

question that we are going to have to ask.

But when you go into the health care facilities there in New Orleans, LSU Hospital, Charity Hospital, one of the venerable teaching institutions in this country, my professors at Parkland Hospital in the 1970s, many of them trained at Charity Hospital in the 1950s and 1960s. It is truly an icon as far as medical care in this country.

But when you walk through that facility, you realize that it quite likely will never be, ever again, what it was before. And it is a sad state. There is equipment that is relatively new equipment, but it has been ruined by water, ruined by mold, not likely to be salvageable under any circumstances.

One bit of good news that I do need to share with Congress is that across the street at Tulane Medical School, the hospital there, under private ownership, has come a long way since the storm hit and since the forced evacuation of that hospital. We toured the facilities there at Tulane, at the HCA hospital. New paint on the walls, new sheet rock where sheet rock had to be replaced. The emergency room, the day we were there was about a week before Mardi Gras. It was not open that day, but they were going to open for Mardi Gras; and I believe that is, in fact, what they were able to do. It was a stark contrast to what was going on across the street.

Now, the difference was that from a corporate level, that hospital, that private hospital had made the decision that no matter where the disaster happened anywhere in the country, they were going to be ready and they were going to respond. As a consequence, insurance money and new investment, new capital invested in that hospital brought it back much more quickly than any of the other facilities that I toured down there.

But even with that hospital coming back, the service available to the residents who have come back to New Orleans, the medical care available, has been decimated. Doctors in private practice, when I visited the first time in October, would tell me, I have got no mail for 2 months. My accounts receivable, I have no idea. No money is coming in across the counter because everyone I am seeing, and the schedule is full, no one has any money, no one has any insurance. No one even knows if the company that they are working for is still in business. Things were so disrupted by that storm that day.

Doctors are leaving the area. The hospitals that remained open may not be able to stay open because of the vast debts that they are incurring. Again, they are busy, patients are coming in, but nobody has any visible means of paying them. It has been a slow, slow process getting our Federal agencies to provide the reimbursement for seeing those patients that should be there. And it just continues to be a sad tale.

There is no question that State involvement, as well, their response has

been weak to nonexistent in several of those areas.

Now, we saw a number of people that fled from the storm path in Katrina came to my area of north Texas. Some great stories there about how people opened their hearts and their homes to people who had been displaced by the hurricane. One of the great stories is, of course, from the Dallas County Medical Society. When they heard that 17,000 people who had previously been in the Super Dome were going to come to a similar facility in downtown Dallas, even though it was on a Labor Day weekend, the doctors in Dallas, through the Dallas County Medical Society, sent out a blast fax to all of their members, and out of a 3,600-member medical society, 800 showed up on the steps of Reunion Arena to help those people and make certain that they had medical care.

But we need to learn our lessons from this crisis. There are areas where our medical system performed valiantly. But there are areas within our medical system and particularly in our Federal agencies where the response was weaker than it should have been. And the reason to be concerned about that is we also hear discussion of an illness called the avian flu that, while fortunately not in this hemisphere yet, may be here before we get back from our August recess because of the distribution of the distributive path along the migratory flyways of birds.

A lot of doctors showed up when they were asked to come down to Reunion Arena to receive the people from the hurricane. But what is going to happen if, instead of a natural disaster like a hurricane, the disaster is a communicable disease like the bird flu?

□ 1830

Can we expect first responders to show up for that when they, in fact, themselves may be placed in peril by doing so?

Well, fortunately, the President and the Department of Health and Human Services and the NIH have worked very hard to come up with an Institute of Preparedness plan. We have provided some of the funding for that right at the end of December in the Department of Defense appropriation bill. There is still more money that we are likely having to put forth for that. And it is one of those things that it may turn out to be another Y2K. It may never materialize. But if it does materialize, it could be so severe and so harsh on our country that not being in a state of preparedness really makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, the House has been very kind with its time tonight. It has given us an opportunity to talk about what I see are a number of issues ahead for us in health care.

I want to stress again that affordability of health care is a thing that we need to keep first and foremost in our minds. Every bill that we introduce, every vote that we take, every committee hearing that we hold, we need

to keep affordability of health care uppermost in our minds. We need to work on the problem with the uninsured. We need to make insurance products available so that people can afford them. We need to expand and perhaps embellish federally qualified health centers. There is no question that we are going to need some type of liability reform in this country, and there is no question that we need some type of provider relief and to keep the best doctors involved and to continue to be involved in the practice of medicine, particularly where it is concerning our seniors.

Information technology will be something that we talk about now and for several years to come, but we need to be extremely careful how we implement that.

And then, finally, every hour that we spend thinking about preparedness, every dollar that we spend on preparedness is going to be money well spent. We can ill afford to have a poor response to the next crisis when it happens to this country. Unfortunately, the events of the last 5 years, I think, have shown us that bad things do happen to good people.

Mr. Speaker, the House has been very generous with its time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. SWEENEY (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today until 1 p.m. on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. BUTTERFIELD, for 5 minutes, today.
Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. VAN HOLLEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HOLT, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DELAY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DELAY, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. GOHMERT, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 4, 5, and 6.

(The following Member (at her own request) to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. BERKLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1259. An act to award a congressional gold medal on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen, collectively, in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.

H.R. 4911. An act to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, April 3, 2006, at 2 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6794. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research — Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program — Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems Centers (SCIMS Centers) and Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs) — received March 7, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

6795. A letter from the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report entitled, "Report on Carryover Balances," pursuant to Public Law 102-486; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6796. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report on the Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Activities: Community Economic Development Program (CEDP) Projects Funded During Fiscal Year 2001; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6797. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a copy of the Department's vehicle fleet report on alternative fueled vehicles for Fiscal Year 2005, pursuant to Public Law 106-419; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6798. A letter from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Superfund Five-Year Review Report to Congress-FY 2004, in accordance with the requirements in Section 121(c) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

6799. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the text of ILO Recommendation No. 195 Concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, adopted by the International Labor Conference at its 92nd Session, at Geneva, June 17, 2004, pursuant to Art. 19 of the Constitution of the International Labor Or-

ganization; to the Committee on International Relations.

6800. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting a report in accordance with Section 25(a)(6) of the Arms Export Control Act(AECA), describing and analyzing services performed during FY 2005 by full-time USG employees who are performing services for which reimbursement is provided under Section 21(a) or Section 43(b) of the AECA; to the Committee on International Relations.

6801. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting the Agency's reports containing the 30 September 2005 status of loans and guarantees issued under Section 25(a)(11) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on International Relations.

6802. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the quarterly report of obligations and outlays of FY2004 and FY2005 funds under the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through September 30, 2005 pursuant to Division D, Pub. L. 108-199; to the Committee on International Relations.

6803. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's criteria used to determine appropriate adjustments in post differentials and danger pay allowances, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5925(a) and 5928 Public Law 109-140, section 4(d); to the Committee on International Relations.

6804. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's report entitled "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005," pursuant to (90 Stat. 748); to the Committee on International Relations.

6805. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendments to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations: Office Names, Corrected Cross-Referencing, Reference to Wassenaar Arrangement, and other Corrections/Administrative Changes — received March 7, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on International Relations.

6806. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the semi-annual report of the Inspector General for the 6-month period ending September 30, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Government Reform.

6807. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's annual report for fiscal years 2000 through 2004, in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6808. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting in accordance with Section 647 of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108-199, the Department's report on competitive sourcing efforts for FY 2005; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6809. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting a copy of the inventories of commercial and inherently governmental positions in the Department of Transportation, as required by the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6810. A letter from the Deputy Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting the Commission's annual

report on the Government in the Sunshine Act for Calendar Year 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(j); to the Committee on Government Reform.

6811. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting a copy of a draft bill titled, the "Reclamation Water Management Improvement Act"; to the Committee on Resources.

6812. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting a proposed plan pursuant to the Indian Tribal Judgement Funds Act for the White Mountain Apache Tribe in Docket No. 99-148L, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 1401; to the Committee on Resources.

6813. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the report on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act covering the six months ended June 30, 2005, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 621; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6814. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a copy of the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement (ITVERP) Report to Congress 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

6815. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Twenty-First Annual Report of Accomplishments Under the Airport Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2004; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6816. A letter from the Acting Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting an informational copy of the Administration's Fiscal Year 2007 Leasing Program report, pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 2213(b); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6817. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Administration's certification that the level of screening services and protection provided at the Jackson Hole Airport will be equal to or greater than the level that would be provided at the airport by TSA Transportation Security Officers, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 44920(d); to the Committee on Homeland Security.

6818. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Administration's certification that the level of screening services and protection provided at Sioux Falls Regional Airport will be equal to or greater than the level that would be provided at the airport by TSA Transportation Security Officers, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 44920(d); to the Committee on Homeland Security.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. NORWOOD:

H.R. 5050. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize coverage for anesthesia and other costs related to dental care for children and certain other patients; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GILCHREST (for himself, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. FARR, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. LEACH, and Mr. CASTLE):

H.R. 5051. A bill to authorize appropriations to the Secretary of Commerce for the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for fiscal years 2007