a charitable organization. The outpouring of generosity and support from our communities has been amazing, but we must do more. The people affected by this storm need our help right away. A do-

nation to the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and other charitable organizations will help provide the resources necessary for these people to survive.

Again, I extend my thoughts and prayers to the victims of this hurricane and their loved ones. May God bless you all.

#### NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, we confront a hideous problem in this Nation. People are dying. People are dead. And people need help. The hospitals are full and nonfunctioning, and the suffering is tremendous all across the southern part of the United States.

The first task we have is to assure that we take care of the people, and we resolve the problems of seeing to it that their suffering is ended and that the rebuilding begins. But while we are doing that, we can commence looking at one thing, and that is the structure of the Federal Government to address problems of these kinds.

At the time we passed the Homeland Security legislation, it was very plain that inserting FEMA into the Department of Homeland Security was a prodigious mistake. Events in the southern United States associated with Hurricane Katrina have proved that to be so.

I am introducing at an early time legislation which sees to it that FEMA becomes an independent agency, with the head reporting directly to the President of the United States, whose responsibility will be set out in statute and whose qualifications and that of his two principal assistants, also subject to confirmation by the Senate, will have to meet certain tests, and that is the need to show ability and experience in areas of emergency management. Only by doing this can we assure that the kind of misfortune and the kind of open criticism that has occurred in the United States of FEMA and our efforts to help people in the southern United States will not occur on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, FEMA was an outstanding Federal agency directing its attentions to the cure of massive problems that followed catastrophes, things like hurricanes, fires and earthquakes. We need to see to it that that wonderful reputation is restored by proper structuring of the agency.

#### AMERICAN CAN-DO SPIRIT WILL WORK FOR HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday marks the fourth anniversary of one of the most tragic days in our Nation's history: September 11th of 2001. We all know what happened following that tragic day. We came together, Democrats and Republicans, focusing on ways in which we could deal with the crisis of terrorist attacks on our soil.

We all know what has happened since that time. We just last week saw what our Chaplain very appropriately described as the worst natural disaster in our Nation's history, and I believe now it is absolutely essential that we do all we can to come together to make sure that we face that number-one priority of meeting the human need that is there.

This Congress is going to do everything we possibly can to ensure that our fellow Americans are comforted. Then, we need to focus on rebuilding.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my colleagues, in 1994, we had a tragic earthquake in Los Angeles, the Northridge earthquake, and we, at that time, saw the crumbling of I-10, the same interstate that runs into New Orleans. I have a piece of it right here from just over La Cienega Boulevard. When it collapsed, the most traversed freeway in the country, a quarter of a million cars a day go over it, they said it could take up to 2 years to rebuild that freeway. By incentivizing the contractor and reducing the regulatory burden, within 66 days, the Santa Monica Freeway was moving again.

We need to use this same can-do spirit to do exactly what Governor Haley Barbour said. He said, We will build the Gulf Coast bigger and better than it ever has been.

#### AMERICAN SPIRIT

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as we return from our district work period, at the forefront of all of us is the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina which literally turned our Nation upside down.

In my district on the north side of Atlanta, I am so proud of the work that has been done to provide relief support for those directly affected by the storm, the largest natural disaster in our Nation's history. Local towns are sending not just money and goods but personnel from fire and police departments. Our local Red Cross has activated shelters to help evacuees find relatives and get back on their feet. These are Americans helping Americans. The American can-do spirit is alive and well and strong.

But most disheartening has been the vicious, personal attacks against some who are trying their hardest to help folks recover, attacks that have even come from supposed leaders in our Nation. These statements and their tone are harmful to our Nation and our re-

covery. I call on all Americans, especially those in positions of influence, to work positively and constructively to solve our current challenge. Anything less does a disservice to all Americans and, ultimately, our viability as a free and a democratic society.

#### BUSH ADMINISTRATION BEGINS DAMAGE CONTROL SPIN OPERATION

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for the people affected and harmed by Hurricane Katrina and to pledge my total support for their aid and recovery. There is so much to be done to help the people on the ground, and there is so much to do in Washington to scrutinize and improve Federal policy regarding disaster prevention and response, and we must undertake that review and those efforts.

But I am also deeply frustrated and angry by the Bush administration's failed response to this tragedy and its failure to take responsibility for its own mistakes. According to the New York Times, the administration, led by Karl Rove, has begun a political damage control operation to blame the local officials in Louisiana, the Governor and the Mayor of the City of New Orleans, for the Federal Government's failures.

No one can undo the damage that has been done, and I wish we could. We should be putting our efforts into helping these people and repairing that damage. I wish the administration would have put as much energy into an early and timely response, an effective response to Hurricane Katrina, as the energy they are putting in now to developing a political strategy to undermine the local officials who have suffered so much in their own communities.

#### THANKING THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN PROVIDING RELIEF TO THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this minute and thank the people of my home State of Texas for opening their hearts and opening their State to their neighbors in Louisiana. Almost a quarter of a million residents from the State of Louisiana are now seeking shelter in the State of Texas.

In my district in north Texas, truly an unbelievable story has unfolded. The Dallas County Medical Society sent out a fax last week to 3,600 doctors and their membership; 800 members immediately sent back the response: Where do I show up and when?

That group put together a response for the hurricane victims that is abso-

lutely unprecedented in my experience in medicine. In my own district in north Texas, from Gainesville to Denton to Keller, to the City of Fort Worth, shelters have been set up, sometimes at a church, sometimes at a summer camp, sometimes at an old hospital, but these centers have provided the shelter and the comfort to the victims of this devastating hurricane. And hopefully, we will get them back on their way, get them the help they need and allow them to rebuild their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank the people of the great State of Texas for all that they have done to help their neighbors in Louisiana.

#### HURRICANE KATRINA EXPOSES FAILURE OF FEDERAL POLICIES

(Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina has inflicted destruction, suffering and death on our Nation. The people of Mississippi and Louisiana have our prayers, and they deserve our Nation's full support. Our gratitude also goes out to the relief workers, law enforcement and military personnel who are helping, healing and saving lives.

Now, as one Nation, Congress must act to provide the necessary relief, shelter, jobs, schools and hope our fellow citizens need to restart their lives. This is a long-term commitment, and these families must not be left behind.

Katrina exposed the Federal policies that have neglected and abandoned our Nation's poor, elderly and disabled. Congress must address these shameful failures of the Federal Government's pathetic emergency response that left thousands of Americans vulnerable, exposed and abandoned.

The American people and Katrina's victims deserve action and answers, and Congress has the obligation to deliver both.

#### WORKING TOGETHER TO FIX WHAT IS WRONG

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the horrors left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina over the past week. Yet, in the midst of this chaos and destruction, the American people, once again, demonstrated their compassion for those left with nothing. The American people and people from all over the world have opened not only their wallets, but also their homes, cities and schools. This compassion has not been limited to Americans alone. Over 70 countries have offered their assistance as well.

Now, a great deal of criticism has been leveled against the Federal Government's response, and much of it may be deserved. But there is also a