

even knew. And I again just wanted to join with all of my colleagues and honor this man's life.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, and let me say this. As we discuss Chief Justice Rehnquist and what he has accomplished and the legacy he brings to the United States of America, we are doing this on the very eve of the beginning of the new selection of a Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. It is, I think, appropriate to realize that as Judge Rehnquist was serving 33 years on the highest court in this land, he also was writing history books to record history.

He knew just what my colleague said, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS), that it is important that we remember the history as it was, not revise it to make it what we want it to be. So he wrote three history books about the Court so we could say, Well, what does history tell us about that event at that time? And so the judge, the great researcher, has given us the research and a direction on the history as it pertains to the Court, something the other justices of the Court that will follow can turn to as additional information to get a picture of where the Court was coming from as it made rulings.

It is very important, and I hope our colleagues in the Senate, as they look at the confirmation of Judge Roberts, I hope that they are looking at the history of the United States Supreme Court and the legacy of William Rehnquist.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, there is a point that comes to mind, and I can get it quickly made. This right to privacy that was in the emanation's penumbras, in the shadows, was something that was never recognized by Chief Justice Rehnquist. That right to privacy will be presented to Judge Roberts, and he will be asked. In fact, he will be demanded to recognize that right to privacy as a condition of his confirmation over in the Senate, a very right to privacy that Chief Justice Rehnquist never recognized.

That is how they are going to try to amend the Constitution and the confirmation process over in the Senate. I think it is important to recognize that the legacy of Justice Rehnquist should be preserved in the confirmation process in the Senate as well.

Mr. CARTER. I wonder how you can be unqualified to serve by not recognizing that right, when there are members sitting on the Court at this time who do not recognize that right.

The point of a Supreme Court is that there are multiple points of view, and you should not be requiring only one point of view on the United States Supreme Court. To make a confirmation hearing dependent upon one point of view absolutely flies in the face of justice in America.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciated hearing from my colleague from Iowa regarding his saying in elemen-

tary school that he wanted to change the government. I think about the example of the emperor who had no clothes, yet all the crowd got swept up in seeing clothes that were not there and saying, Oh, are the clothes not beautiful? They were not there. Chief Justice Rehnquist was one of those if he had to stand alone and say they are not there, there are no clothes, he did it.

Just in conclusion, I think about the end of Frost's poem: Two roads diverged in the woods for Chief Justice Rehnquist many years ago, and he took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference. It has, in fact, changed a Nation for the good.

□ 2200

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. One of the downfalls of appearing in the Congress with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is these guys are great in quoting all these things off the top of their head, and that is hard for an old trial judge who is just used to shooting from the hip. I do enjoy the wonderful quotes these guys pull out and quote them right. It is a blessing to have them as Members of our Congress.

Mr. Speaker, you have been very patient today as we honor our passing Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as we laid him to rest today. We thank you for your patience in allowing us to express our opinions about him.

ISSUES AFFECTING AMERICA IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House once again. I am glad that we are here back in the people's capital of the United States to represent those that sent us up here to represent them.

This hour is designated by the Democratic Leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), and the rest of our leadership on the Democratic side, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), also the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), our vice chair of our caucus; and week after week we come to the floor to share with Americans issues that are facing not only them, but also this country.

I can tell you that we appreciate the fact that the leader had enough foresight and insight to know that not only those of us that are in the 30-something Working Group, but young Americans, have to have a voice in this process.

As you all know, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and a number of

other issues that have faced the Nation since we recessed for the summer to go back to our districts to also take care of other congressional business, there is a lot that has happened for and to Americans. I think it is important for us to just reflect a little bit on what has happened as it relates to Hurricane Katrina.

Tonight I am joined not only by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), but also the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), who is my neighbor in Florida and representing south Florida. The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) and I, both our districts were touched by Hurricane Katrina as a Category 1 storm, but not as a Category 5, some may say 4, that hit the gulf coast area; and our hearts go out to those individuals that are going through the process.

I think tonight not only are we going to talk about the issues that are facing many of these families, but many of them are young families, many of them are elderly; and because of the mistakes and the failures in some part of our emergency management agency and other responding agencies, there was loss of life that could have been prevented. I think we should take this in a very serious way. The responsibility of this Congress, one, is to ask the questions and to make sure it does not happen again.

I do commend not only the Democratic leader for recommending that there be a task force or a select committee to deal with the issue of the recovery process and to be able to review the whole Hurricane Katrina experience, but I am glad that the Speaker has taken her recommendation and moved on it and they will appoint a task force to deal with this issue, because I think it needs the kind of oversight to make sure that we do not make the victims victims over again because we thought that it was important to appropriate some \$50 billion-plus towards the recovery effort without the appropriate oversight to make sure that it gets where it is supposed to be.

Mr. Speaker, I also feel, before I yield to my colleagues, that it is important that we all understand that we are in the first 2 minutes of the first quarter, if this were a football game, as it relates to the recovery process. I think the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) and other Members from States that are constantly hit by hurricanes understand that we are in the very early stages.

We know that a number of Americans have been turned off by the recovery and the response, and there will be a time and place to be able to identify that. That time is now, that time is also in the future, but also to make sure that we do not continue to fumble the ball.

When I say "we," I think it is important to understand that we do have an

executive branch that has the responsibility for appointing responsible individuals to carry out the task that we legislate for here in this Congress, and that we make sure that they have the dollars, A, that is the question as relating to levees and other preventative measures that could have prevented loss of life; and, B, making sure that there are individuals that can make the decision without an act of Congress to go in and save lives in a timely manner.

So, I am glad, Mr. Speaker, that we are here. I am glad that the 30-something Working Group, that one thing that not only the Democratic Caucus can count on, but also this Congress can count on, we will come here week after week to make sure that the American people know what they need to know and make sure that this Congress also hears the voices of those that cannot be heard here.

I have some information, but I am going to yield to my colleagues, A, talking about the process on what are the programs that are available to Americans, because, Mr. Speaker, I feel those that are victims, and I am talking about in the tens of thousands, that are victims, some are in shelters, but, guess what? Many have been taken in by their family members and friends throughout the country. Maybe FEMA, maybe the State government, maybe the local government has not been able to locate these individuals to let them know what they are eligible for.

If they left their home in the middle of a storm trying to swim out of their home and the water is over the roof, they may not know they are eligible for assistance from the very government they have been paying taxes through the noses to over the years. So as it relates to their home and as it relates to their job, to even making sure they are able to receive the kind of counseling, their children receive counseling, it is important that we tell them and break it down to the point that they can understand. If they have a problem as it relates to getting that information, that is what their Member of Congress is for.

So we have people throughout this country, we have the list of how many people are displaced in different States, but how many of those individuals cannot be reached. Hopefully, we will reach family members and loved ones that can share with them their rights, so that they will be able to take advantage of some of the assistance that has been provided thus far.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield to my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. It is again great to be here with my colleagues from Florida and Ohio. It is so important that we spend the time that we spend here each week helping to get the message out to our generation and, quite honestly, to the generations ahead of us and behind us.

We had a devastating tragedy happen to us in our country, and that is to all of us, about 10 days ago. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and I literally live at one point or another through every storm in the "cone of error," as every storm that approaches the United States at some point or another, the gentleman's and my home and the homes of our constituents are in the cone of error for some period of time. So we know what it is like to stare down any one of a number of different levels of hurricanes or tropical storms.

As we speak tonight, we have Ophelia just about 100 miles off the coast of our State, yet again another tropical storm warning. We are up to "O" now. It is just never-ending.

One of the things that I would like to spend some time on tonight with both of your indulgence is we do need to get the information out, and one of the things that I did on Tuesday at home in south Florida was help to try to channel the energy of south Floridians who obviously were devastated by the last Category 5 hurricane that hit the United States and that unfortunately hit us in south Florida, deep in the hearts of our community, and we had an outpouring of affection and assistance from across the world. So you can imagine listening to this, what people in south Florida so badly want to do is return the favor and give back to the people in the gulf States and across the country what was given to them 13 years ago.

They do not know where to channel that energy, because there are so many relief organizations, so many on-the-spot relief organizations that have cropped up in the last week; and, unfortunately, if you recall during Andrew and during the 9/11 attacks, you have groups that will form within a matter of days to take advantage of a whole lot of money that is flowing through people's hands.

So what we did in south Florida is we channeled people's energy through one organization, Volunteer Florida, which is an organization affiliated with the State that exists throughout the year to help foster volunteerism. But we turned it into the clearinghouse for our State and gave people a phone number that they can call. I will check my notes and provide it. I do not want to give out the wrong number. Logon to www.volunteerflorida.org. We are trying to make sure that people go through an agency they know they can have confidence in.

Beyond that, there is an absolute necessity, I feel, for us to talk about what has gone on in the last 6 or 7 days, or, rather, what did not go on, because it is just absolutely unacceptable to me, and unacceptable is not a strong enough word.

The response, the lack of response, the indifference, the insensitivity and the actions and words of the leadership that is running this country in response to this devastating tragedy is just inexcusable to me.

While I have heard many of my colleagues and other people across this country say now is not the time for finger pointing, well, do you know what? If we did not talk about what was not going on last week, then, quite honestly, I think President Bush might still be on vacation even today. I think quite honestly that perhaps there would not have been a response even to the degree that we needed it without someone saying that the emperor had no clothes. Where was the help?

We know, because we live in the cone of error, so often in south Florida that you have several days' notice, and they did have several days notice that a Category 5 hurricane was bearing down on the gulf coast States. Where were the troops on the border of the cone of error? Where was the readiness? Where was the preparation? Where was the response? Where was the organization? It was nowhere.

We have got to make sure not only that it never happens again, but that there is an investigation and that there is a discussion in this body as to why it happened. We should talk about FEMA and why it is being led by a person who has absolutely no previous emergency preparedness or disaster experience, none, why his ineptitude was allowed to continue. Why a year ago when Florida faced four hurricanes, FEMA was handing relief checks out like candy to people who were not even victims of the storms.

There has got to be some accountability, and the time is not 2 months from now. We have billions of dollars that we are appropriating here and are about to appropriate that we should be appropriating, but we are going to go put it in the hands of people who have proven that they are incapable of handling disasters like this? Something needs to happen so that we can hold these people accountable on many different levels.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I agree 100 percent with the gentlewoman. And to look back and hear all the information that FEMA had beforehand, an article here from Cox News and the New Orleans Times, Dr. Max Mayfield, Director of the National Hurricane Center, was talking to FEMA. They were going through simulations on what exactly could happen and what the worst-case scenario could be, what the storm surge capabilities were for overtopping levees.

I think it is important, if this is not pointing fingers, we get paid to oversee administrative government, and that is what we are doing here. The thing that is outrageous is that the people who are in charge and who are incompetent for those early days are the same people that are running the operation now. Thank God we have got some military in there now to actually fix some of the problems.

But I think it is important that we share with the American people, not to be critical, but so the problem gets

fixed. This is our responsibility here. This is our constitutional responsibility here.

Dr. Max Mayfield, and you can get this on the Internet, the Cox News article said, knew storm's potential. Just to read through here a little bit and share with you, there were briefings by this Dr. Mayfield who told FEMA that the strength of the storm and the potential disaster it could bring were made clear during both briefings and an informal advisory which warned of a storm surge capable of overtopping levees in New Orleans and winds strong enough to blow out windows of high-rise buildings.

"We were briefing them way before landfall, Mayfield said. It is not like this was a surprise. We had advisories that the levee could be topped."

These guys had the information and they failed to respond. And the most insulting part of this whole thing is to have the President say days afterwards, "I do not think anyone anticipated a breach of the levees."

□ 2215

I mean, it is just not true. It is just not true because the FEMA people knew, and there were these advisories and there was all this information that FEMA had, and it is unacceptable that this is the way the government is supposed to work. Because after 9/11 the American people charged this Congress, reelected this Congress, reelected this President because he had the capability supposedly to keep us safe. I do not think there is one American out there now that would even feel close to safe if something happened here.

I do not know, and it seems like the goals that we wanted to try to communicate, intraoperability where people could communicate with each other because they would have the proper communication equipment, the predisaster mitigation which they used out West for an earthquake where they actually went in early and secured buildings and spent \$20 million, which ended up saving \$50 million out there, that program that Mr. Witt started was called Project Impact; and the day the earthquake hit on February 28, 2001, was the same day the President cut that program. This was a lack of foresight for many, many, many years.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to just highlight that this is not an isolated incident. It would be easy to say that FEMA was just overwhelmed and could not possibly have been expected to be prepared for a storm the size of Katrina since this administration changed the rules of the game when it comes to FEMA. FEMA used to be an independent agency prior to the Bush administration and prior to its being absorbed into the Department of Homeland Security

after 9/11. FEMA was an independent agency with a director and a staff that had expertise in disaster preparedness.

I want to just highlight for my colleagues prior to Hurricane Katrina some of the instances of irresponsibility on FEMA's part under Secretary Brown's leadership. In 2004 Florida officials recorded 123 fatalities from last year's hurricanes. We had four hurricanes that hit Florida last year. FEMA pays expenses for 315 deaths; 123 fatalities documented from last year's storms. FEMA pays expenses for 315 deaths. There is something wrong with that.

In 2004 FEMA reimbursed over 5,000 people \$9.3 million for rental assistance when a follow-up study showed that most residents never left their homes. In 2004 FEMA reimbursed people for 11-piece bedroom sets when they just owned a bed. In 2005 Hurricane Katrina strikes Florida damaging over 200 homes. FEMA has declined to pay individual assistance to those homeowners.

And I stood in the yard of an 86-year-old woman on Monday who lives in my district who was in tears, whose hearing was so poor she could barely hear what I was saying to her. Her home had no roof. Her neighbor's home across the street was basically crumpled in his yard, and around the corner was the same type of home with the roof ripped off and lying on the front lawn. FEMA has decided that there is an 800-home standard for destruction or damage before they will pay individual homeowners reimbursement for their damage.

Let me just show my colleagues the type of damage that FEMA says people are not eligible for assistance. This is what FEMA will not pay for. After Hurricane Katrina, as a Category 1 storm, struck Florida last week, this is the damage that they say these people do not deserve reimbursement for because we did not have 800 homes suffer this kind of damage.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Because why?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. FEMA is saying that the standard they are using in 2005, and as I have outlined for my colleagues, which they had no such standard in 2004, coincidentally in a Presidential year, they are saying that because Florida did not reach the threshold of 800 homes that were damaged that our homeowners who have damage are not eligible for individual assistance, meaning they cannot get reimbursed by the government, by FEMA, for the damage.

Now, I will not claim by any stretch of the imagination that Floridians suffered the same type of strife and damage that people in the gulf States did from Katrina, but I will argue that hurricanes know no boundaries. Hurricanes do not respect State boundaries. Katrina did not know the border of Florida and Alabama and on westward. The impact on a homeowner in Florida is the same as it is on the homeowner who suffered the same kind of damage in a gulf State. This is what FEMA is

denying. It is disgusting. And it is just not going to stop. We have got to get the word out to people, Mr. Speaker, that there are places that they can turn to for help, but clearly FEMA was not one of them.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that everyone understand that Homeland Security Director, the FEMA Director, or the President of the United States can reverse an original decision by FEMA not to pay individual homeowners or assist individual homeowners who do not have insurance, that are eligible for Federal programs. It is almost like saying that we have the antidote for their problem, but there are only 200 or 300 people affected and we have to get to 800 before we can help them.

I mean, it does not make sense, and because of that we have asked the President, and a bipartisan letter has gone to not only the President but also to the FEMA Director and also to the Department of Homeland Security Secretary, about looking at this very small issue. But I can tell the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) that if there are issues of the very obvious, what happens under a \$50-plus billion dollar appropriations to an agency that cannot see that there is a need out there that needs to be met?

Let me tell the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) when Americans pay their taxes, they expect a response in times such as this. They do not expect bureaucratic lip service. They expect action. And I just want to make sure the people are clear on this. Folks may say, well, you know, you all are there and you all are Democrats and all, and it is your job to be able to point out everything that is wrong. That is incorrect. And I know the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is from the heart of America, this, that, and the other; but the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) and I are from the South, and I think this is an issue about how this country feels about the South, how they feel about people that live in the South.

I will tell my colleagues this: maybe in another part of the country the response would have been different, but I can tell the Members right now there are a lot of individuals that are down there that pay taxes just like anyone else that expects representation. I do not know, maybe this lady may be a Republican. She may be an Independent. We do not care. She needs assistance.

And the bottom line is that FEMA is supposed to be there in a time of need. The Federal Government is supposed to be there in a time of need. When the local government resources are out or depleted or coming close to being depleted, that is why we have a Federal Government. They are not independent countries out there. Louisiana is not by itself. Alabama is not by itself, and I can guarantee my colleagues that Mississippi is not there by itself. So

why should they be treated any differently than any other part of the country?

The bottom line I feel is what is the Federal obligation to the South? What is it? And I feel that we really do not have to paint a picture for Americans. We really do not. They have seen it. And they saw folks having press conference after press conference talking about what the situation is. They say, We knew that 5 or 6 days ago. And what my colleague was talking about with the hurricane director, they knew. They were just hoping that the levees held.

But I think it is outstanding that the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) brought pictures here tonight, because when we talking about the 30-something Working Group, third-party and fourth-party validators are important because we have folks who take to the floor saying, Well, it is not what some people tell you that it is. Do you believe us or your lying eyes? We see it on television.

The reason I talked about information, that it is important that we disseminate information, I want the Members and the American people to see what we get in the U.S. Congress. We get one sheet of paper talking about a recovery process. Like my cousin used to say, If I am lying, I am flying. The bottom line is that this came out as Congressional Advisory No. 8, September 6. This is yesterday's advisory. Today is like three quarters of a page. I thought I would at least get a full-page report. It is just bullets and feel-good language, not telling us anything.

I just want to take this little segment out here while we are talking about the major inequities here, and hopefully, Mr. Speaker, hopefully, someone will say we need to correct this. Not only should we provide more information to Members of Congress but we should also make sure we provide information to more victims.

This is what it is: the Housing Task Force, whoever they are, are also identifying long-term housing facilities to assist disaster victims as quickly as possible. What is "quickly as possible"? Do I pay my taxes as quickly as possible, or do I have a date to pay my taxes?

Here is the other issue: assuring that security and order to the impact areas, maintaining law and order is a priority to assist recovery and evacuation efforts, deliver relief in a timely and effective manner.

This is stuff that one puts on their Web site when they are selling cookies.

The bottom line is we have people that we have not even found yet. I am talking about FEMA or whatever the case may be. But here is the issue: we must assume nothing. And I tell my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and I have said this before and they all have heard me, I do not care if they are Republican, Independent, Democrat. They need to go see the wizard and get

some courage and say, listen, it is not working and we need to make it work, not going down there and walking around for a day saying, well, you know they are doing the best they can do, because folks are hurting.

So we have got to get this information out. We have got to make sure that this lady and other folks are able to get the assistance that they pay taxes for. So if I have anything to contribute here tonight, and I have some other information, and I see that the gentleman from Ohio is looking at me, but if I have anything else to contribute here tonight, I want to make sure this Congress understands. Here is a question for the Congress and for the Federal Government: What commitment do you have to the people that are living in the South? That is what I want to know. I want to know is it lip service or is it for real? And I can tell the Members right now from what I am seeing, there are no recommendations for a national day of mourning. People have died in this thing, and we are finding more people. There are no recommendations to go down to the South and have a joint session of Congress. It is beyond a natural disaster. A lot of it is failure of government.

I am coming in for a landing. There was a letter that was written today to a chairman of a major committee here of serious questions that were asked. Could New Orleans' levee system hold? The budget of the Corps of Engineers for construction projects in New Orleans District was cut over 40 percent between 2001 and 2005 apparently to free up funds for the war in Iraq and homeland security projects.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Say that again.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am going to finish, and then I am going to go back over it again.

In 2004, for the first time in 37 years, the first time in 37 years, the Corps of Engineers halted all work. They stopped all work on the New Orleans levee system. Not because they felt like it. It was because they did not have any money. I am on the Committee on Homeland Security and we knew, and I know the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) has information that they went through a whole exercise about what if this happens. They knew it could happen. So when someone lines up in front of a camera and starts talking, I do not care who they are. I was emancipated many years ago; so I do not care what some may feel about what I say here tonight. The bottom line is if it is the President or the village council person or whoever it might have been as it relates to holding back funds from the levee system, saying this was a natural disaster, what could we do, we could have governed in a way that we should govern on behalf of individuals in the South that pay taxes just like anyone else.

And the bottom line is if it was not for Katrina, Mr. Speaker, we would have been voting here on the estate tax for a huge tax break, to even make the

reality even more evident that the Corps of Engineers never would have had started work on the levee system next year or the year after that or the year after that because we have no money.

□ 2230

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I think this gets back to a basic concept that we have seen over the course of the last couple of years here. The outfit that runs this body and that lives in the White House and this administration, they just hate government. They just hate it, and they think that if it was gone and abolished, everything would be fine. So, if you bring that attitude to government, that government cannot do anything good.

And then your philosophy leads you to a point where you put an attorney for Arabian horses and a guy who used to run horse shows in charge of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, that is where that philosophy takes you, and then you get someone who is incompetent to handle the job, not a professional emergency management specialist, but just a political appointment, because government is for supplying our friends with graft, and that is all this is.

Now, the gentleman mentioned something, and I want to go through this and I read a little bit of this article earlier. And this is Dr. Mayfield and what he said. He participated, he and his staff participated in a 5-day Hurricane Pam exercise, which was sponsored by FEMA and the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness last July, that assumed a similar storm as Katrina would hit Louisiana, and they called it Hurricane Pam at the time, on July 23 of 2004.

So FEMA released, after they simulated this Hurricane Pam in Louisiana, FEMA announced the exercise and basically summed up the simulation. Here it is, quote: "Hurricane Pam," and this is FEMA talking in July of 2004. "Hurricane Pam brought sustained winds of 120 miles per hour, up to 20 inches of rain in parts of southeast Louisiana, and the storm surge toppled levees in New Orleans. More than 1 million residents evacuated, and Hurricane Pam destroyed between 500,000 and 600,000 buildings. Emergency officials from 50 parish, State, Federal, and volunteer organizations faced this scenario during a 5-day exercise held this week at the State Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge."

Then, a year later, this same government says they had no idea that could possibly happen. How disingenuous is that? You ran a simulation. You war-gamed Hurricane Katrina and you called it Hurricane Pam a year ago. And then you come to the American people and say, the best you could come up with is, who would have thought the levees would have broken. Thinking everybody is stupid? Thinking this would not come out?

It is criminal, criminal, what happened. You put an Arabian horse purchaser in charge of FEMA, you war-gamed it the year before, and the guy still does not know what he is doing, and people died because of it. That is the sad part of this whole thing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, to piggyback on what the gentleman from Florida said about tax cuts, I mean it is just mind-boggling that yet again, their answer, their solution for everything is more tax cuts. I mean, I would not believe it unless I had it in print in front of me, but Treasury Secretary Snow said just the other day, today is September 7, he said yesterday at a press statement, this is in response to what we should do about Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath. He said, "Making the tax cuts permanent would be a real plus in a situation like this, because people would know they had going forward the advantage of lower tax rates," Snow said. "And when people know they have lower tax rates locked in going forward, it affects their behaviors. It makes them more confident of the future."

Now, let us talk more about FEMA's failure, because that is really what it boils down to at the end of the day, because we need FEMA to be there, we need FEMA to generate confidence in Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans, and I am going to use the word "Republican," but the Republicans ran last year on being the party that would be the best choice to protect people. They were the security party. That is supposedly the thing that tipped the scales.

Well, it is not just an issue of security in a terrorist crisis, which all of this resulting from Hurricane Katrina calls into question now, about whether they really are the party. They are clearly not the party of crisis.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They have proved they are not the party.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. They have proved they would not be able to be there in a disaster, in a disaster of any major proportion.

Let me just detail, because I have another chart here that is going to outline a couple of things that I think are important, FEMA's failures. Let us talk about cleanup, and let me just acknowledge that "personnel" is spelled wrong on this chart. I want to make sure the people knew that I know how to spell "personnel."

Cleanup: FEMA has failed for pay for debris removal from private property. This has resulted in many homeowners incurring large expenses paying for the removal of not only their own fallen trees and other damage, but also rubble blown onto their lots from other locales.

Let us talk about Federal aid.

So we give them an "F" in cleanup, because they are basically ignoring Florida as if a storm never hit our State.

FEMA must be more responsible in allocating Federal aid. We are talking about the things that FEMA should have been doing already and must do going forward. About \$30.8 million in FEMA money has been awarded to residents in Miami-Dade, a county that I represent and that Congressman MEEK lives in, much of it for replacement of appliances such as televisions and air conditioners, although the storms last year in Florida barely grazed the county. Meanwhile, this year, when the storm hit the county directly, now they are not reimbursing people who have legitimate damage and roofs ripped off their houses. Meanwhile, other storm-ravaged areas still have many families who continue to be displaced because of the severe damage to their homes. So they get an "F" in Federal aid.

How about personnel? Subsequent reports detailed how FEMA inspectors received little training, that FEMA approved millions in assistance to other areas of the country largely unaffected by disasters; that government scientists said that FEMA misrepresented wind data that it used to justify the payments in Miami-Dade County last year, and that the agency paid 315 hurricane-related funeral claims in Florida, even though the official death toll was only 123. So they get an "F" in personnel.

Fourth, the shocking statistics in terms of their preparedness. Florida officially recorded 123 fatalities last year from hurricanes, as I outlined, but were paid for 315 deaths, including those of a man who shot himself and a stroke victim who was hospitalized more than a week before the last storm hit, and that was documented by the Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel. In one case, a FEMA worker tried unsuccessfully to persuade a coroner to count among the hurricane casualties a morbidly obese heart attack patient who purportedly was scared to death.

This is the kind of thing that went on in FEMA before Katrina. These are the people that we are putting our confidence in and that people in the gulf coast States are having to put their confidence in, who are going to come in and rescue them and clean up this mess.

Most recently, disaster aid earmarked for hurricane victims in central Florida paid for funerals for people who died of cancer, a brain aneurysm and, in one case, advanced AIDS, according to the local medical examiner. That was in the Sun Sentinel as well. Asked to comment on payouts in central Florida, FEMA spokesman James McIntyre did not provide a response. He also did not address how many more funerals FEMA has paid for since that time.

We have to make sure that FEMA takes responsibility and is held accountable for its mishaps. This is an organization that gets an "F" in every single thing that they are primarily responsible for. This is the organization

that Americans are supposed to be putting their confidence in, that is going to be there for them when disaster strikes, and in advance of disasters striking that they should be ready for, and afterwards when they have to come in and clean it up. It is just absolutely inexcusable and disgusting.

For example, with the President, responding to the damage that the gentleman talked about to the levees, he said on Good Morning, America last Tuesday, that no one expected the levees to fail. Yet, he cut the budget that would have shored up those levees just last June, in 2004.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, that was the same, almost the same identical phrase that we heard from the Secretary, the new Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, about 9/11 when she was National Security Adviser: Who would possibly think anyone would take a plane and fly it into a building like a missile? Well, we found out later that people knew that was going to happen. They knew that was an option.

It is the same old rhetoric with these people over and over and over again. It does not make any sense. It just does not add up. Now, all of a sudden, the spotlight is on, and we have all of this information here, and we have pages and pages and folders and folders full of how much they knew beforehand and played dumb.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The same letter here that I read from earlier, I just want to read another paragraph out of the letter to the committee chairman from Ranking Member WAXMAN and also Ranking Member OBERSTAR and THOMPSON of the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Government Reform and also the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

The President said, I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees. But just the opposite is true. Multiple reports have predicted that a large hurricane could overflow the levees and cause massive damage in New Orleans. Both the Red Cross and FEMA ranked a hurricane in New Orleans as the Nation's most dangerous natural disaster threat.

I am going to tell my colleagues, this is well documented. Senator Breaux, who is retired, came out of retirement and jumped on TV 2 days after the storm saying, Excuse me, I am sorry, I just, I do not know what folks are talking about when they say they did not know this was going on. I mean, year after year, we tried to get money from the Federal Government. His entire congressional career was based on getting money for the levees. That is why some folks started talking about, well, you know, they are here talking all that mess, and we are trying to save lives, they are talking about what is not happening.

Let me tell my colleagues what we are doing here tonight. We are saving lives, literally. We are saving lives here and pointing out the inequities of an

agency that we just gave \$10-plus billion to and said, You handle it, okay? And the bottom line is that just as upset as Americans were about 9/11 and the loss of life, they need to be upset about Katrina and the loss of life and the lack of oversight in governance. The bottom line, period, dot.

So I think any American life that is lost when it could have been prevented deserves to be brought to the highest levels of Congress on both sides of the aisle. I am beyond partisanship right now. This is about responsibility. And the bottom line is, if the tables were turned and there was a man in the White House that had a Democrat, had a "D" behind his name, we could not stop the line of Republicans out the door to talk about what he or she did not do when they were supposed to do it and how they were supposed to do it.

So the bottom line is this: What are we going to do? I do not have a family member, God bless, in this situation, but there are people that do. And guess what? They may not be a Member of Congress. We have to give voice to those individuals.

What commitment does the Federal Government have to the people that are living in the South? That is the question. That is the bottom line. I do not care if they are a chairman, ranking member, somebody elected them over something in this Congress. The bottom line is, What is the commitment to the South? Because that is the only thing that I can point out, I say to my colleagues; I cannot come out with anything else.

Maybe the folks down there do not talk as fast as other folks, I do not know. Maybe they do not have endowed universities like we have in the North and in the central part of this country, I do not know. Maybe there are individuals that do not necessarily care about infrastructure and look at the warnings as it relates to New Orleans. Now it has happened.

The question is, what are we going to do about these individuals who are living in football stadiums and folks think it is okay for them to be there for 6 months. You can reach over and touch the next person in your bed. Do we have sex offenders living in the same stadium on the 50-yard line or the 60-yard line from a child? These are the things that we have to correct. These are the things that we must pay attention to. We cannot allow it to happen, or they will be made victims time after time and again.

So the bottom line is that we have individuals that are displaced. We have a Federal agency that we are about to give \$50-plus billion, and I guarantee my colleagues that there will be no real discussion about oversight.

□ 2245

There will be no real action. I will guarantee, we will not stand by and watch this administration get this money and start handing out contracts to their buddies.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is exactly right. We are not going to let that happen.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And making individuals victims again. Because I guarantee, and I told you this earlier today, I may be in some retirement community at 80, if God is willing, walking around with a walker, and someone looks back in the history books about what took place at this time in the moment, and they look at me and they say well, were you not a Member of Congress at this time? What were you doing? I will tell them refer to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and also reflect on what happened and what the American people did because they knew what these individuals were doing and making these individuals victims again.

Now, do not get me wrong. I am not saying that it is intentional. But I guarantee you for folks who do not look and wear the flag of oversight and making sure that this never ever happens again, folks talking about never ever happen again. Let us stop the bad from happening. And the only way we are going to stop the bad from happening is governing in the way that we are supposed to govern.

And you know something, I say to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), we are in a bad situation. We have constituents that are hurt. We have constituents that are raising money and doing those things and sending truckloads and giving to the American Red Cross and to the Salvation Army and to the NAACP and all the other groups that have relief funds. There are kids throughout this Nation that are giving lunchboxes and giving toys and all of these different things and running around.

Meanwhile, the big kitty, the \$50-plus billion we are running around here on a hush hush kind of thing and Members barely know what is going in the bill, what oversight is there. Where will it go? No one has been removed for a more qualified individual to be placed in a position that can continue the response and the recovery.

We are in the first quarter of this recovery and we know that our quarterback is not up to the task to be able to make it to the goal line. The FEMA Director, possibly the Homeland Security Secretary, possibly the individual in the White House that is quarterbacking the administrative moves on behalf of the White House, we need to call them in. We need to call time out, and we need to change our personnel for individuals that not only carry the resume but have the wisdom to be able to carry it out.

And you know, I am on the Homeland Security Committee, and I know these individuals. I sit down and talk to them. I have gone to the Department of Homeland Security. But guess what? This is not about personalities. This is about governance. And it is not personal. It is just business, and the business of saving lives and making sure

that these individuals are made whole as much as possible. And we have got to correct it, not now but right now.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You talk about the quarterback, and let us continue the football analogy. If you have got the quarterback in the FEMA Director not having any ability to get things done, let us continue the football analogy and call Secretary Chertoff the coach, and the President the man in the front office. You have got both of those people who we cannot have any confidence in either.

And I will take a less than left-leaning example here, an excerpt from Fox News Sunday, because the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) talks about it not being intentional. The gentleman is right. It is not intentional. Their response was not intentional. It was just indifferent. The indifference is what is shocking. And you had Chris Wallace go through this exchange with Secretary Chertoff on Fox News Sunday this past Sunday.

Mr. Wallace said, "But Mr. Secretary, you know there are an awful lot of people around the country that are asking these questions and want to hear answers from you today.

During the week, during this past week you seemed to minimize or not to know about a lot of problems on the ground in New Orleans. Let us watch some of those."

And then he went on to show him some of the clips.

And this was Secretary Chertoff's response: "We are extremely pleased at the response that every element of the Federal Government, all of our Federal partners have made to this terrible tragedy. There have been isolated incidents of criminality. We have all seen pictures of looting."

Then he goes on to say: "I have not heard a report of thousands of people in the Convention Center who do not have food and water."

Well, I can understand why, because yesterday when we had the briefing in this Chamber from most of the members of the Cabinet, you had one of the Secretary of Defense's military leaders stand up and say that the pictures we have all seen on TV are just like looking through a straw, that that does not show the full picture. We are looking through a straw, that they are extremely pleased with their response and it is going exceedingly well.

So then he goes on to say, what Chris Wallace says: "Mr. Secretary, how is it possible that you could not have not known on late Thursday, for instance, that there were thousands of people in the Convention Center who did not have food, who did not have water, who did not have security, when that was being reported on national television?"

Secretary Chertoff says: "Well, Chris, you know, that is one of the issues we have to look at. I mean, we were in constant touch with what was going on in the field, getting information from State and local officials. As it happened on that very Thursday I was in a

video conference with State officials and did not get any information about this. And one of the things we will look at is why in the middle of this emergent crisis there was a conflict in the information."

You know, I can tell Secretary Chertoff why the State and local officials did not feel like they had to tell you that there were people at the Convention Center, because you could not turn on your TV and not see them dehydrating in front of your very eyes. How about the woman who had her dehydrated baby who she could not even wake up? I mean, I have a 2-year-old. God forbid that ever happened in my family. I can assure you that if it happened in the community that I represent, I have a hunch that the response would have been a little bit quicker because my constituents are not poor and they are not African American primarily.

You know, you talk about the South, and obviously I am one of those Members that would be very protective of the South. But this could be a natural disaster in Detroit or in Wisconsin or name any State with a black community or a predominantly poor community, and there but for the grace of God go them. I mean, really.

We are not here to point fingers. We are just here to point at what has been happening in front of our very eyes. And this has just got to stop. We do have to come up with solutions. We cannot hand out \$50 billion to a person who is running the show like it is a circus, like he is the ring leader in a circus, and not a very good one. It is just inexcusable. We cannot ever let this happen again, and we have got to draw a line in the sand and say this far and no further.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It almost brings up the point, whether it is black or white or whatever, number of electoral votes the way this group operates. You know, if you have got a State that has enough electoral votes, we will maybe even be there before anything comes. But if you do not have enough, you know, you are on your own, and we are going to absolutely roll the dice.

And as we are kind of creeping into the final few minutes here, I want to just touch upon what the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) has just said, that I hope the ultimate point that we can all carry out of this whole tragedy that is still going on for thousands and thousands and thousands of people, and I hope when New Orleans is rebuilt and we are all down there, you know, hanging out again, that the point that we all remember is this: this tragedy highlighted the clear disparity between many people in this country and many others in this country. Whether it is black or white or rich or poor, there is a huge, tremendous rift between those people who have a lot of money and those people who do not have anything.

And we saw it today, or this past week because people were saying, well,

why did they not leave? Well, 35 percent of the African Americans, I believe, in the city, did not have cars. Now, regardless of how the whole thing was structured, and we will have arguments about everything else, they were at a clear disadvantage. They were reliant upon someone else. And you go through education and health care and basic skills that kids test on, it is unbelievable how poorer kids do so much worse.

And this is going on in Youngstown, in Akron, in Cleveland, in Milwaukee, in Detroit. Pick a city, as the gentlewoman said. And I hope that after all this we realize that that is unacceptable and to give millionaires trillions and trillions of dollars and see what the end result is, whether it is through kids, education, health care or levees being built, the government has a role to play, and those people who benefit from society have an obligation to meet their responsibility to everybody else. And that is really, I think, the ultimate point in this. And I hope that the reaction to this is the same reaction that we had in 1927 when the big flood hit in 1927, which eventually led to a very progressive era in government and into the 1930s and 1940s and, quite frankly, into the 1980s.

So I hope that we all realize that, you know, we are pretty lucky, most of us. But there are some people that we need to reach out to and find ways to reform government and put the money in the right places to make sure that those people have the kind of opportunity that many others have.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) I just wanted to go over a couple of these programs that FEMA has available for individuals that are in the Federal disaster area, those States that have been designated by the President. There are a number of grants and I just want to make sure, and also low-interest loans, and if anyone wants assistance as it relates to those, you can call and just ask the question. The operators will go over it with you. They are working 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. You can call 1-800-621-FEMA, F-E-M-A, and that is 3362. So that is 1-800-621-3362 to register. If you are hearing impaired, you will dial the TDY line, which is 1-800-462-7585. I am going to read that other number over again. 1-800-621-3362. If you are hearing impaired, 1-800-462-7585. They also have an online, you can reach FEMA through FEMA acronym, FEMA.gov/register. That is again 24-hour grant. They also have 24-hour you can get the grant information. And many of the family members may have to get it on behalf of the other family members because they may not be in an area where they can receive that information. You have to help your family and friends through this process, even though government is reaching out to them.

The individual housing grants that are also available, this is the primary

vehicle of assistance that FEMA provides to individuals. Also what that individual grant information does, it provides you with a voucher for short-term housing. Each individual can get up to \$26,200 per individual or household. And I think that is important. And we will give you more information in the coming days on that.

Disaster unemployment relief. This program, with acronym of DUA, provides benefits to individuals that were previously employed or self-employed that have been made jobless because of a direct result of the major disaster which will be Katrina, that are not eligible for regular Federal or State unemployment insurance. I think that is important. But I still urge Americans and also Members to encourage their constituents to go after these programs.

Dislocated worker activities, this is a program that provides training and also related assistance to persons that have lost their jobs that are unlikely to return back to their current job or industry. That is important for individuals that are throughout the country.

I just want to be able to add in the last couple of minutes here, we have folks that are all over the country, that are literally all over the country. And I am coming back to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

In Alabama, there are some 5,017 individuals; Arkansas, 5,534. I am just reading out some of the big numbers. Louisiana there are a lot of people still there, 67,000 individuals. So there are a number of programs that are available. I urge you to go to the FEMA Web site or even call them. Mr. RYAN, do you want to give the Web site information?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. We are going to be trying to recruit college kids to go down and help with the clean up too. So it is 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, on behalf of the 30-something Working Group, we would like to thank the Democratic leader, Mr. Speaker, for allowing us to come here to the floor once again, and it was an honor addressing the House once again.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, this evening I wanted to spend the first few moments reflecting on the crisis in the gulf.

□ 2300

I have been privileged to observe nearly 8 decades of life and I will tell you that this is the only time that I can remember that I was looking at television, coming from our country that seemed really surreal to me. I had