

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 than 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, Desirée 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

many times with personnel awards including Navy and Marine Corps Commendations Medals, three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, the Presidential Service Badge, and six Marine Corps Good Conduct Medals. For 20 years, he has helped make our country a safer place in which to live. I ask my colleagues in the 109th Congress to join me in congratulating him, and wishing him well in his retirement as well as all his future endeavors.

HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to extend my deepest condolences to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, who lost their lives, their homes, their communities, and their livelihoods. My thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

I have been very disappointed in what appears to have been a slow federal response to this disaster. In addition, many appeared to have ignored warnings over the years about the potential vulnerabilities and the steps that could be taken to prepare for this situation.

It is my hope that we can come together on a bipartisan basis and work to review and assess the adequacy of the early federal, state, and local preparedness. We must also continue to focus on providing immediate assistance to those in need. I am pleased that the Congress convened on an emergency basis to provide more than 10 billion dollars for disaster relief efforts and trust we are providing an additional \$52 billion today. In addition, I have been working with federal, state, and local officials to ensure that Maryland does everything it can to support the relief efforts. The State of Maryland has dispatched members of its National Guard and Montgomery County has dispatched search and rescue squad personnel. Other local governments are actively exploring ways that they can help. I am especially proud of the people throughout our community and country's outpouring of support for those whose lives have been shattered by Hurricane Katrina. They have opened their arms, their homes, and their pocketbooks.

Mr. Speaker, while the enormity of this tragedy is overwhelming, I am confident that a spirit of determination and generosity will ensure that we will rebuild and endure. Our strength as a nation will be evident in the days to come as communities throughout our country unite to provide assistance to those in need.

ON PASSAGE OF H.R. 3673

HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Management, Finance, and Accountability, I rise today to express my concern for the victims and to emphasize the importance of ensuring that every dollar allocated to this relief effort gets to its intended recipient. As we

pass this important relief measure, let me assure all Americans that we stand ready, willing, and able to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina. As we prepare to provide the appropriate and necessary assistance to ensure our citizens can rebuild their lives, we must administer these Disaster Assistance funds responsibly.

Over the past two years, my Subcommittee has held three hearings on management at the Department of Homeland Security. While not always the most exciting topic, it is strong, sound management that will enable us to get through a crisis of this magnitude. Last year, in the aftermath of the Florida hurricanes, FEMA administered grants through the Individuals and Households Program. Just as we seek to do today, these grants were intended to provide emergency relief to those most impacted. Unfortunately, according to a report by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (Audit of FEMA's Individuals and Households Program in Miami-Dade County, Florida, for Hurricane Frances, OIG-05-20), there were numerous documented instances of improper payments.

The assistance that we are providing to the victims of Hurricane Katrina is too important to be misspent. The Federal government has a responsibility to ensure the proper and effective distribution of aid. Any dollar lost to fraud or mismanagement is a dollar that does not make it to someone who is in need.

With the passage of the Stafford Act (Public Law 93-288) and its subsequent amendments, the Congress put in place specific requirements for the effective allocation of disaster funds. This statutory framework is designed to protect these resources from those who would seek to gain at the expense of the victims of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. With sound management, appropriate controls and accountability, we will have the means to continue to provide resources to those who are truly in need of assistance.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of these supplemental appropriations for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

As someone who helped rebuild my city, New York City, after the terror attacks of 9/11 and as someone who lost over 110 constituents, countless friends and my first cousin to the horrors of the World Trade Center, I know the pain and suffering the people of the Gulf Coast are feeling and their despair.

When America hurts, America helps.

The damage of Hurricane Katrina is much greater than the physical destruction that was left in its wake. And it is much more than the psychological trauma that has affected these survivors who are now displaced. The damage is so great, and the lack of response from our Federal Government in the immediate days after this storm was so small, that it begs for this Congress to demand answers.

Why was the agency that is responsible for our emergency response, FEMA, so woefully under-prepared and under-funded?

Why did the director of FEMA have no emergency management experience?

Why was funding for the Army Corps of Engineers designated to protect the City of New Orleans from a dangerous flood of this level, diverted to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans?

These questions demand answers.

Last week we saw many shocking images of poverty and economic disparities among us. Like many parts of many cities in this country, the tourist trodden French Quarter with fancy hotels and restaurants are worlds away from the reality for the people who work in them. One third of the city of New Orleans lived below the poverty line, and these people, mostly African American, were the ones who were most impacted by this storm and the mismanagement of the Federal response.

We also saw positive images of Americans helping Americans in need. We saw a young six year old boy; lead his siblings to safety and to be re-united with his family. We saw neighbors help out other neighbors to get them to safety, and we saw the National Guard many fresh off duty in Iraq, put on their boots and waded into the water to save lives.

This money today will provide an immediate infusion of cash to provide healthcare for displaced people, emergency housing vouchers for people without a home, emergency unemployment insurance for people now without a job, and money for debris removal and systems to provide clean water to the city of New Orleans.

This money partners with the amazing response of the American people and the world community to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Constituents throughout my district have volunteered their time, contributions and money to help the people of the Gulf remembering how these same people helped us after 9/11. When America hurts, America helps and the remarkable sacrifice and contributions of so many people who have opened up their wallets and homes to these victims is what makes our country so great.

Today's support is a strong step, but it not the last step. The last time this many people were displaced was during the Civil War. This Congress must get back to work in a bipartisan manner, and address the needs both immediate and future, of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. And we should not adjourn or recess until we do so. Tax-cuts, estate tax repeal, plans to privatize Social Security, should all take a back burner, while these people suffer.

We must work to bring the full Federal resources of this government to help these people get back into their homes and quickly as possible, and to rebuild their lives.

We must use this tragedy as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for these residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. For one-third of the people of the city of New Orleans to be living in poverty, sub-standard housing with poor healthcare, is inexcusable in this the richest country in the world. We must raise living standards through job training, better schools and stronger neighborhoods and eradicate the hopeless conditions so many Americans live in not only in the Gulf region but throughout our Nation. Let us use this terrible storm to learn a lesson and commit us to a new war on poverty that will truly bring Americans who are living in 19th Century poverty into the 21st Century through better housing, healthcare and education.