

109<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 466

Observing the one year anniversary of the date on which the Gulf Coast region was struck by Hurricane Katrina, acknowledging the significant deficiencies that still exist in the ability of cities in the Gulf Coast region to provide necessary social services and subsistence to their residents or to attract the return of many displaced residents, and reaffirming the commitment of Congress to assist in rebuilding the Gulf Coast region, improving the quality of life for all its residents, and ending poverty in America.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 28, 2006

Mr. WATT (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. CARSON, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. FORD, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. NORTON, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, and Mr. WYNN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Observing the one year anniversary of the date on which the Gulf Coast region was struck by Hurricane Katrina, acknowledging the significant deficiencies that still exist in the ability of cities in the Gulf Coast region to provide

necessary social services and subsistence to their residents or to attract the return of many displaced residents, and reaffirming the commitment of Congress to assist in rebuilding the Gulf Coast region, improving the quality of life for all its residents, and ending poverty in America.

Whereas on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast as a Category three hurricane, causing death, injury, displacement, destruction, and economic devastation in communities and towns of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana;

Whereas, the Hurricane and subsequent flooding of 80 percent of New Orleans destroyed 275,000 homes, 18,750 businesses, and 875 schools and was the proximate cause of 1,577 deaths in the Gulf Coast, with damage estimates in the hundreds of billions of dollars;

Whereas, Louisiana and Mississippi suffered the greatest displacement of populations with Louisiana having an estimated 344,781 people displaced;

Whereas, the percentage of homes with electric service in New Orleans was only 50 percent six months after Hurricane Katrina and only 60 percent nearly one year after the Hurricane;

Whereas, over 96,000 people were without emergency transportation in New Orleans, and the number of operational public buses was only 17 percent of the number of buses before the Hurricane almost one year after the Hurricane;

Whereas, 5,192 children were reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children as missing or displaced as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and

it took 6½ months for all of these children to be reunited with their families;

Whereas, 1,100 schools were closed immediately following Hurricane Katrina;

Whereas, more than 400,000 children under age 5 lived in counties or parishes that were declared major disaster areas as a result of the Hurricane;

Whereas, the number of licensed child care facilities in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina declined by 54 (4 percent) in Mississippi and 356 (25 percent) in Louisiana after the hurricanes;

Whereas, only 46 percent of public libraries have reopened in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina;

Whereas, six months after the Hurricane struck land, 15 percent of the public schools reopened, but in July 2006, only 18 percent had reopened, an increase of only 3 percent in about one year;

Whereas, as of July 2006, less than 2 percent of total Federal spending on post-Hurricane relief was given to meet educational needs in New Orleans;

Whereas, as of July 2006, only 15 percent of the hospitals in New Orleans were reopened, an increase of only 5 percent between February 2006 and July 2006;

Whereas, 1.2 million residents of New Orleans are without health insurance since the Hurricane;

Whereas, prior to the storm, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama had among the highest racial and ethnic health disparities, health provider shortages, and percentages of persons without health insurance in the United States;

Whereas, following Hurricane Katrina, the provider shortage that plagued the region worsened, with an estimated 6,000 physicians alone leaving the region and one in three displaced physicians from New Orleans parishes were primary care physicians;

Whereas, as of July 2006, only about 3.3 percent of total Federal spending on post-Hurricane relief went to meet health, social services, and job training needs in New Orleans;

Whereas, as of January 2006, thirty million cubic yards of debris remained uncollected in New Orleans;

Whereas, the slow disaster mitigation by the Federal Government has resulted in environmental concerns, fears of runaway spending abuses and despair;

Whereas, the lack of control over the procurement process has caused debris removal costs to quadruple from \$8 per cubic yard to \$32 per cubic yard;

Whereas, in addition to toxic sediment sludge from the bottom of lakes, rivers, and the Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Katrina deposited in communities, the Hurricane also struck 466 facilities handling large quantities of dangerous chemicals, and 31 hazardous waste sites along the Gulf Coast;

Whereas, the United States Coast Guard reported that more than 7 million gallons of oil and between 1 and 2 million gallons of gasoline from plants and depots in southeast Louisiana were spilled as a result of the hurricane;

Whereas, Hurricane Katrina struck 16 Superfund toxic waste sites, three of which were flooded in the City of New Orleans;

Whereas, these toxic waste sites contained contaminants that included heavy metals often associated with developmental problems and increased risk of cancer, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons which are known carcinogens;

Whereas, the Environmental Protection Agency drastically raised the requirements for demonstrating the presence of toxins after Hurricane Katrina in an attempt to reduce its workload;

Whereas, residents returning to the region have been reporting widespread cases of respiratory problems, asthmas and skin rashes;

Whereas, the Federal response to the housing and economic crisis in New Orleans limited the use of \$6.2 billion in grants to reconstruction of 20,000 homes destroyed outside federally insured flood zones and failed to include provisions to rebuild an additional 185,000 destroyed homes;

Whereas, 10,477 United States Government trailers slated for Katrina survivors sat empty in Hope, Arkansas nearly one year after the storm hit;

Whereas, prior to Hurricane Katrina, 7,379 public housing units existed in New Orleans and only 1,099 units were available in July 2006;

Whereas, one in every five Louisiana prime-rate mortgages is 30 days or more past due;

Whereas, close to one year after the Hurricane hit land, in Louisiana, the Federal Emergency Management Agency had provided trailers for only approximately 37 percent of the estimated 90,000 displaced families in need of housing;

Whereas, poor procurement practices have resulted in bottlenecks and in-State battles over sites and trailer costs that have increased from \$19,000 to \$75,000 each;

Whereas, the number of households receiving rental assistance has increased by 5 percent from February 2005 to July 2006;

Whereas, some areas in the Gulf Coast continue to suffer a shortage of rental housing available for storm victims;

Whereas, a study by Total Community Action, Inc., a public advocacy group in New Orleans, revealed that in New Orleans, where African Americans comprise 67 percent of the population, 27 percent of the residents live below poverty level;

Whereas, out of 100 children born in poverty in Orleans Parish, 60 of them will remain in poverty;

Whereas, the State and local governments of Louisiana have indicated that they will face more than \$8 billion in lost taxes and fees over the next four years;

Whereas, unemployment in New Orleans increased by 49 percent between the period six months after Hurricane Katrina and July 2006;

Whereas, one in six adults remains unemployed in the New Orleans region;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, individuals who do not live in their pre-Katrina residences suffer unemployment rates at least three times higher than those living in their previous homes; and

Whereas, one year after Hurricane Katrina, the status of the infrastructure, environmental safety, levees, healthcare, education, housing, and economic viability have not been

restored to a level that reflects adequate Federal relief and mitigation efforts in the Gulf Coast: Now, therefore, be it

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

3           (1) expresses its support for the people still af-  
4        fected by Hurricane Katrina one year after its de-  
5        structive landfall on the United States Gulf Coast;

6           (2) acknowledges that significant deficiencies  
7        still exist in the ability of cities in the Gulf Coast  
8        region to provide necessary social services and sub-  
9        sistence to their residents or to attract the return of  
10       many displaced residents; and

11          (3) reaffirms its commitment to assist in re-  
12        building the Gulf Coast region, improving the quality  
13        of life for all its residents, and ending poverty in  
14        America.

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