

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS ARISING FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HURRICANE KATRINA, 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 2, 2005

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the emergency supplemental appropriation to help the recovery efforts along the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane Katrina has caused damage of historic proportion, and it is our responsibility to do everything we can to fully support the revitalization of all of the affected areas.

The images of the devastation that we have all seen over the course of the past week will be with us for some time. We need to turn our attention to and provide sufficient resources to repairing the lives of our fellow Americans most affected by this disaster: the poor, the elderly, and the disabled.

It is obvious that the administration's preparedness and response was insufficient. It is apparent that FEMA did not take action quickly enough to prevent the massive destruction of property and the widespread loss of human life.

While it is important that these issues be addressed in a timely manner, our immediate focus, and top priority should be helping the thousands of Americans who need our assistance during this tremendous rescue and cleanup effort that lies ahead of us.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this emergency appropriation, so that we can give immediate assistance to everyone affected by this disaster.

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SPEECH OF

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 2, 2005

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with my colleagues in expressing my sincere condolences to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. My heart goes out to those who are suffering, especially those who are still seeking information on the fate of missing loved ones. The devastation of Hurricane Katrina will continue to be felt for years to come.

Therefore, I support this all important supplemental appropriation bill to ensure our Nation can and will provide the necessary relief services to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. In the aftermath of this horrible tragedy, as in past tragedies, we have seen the true generosity and compassion of the American people. I continue to be amazed at the outpouring of support from people all over the country working together to offer assistance to those in need.

Hundreds of fire fighters and search and rescue crews from my home state of California

have gone to New Orleans and the Gulf coast devastated by the hurricane. I am proud to say that this includes the 70 strong Los Angeles urban rescue team from Fire Station No. 88 in Sherman Oaks in my Congressional District.

In both my District and Washington, DC offices, I have received hundreds of calls from my constituents calling to express their concern for those in need and seeking to identify ways to provide them with assistance. For many of my constituents, this tragedy brought back their memories of surviving natural disasters, like the 6.8 earthquake that struck Northridge at 4:30 am on January 17, 1994. Like Katrina, this earthquake caused monumental damage to communities, including road structures, and was one of the costliest natural disasters in our nation's history.

Following the earthquake, the Northridge community experienced similar outpouring of support from Americans. However, we also experienced a much greater and more effective response from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA began 15 minutes after the earthquake. This is particularly significant because unlike Katrina, the Northridge earthquake was not predicted to occur in 2004. In addition, the FEMA Headquarters Emergency Support team was activated 90 minutes after the earthquake. FEMA coordinated the response of the 27 Federal agencies involved in the Northridge earthquake allowing for services to be provided quickly. An Earthquake Service Center with representatives from all disaster agencies was opened almost immediately. FEMA also expedited the loan process for victims and disseminated important information to Los Angeles County residents.

In short, we saw results. Victims received relief in a timely manner. We saw an efficient Federal agency carrying out its mission. Reason would dictate that 11 years after this disaster, our response to natural disasters would be even more rapid and effective, and not slower and inefficient.

Sadly, this has not been the case. Almost exactly four years after the September 11th terrorist attacks, our Nation continues to struggle with properly aiding its citizens when disaster strikes.

And, unfortunately, we have seen firsthand the results of this struggle. We have all seen the images on television and heard the grim reports. People who have already lost their homes, who were separated from their families did not have access to basic necessities—food, water, and medical supplies. Many of these families, who needed their government the most, were forced to live in despicable, unhealthy and dangerous conditions. Women have been raped, babies have had to go without diapers, and people were forced to live in filth surrounded by human waste and corpses.

This is absolutely unacceptable, and I join with my colleagues in demanding a complete explanation of and accountability for what went wrong. We must also ensure that this ineffectual initial response never happens again.

Congress has a vital role in overseeing agencies and providing adequate funding. We need to reinstitute disaster mitigation programs like "Project Impact" that were in place during the Northridge earthquake. In addition to providing assistance after a disaster we

need to take steps to prevent disasters. This includes responding to the funding requests of the Army Corps of Engineers and local communities who have predicted disasters, like the one we are now experiencing. In our capacity as legislators, we must ensure that FEMA has the leadership, tools and resources to effectively respond to a crisis without being burdened by untold levels of bureaucracy and lack of a clear mission.

This is an agency that needs to be directed by an experienced professional. What we have seen is just the opposite. I therefore call for the resignation of FEMA director Michael Brown. I am encouraged that former FEMA director James Lee Witt is providing his knowledge and experience to the state of Louisiana and it is my sincere hope that Mr. Witt will be reappointed to his position as Chief of FEMA and restore that agency to the strength it had during the Northridge earthquake.

But, that is not enough. We must also help individuals facing financial vulnerabilities from natural disasters as well as foster an environment that allows the private sector to properly aid those in need. To that end, I have worked with my colleague from Florida, Ms. Brown-Waite, on legislation that would require the Secretary of the Treasury to ensure there was sufficient insurance capacity available for private homeowners to cover catastrophic natural disasters. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Homeowners' Insurance Availability Act of 2005 (H.R. 846).

In 2002, along with several of my colleagues, I asked GAO to study efforts to securitize natural catastrophe and terrorism risk. We received that report in April 2003, but have not held hearings in the Financial Services Committee on the issue since then. I am hopeful that we can enact this needed insurance legislation so that Americans living in areas subject to cyclonic, seismic, volcanic and other catastrophic activity can rest assured that the industry insuring them against losses will be there when they need it the most.

This is just one suggestion for ways that we can move forward to protect our citizens and our financial industry. Once again, I thank my fellow citizens who have shown such wonderful compassion for those affected by Katrina. I look forward to working with my colleagues toward the goal of implementing a fully functional and effective government response that aids people in need and provides them with the tools to help get them back on their feet as quickly as possible. The American people deserve no less.

IN RECOGNITION OF UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 12, 2005

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, it is with the greatest pleasure that I rise today to recognize the grand opening of the 10th campus of the University of California system in Merced, California. UC Merced is the first new University of California campus since 1965 and the first ever in California's sprawling San Joaquin Valley.

Established in 1868, the University of California has become one of the largest and

most highly acclaimed institutions of higher learning in the world. The knowledge and opportunities that the UC institution has cultivated in our students and communities has inspired great minds and encouraged extraordinary technology for generations. It is recognized globally as one of the world's leading public university systems and we are thrilled that it is becoming an integral part of our community in Merced.

I am honored to join the community in the University's opening ceremonies on September 5, 2005. This occasion is particularly special to me, as my commitment to making Merced the home of the 10th UC campus began many years ago. Throughout my career in the California State Legislature, and today as a Member of the United States Congress, UC Merced has remained a priority of mine. Since Merced was chosen by the UC Board of Regents from 85 other cities as the site for its newest campus 10 years ago, the road has been long and arduous. But the vision and drive of countless individuals and numerous elected officials ensured that we would all share in the celebration of this momentous occasion. With the steadfast support and unwavering commitment of our community, we succeeded in making this dream a reality—we brought the first UC campus to be built in nearly 40 years to Merced.

September 6, 2005 marks the first official day of classes whereby UC Merced will "launch the future" of its first class of 1,000 students from throughout the San Joaquin Valley and the state of California. The inaugural class is comprised of students from as far north as California's most northern county of Del Norte, as far south as San Diego, as far east as the Sierra Nevada and as far west as the Pacific Coast. Remarkably, approximately half of the students are the first in their families to attend college.

Under the guidance and leadership of Founding Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, an exceptional team of talented academic and administrative professionals has assembled to build the nation's first major public research university of the 21st Century. This founding team of professionals share in the Chancellor's dedication to education and commitment toward carrying forward the University of California's historic mission of excellence in teaching, research and public service.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride and pleasure in announcing the grand opening of the University of California Merced. I ask my colleagues to join me in conveying our best wishes and gratitude to all of those whose vision, dedicated efforts and steadfast support helped establish an institution that promises to challenge and inspire generations of students to come. As a Member of Congress it is an honor to represent UC Merced in the 18th Congressional District of California, and as a member of the community it is a pleasure to welcome UC Merced and its inaugural class to Merced County.

COMMENDING THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT FOR DISENGAGEMENT IN GAZA AND WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 12, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in commending the Government of Israel for its bold action in disengaging from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements in the past few weeks. At considerable political risk, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has demonstrated his resolve by following through on his commitment to withdraw the Israeli presence from these areas. His government has made an unprecedented and unilateral sacrifice in the name of peace, surrendering land on which Israelis have lived continuously for almost four decades—land won in a war that was thrust upon them.

To be sure, the disengagement serves Israeli security interests, since it establishes a defensible line of separation that improves Israel's ability to defend its citizens from terrorist attacks. That is good news for both Israelis and Palestinians. Every day without bloodshed brings us one day closer to peace.

Mr. Speaker, I would particularly like to commend Israeli military and government officials for implementing disengagement in a way that allowed as many settlers as possible to express their remorse or anger while still encouraging them to vacate the area without resorting to violence. Even when some individuals or groups sought to provoke confrontations, Israeli authorities wisely avoided being drawn into fighting and, in the end, successfully and patiently evacuated even the most determined of dissidents. I am full of admiration for the Israeli military's achievement.

A significant majority of Israelis favored disengagement, and I think it is important for them to know that the American people are behind them, supporting them in their struggle against terrorism and in the search for peace.

But the decision of Prime Minister Sharon and his government to relinquish the settlements also creates an unprecedented opportunity for Palestinians who seek a state of their own. After this historic Israeli gesture, the burden to act now rests with Palestinian Authority leaders, who must prove that they can take on the challenge of securing and administering the territory just now coming under their control.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will soon see a concerted effort on behalf of the Palestinian Authority to move against terrorist organizations. This means not only bringing to a halt the attacks against Israel, but disarming the terrorists as well. A lull in violence is simply not enough. Terrorist infrastructure must be dismantled if Gaza is not to become a per-

manent launching pad for attacks by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other murderous fanatics. And I would urge President Mahmoud Abbas to insist that any group that wishes to participate in the January elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council first renounce violence in word and deed and divest itself of all arms.

President Bush recently noted in his first-ever interview with Israeli television that we are witnessing in Gaza "an opportunity for the Palestinians to show leadership and self-government" as well as "an opportunity for democracy to emerge." Mr. Speaker, I invite Palestinian leaders to make this vision a reality, building a Gaza that is democratic and peaceful, free and open.

In the wake of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, the international community should also do its part to assist the Palestinian Authority to move in the right direction, and Special Envoy James Wolfensohn is impressively leading the way. But there are additional responsibilities that fall squarely on the shoulders of Egypt and the Arab and Islamic nations.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most dramatic but least publicized aspects of the disengagement was Israel's decision to underscore the completeness of its withdrawal by removing its forces from Gaza's border with Egypt and allowing Egypt to send 750 troops to guard that border. This effectively alters the longstanding arrangement, based on the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which prohibited Egyptian troops from that region. Egypt has now assumed the major responsibility for ensuring that terrorists and arms do not penetrate that border. Terrorists seek to make a mockery of Israel's disengagement by making Gaza an unrestrained launching pad for terrorism into Israel—just as opponents of disengagement predicted they would. It is the responsibility of Egypt, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, to win the confidence of the Israeli people by keeping Gaza peaceful.

The wider Arab and Islamic worlds also have a significant part to play. By pursuing normalization with Israel, they will demonstrate that steps toward peace will be met in kind. The very significant meeting last week between the Israeli and Pakistani foreign ministers is encouraging in this regard, as are recent reports of stepped-up Israeli contact with the United Arab Emirates and Tunisia.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Prime Minister Sharon and his government for taking this wise and exceptionally courageous step toward peace—a step that is fraught with more risks than the media have acknowledged. I encourage the Palestinians to capitalize on this unique opportunity to demonstrate their own competence in governance and commitment to peace. And I call on the Arab and Islamic world to assume responsibility for proving to Israel that unilateral steps toward peace are not only appreciated but reciprocated.