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Major Accomplishments of the U.S. Senate During the 109th Congress, to Date

This paper lists major accomplishments of the Senate during the 109th Congress, to date. (This listing will be updated and re-issued periodically throughout the remainder of the Congress.) Items are listed under the following ten categories:

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Note: For organizational purposes, each category lists the accomplishments in numerical order, by public law number (if enacted), from most recent to oldest, and by bill number if not enacted.

PROMOTING JOBS AND A STRONG ECONOMY

Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 – P.L. 109-236

This law makes new improvements and encourages innovations in mine safety to protect American miners. The law requires each covered mine to develop and continually update an emergency response plan and to use the latest equipment and technology that is commercially available to protect workers; requires that every mine make available two well-trained rescue teams located in close proximity to the mine; provides tort protection for employers and rescue team members while increasing penalties for safety violations; and creates a permanent office of Mine Safety and Health within the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

Stop Counterfeiting in Manufactured Goods Act – P.L. 109-181

This law prohibits trafficking of counterfeit labels, patches, and medallions. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency, counterfeiting of goods through overseas sales and re-importation of electronics, DVDs and other products costs American businesses hundreds of billions of dollars a year. This law will help American businesses to recover and protect against future losses through requiring the destruction and forfeiture of equipment used to make counterfeit goods and forcing counterfeiters to pay restitution.

United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act – P.L. 109-169

This law strengthens the economic and diplomatic ties between the United States and the State of Bahrain. Bahrain is one of America's closest allies in the Middle East. This law affirms the United States' commitment to supporting allies overseas and encouraging reform by promoting open markets.

Terrorism Risk Insurance Revision Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-144

This law extends the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) through FY 2007, providing a reinsurance "backstop" for insurers in exchange for a requirement that they provide terrorism risk insurance to commercial firms at reasonable rates. This law will help shift the burden from the taxpayer to the private sector by increasing the property and casualty insurance loss threshold that would trigger federal assistance, increasing the amounts of terrorism losses retained by the insurance industry, and reducing the federal share of insured loss compensation in 2007. The law also instructs the Presidential Working Group on Financial Markets to recommend to Congress legislation to address the long-term availability and affordability of terrorism risk insurance.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – P.L. 109-59

This law authorizes \$286.5 billion in funding for federal-aid highways, federal transit programs, and motor carriers safety programs for five years. It provides financing for vital highway construction and repair projects, and provides states with the financing certainty necessary for longer-term infrastructure investment. Based on employment estimates produced by the Department of Transportation, this funding level will support more than 13 million American jobs. The Act also makes a number of changes in federal law to provide states with more flexibility in both revenue and expenditures by ensuring a minimum guarantee for the Highway Account of 90.5 percent for 2005-2006, increasing to 92 percent for years 2008 and 2009, thus ensuring all states receive a more equitable percentage of the funding they contribute.

Dominican Republic – Central America – United States Free Trade Implementation Act (DR-CAFTA) – P.L. 109-53

This law implements the United States-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade agreement. This is the first free trade agreement between the United States and the Central American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, as well as the Dominican Republic. This agreement benefits U.S. businesses by leveling the playing field with America's 12th largest market for exported goods; 80 percent of U.S. exports to this region are immediately duty-free with the remaining 20 percent becoming duty-free by 2010. This "win-win" agreement also benefits Central American countries by helping to provide economic stability in these democracies, an issue vital to our national security interests.

Junk Fax Prevention Act – P.L. 109-21

This law protects Americans from receiving unsolicited advertisements through fax machines. It amends the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit faxed advertisements unless the sender has an established relationship with the recipient or the advertisement contains a notice that the recipient may request that such transmissions desist.

Family Entertainment and Copyright Act – P.L. 109-9

This law makes it a crime to use a video recorder in a movie theater or to distribute a copyrighted work before its release or commercial distribution. It also legalizes movie-filtering technology that blocks sexually graphic and violent content, and it encourages the preservation and restoration of scholarly works. The movie industry believes that in-theater video recording of movies is a significant factor in approximately \$3.5 billion in piracy losses.

Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act – P.L. 109-8

This law, the first major revision to the U.S. Bankruptcy Code since 1978, makes improvements to the bankruptcy code in consumer, small business, and corporate contexts. In particular, the law ensures that only those individuals who earn less than their state's median income or those who are otherwise unable to pay their debts are able to wholly discharge them. At the same time, it ensures that those who have the ability to pay back some of their debt actually do so, rather than abuse the system. This law will save approximately \$3 billion annually for consumers through lower interest rates and better products and services.

United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (S. 3569) – Passed Senate

This bill would implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement, negotiated in 2004 and 2005, and signed on January 19, 2006. It would strengthen the economic and diplomatic ties between the United States and the State of Oman. This bill affirms the United States' commitment to supporting allies overseas and encouraging reform by promoting open markets.

Financial Services Regulatory Relief Act of 2006 (S. 2856) – Passed Senate

This bill would reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens imposed on our nation's banking industry, allow the Federal Reserve System to pay interest on certain reserve balances, give the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve greater flexibility in setting reserve requirements, and give financial regulatory agencies more flexibility in sharing data, retaining records, and scheduling examinations.

Water Resources Development Act of 2005 (S. 728) – Passed Senate

The bill would provide authority for the Secretary of the Army to carry out 42 projects for water resources development, conservation and other projects. Specifically, the bill contains navigation capacity Improvements and Ecosystem Restoration Plan for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System, would establish the Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration program, and contains Corps reform provisions, and would establish a National Levee Safety Program, modeled after Dam Safety Program, to look specifically at levee safety issues.

Workforce Investment Act Amendments of 2005 (Provision of the Job Training Improvement Act of 2005) (H.R. 27) – Passed Senate

This bill would give states and local areas the flexibility to provide training for jobs in high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations needed to ensure America's competitiveness in the global economy. Specifically, the bill would do the following: improve the existing One-Stop Career Center delivery system; remove barriers that have discouraged business involvement in workforce training, while finding new mechanisms to increase and improve local business and industry participation in job training decisions across the nation; improve access to services; and improve youth job training activities by directing more resources to those out-of-school youth who are most in need of assistance.

Pension Security and Transparency Act of 2005 (H.R. 4) – Passed Senate

This bill would increase the retirement security for American workers by helping to ensure the solvency of American pension plans. The bill also adjusts Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) insurance premiums and establishes minimum funding standards to strengthen private pension plans, including multiemployer pension plans.

Nomination of Christopher Cox to be Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) – Confirmed by Unanimous Consent

REDUCING SPENDING AND KEEPING TAXES LOW

Tax Relief Act of 2005 (Tax Reconciliation) – P.L. 109-222

This law prevents a number of scheduled tax increases from going into effect and ensures that more middle-class, working Americans do not become subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax. America's economy grew by more than 3 percent for 10 consecutive quarters through 2005, and the law helps to ensure this pro-growth environment. Several important provisions of this law include small-business expensing provisions, a research and experimentation tax credit, deductions for tuition to help students and families afford college, deductions for state and local taxes, and the low-income savers credit.

Deficit Reduction Act (Spending Reconciliation) – P.L. 109-171

This law reduces federal outlays by \$39.675 billion for FY 2006-2010 (and \$101.6 billion over the 2006-2015 period). The law includes provisions that would provide net savings in Medicaid of \$4.76 billion over five years and Medicare savings of \$6.41 billion over five years. This law is the first deficit reduction reconciliation bill since 1997; it affirms Republicans' commitment to controlling spending even while rebuilding the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina.

Welfare Reauthorization (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171

This law reauthorizes several provisions that have been successful in reducing the welfare rolls and moving those individuals into gainful employment. These provisions include the following: authorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) through FY 2010 at its current funding level (\$16.9 billion annually) and an additional \$1 billion for child care over five years; readjustment of the work participation rate to conform with the intent of the landmark 1996 Welfare Reform Act (P.L. 104-193); and the providing of grants, including \$100 million annually for the promotion of healthy marriage initiatives, and \$50 million annually for responsible fatherhood programs to strengthen two-parent marriages, reduce poverty, and improve child well-being.

The Digital Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171

This law requires television broadcasters to vacate the analog portion of the public spectrum by February 17, 2009, and directs the FCC to conduct an advance auction of those licenses on January 28, 2008. This auction, which is expected to generate \$10 billion, will be used to reduce the deficit by \$7.3 billion, with the remaining proceeds going towards programs that would advance the DTV transition and strengthen public safety communications. Additionally, 24 megahertz of spectrum recovered from the digital transition will go to public safety personnel.

Departments of Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-149

This law provides \$601.64 billion in total budgetary resources for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies. The Conference Report for this bill included no member-specific projects (earmarks), which demonstrates the Republican Senate's willingness to make tough choices in exercising budget discipline.

Discretionary Spending Reduction (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This provision will cut most discretionary spending by one percent. Veterans Affairs funding and combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are exempt from the across-the-board cut. It is estimated that this cut will save \$8.5 billion for fiscal year 2006. This represents Republicans' commitment to exercising fiscal discipline even while responding to the necessary rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina.

Transportation, Treasury, the Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-115

This law provides \$89.14 billion in new obligational budget authority for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, the Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies. The increase in funding for FY 2006 was kept to a level lower than the rate of inflation.

Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-108

This law provides \$61.80 billion in new obligational authority for the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce and related agencies. This level is a 1.8-percent decrease in funding from the FY05 enacted level.

Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-102

This law provides \$20.98 billion in total funding for foreign operations. It provides economic assistance and humanitarian aid, including \$2.82 billion to help combat HIV/AIDS, among other infectious diseases, and \$1.77 billion for the Millennium Challenge Corporation to reduce poverty in developing countries through economic growth. This funding affirms the United States' commitment to helping other nations in need, improving global health, and promoting freedom.

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-97

This law provides \$100.1 billion in new budget authority for Agriculture, Rural Development, the Food and Drug Administration, and a wide array of Federal programs, mostly under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. During the bill's consideration in conference, language that would have allowed prescription drug reimportation was dropped.

FY07 Concurrent Budget Resolution (S. Con. Res. 83) – Passed Senate

This budget resolution sets total spending at \$2.787 trillion and total revenues at \$2.428 trillion. As approved by the Budget Committee, the budget meets the President's goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009 a year early; the projected budget deficit will be reduced to 1.7 percent of GDP by FY 2008. Most non-defense discretionary spending will remain flat or will be cut this year, as it was last year.

DEFENDING AMERICA AND SECURING THE HOMELAND

Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006 – P.L. 109-234

This law provides \$74.6 billion to meet the needs of troops overseas fighting the Global War on Terror, pandemic flu preparation, increased border security, levee repair and flood control projects, without exceeding the President's requested funding level [Note: the law also provided hurricane-relief funding, which is addressed separately.]

USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act – P.L. 109-177

This law permanently renews 14 provisions of the USA Patriot Act and temporarily extends two provisions previously set to expire. This renewal is essential to prevent future terrorist attacks by providing law enforcement and intelligence agencies with the tools necessary to detect, apprehend, and prosecute terrorists and criminals.

Tsunami Preparedness Act (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171

This law provides for the improved operation of a tsunami warning detection system, under the Direction of the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), for America's coastal regions. The law also directs the Administrator to do the following: establish community-based "tsunami hazard mitigation" programs in high-risk areas; provide support to the international entities to work with other participating nations to provide funding for a global tsunami warning system; and establish a program to improve the resilience of coastal communities to natural disasters.

Department of Justice Reauthorization (Provision included in the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005) – P.L. 109-162

This provision authorizes appropriations for law enforcement programs in the Department of Justice, including the FBI, the DEA, the ATF, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The law establishes the United States-Mexico Border Violence Task Force to combat drug and firearms trafficking, violence, and kidnapping along the border between the United States and Mexico. The law also authorizes the establishment of a National Gang Intelligence Center and gang information database to increase state-federal cooperation.

DNA Fingerprint Act of 2005 (Provision included in the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005) – P.L. 109-162

This provision amends the DNA Identification Act of 1994 to expand the ability of states to add DNA analyses to the National DNA Index. Those profiles can be compared to evidence from crime scenes in order to solve rapes and other serious crimes. In addition, the law authorizes the Attorney General to prescribe regulations for the collection of DNA samples from individuals who are arrested or from foreign aliens who are detained under the authority of the United States.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-155

This law authorizes the funding for National Aeronautics and Space Administration to continue the agency's important work in aeronautics, science, and the exploration of space. The Act requires increased reporting and accountability by NASA and provides for a program to establish a permanently sustained presence on the Moon, the development of a space commercialization plan, and a competitive prize program to encourage private-sector development of space exploration and aeronautical technology.

Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-148

This law provides \$453.28 billion in new obligational authority for the Department of Defense for FY 2006. This Act provides \$50.0 billion in supplemental funds for the Global War on Terror, fully funds key readiness programs critical to the Global War on Terrorism, and also provides funding for a 3.1-percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel. This law also establishes uniform standards for interrogation and prohibits cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of individuals under the control of the Department of Defense.

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-114

This law provides \$82.57 billion in new budget authority for FY 2006, including funding for military construction for the active and reserve component accounts; family housing construction and improvement, operations and maintenance; and the base realignment and closure account (BRAC). It also provides \$70.25 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which includes \$23.55 billion for medical services to provide care for veterans whose service has kept all Americans safe.

Reducing the Number of Alien Absconders (Provision included in the Conference Report to Accompany the Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-108

This provision directs the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to work together to study existing apprehension, detention, appeal, and removal policies of illegal aliens and to supply a report to Congress of effective means of reducing the absconder rate.

Automated Biometric Identification System/Fingerprint Identification System (Provision included in the Conference Report to Accompany the Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-108

This provision directs the Department of Justice to update Congress on its efforts to fully integrate the databases at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with regard to fingerprint scans at U.S. ports of entry. The use of biometric identifiers such as fingerprints is an important tool to ensure that terrorists or criminals monitored by the FBI or DHS are identified and stopped before they are able to enter the country.

Service Members Group Life Insurance Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-80

This law allows for an increase in the maximum life insurance coverage allowed for an insured veteran or service member from \$250,000 to \$400,000. It also directs the Secretary of Defense to make a good faith effort to inform the spouse of an active duty service member if the member chooses to reduce coverage or designate another person as beneficiary of benefit. This law affirms the Senate's commitment to ensuring that military survivors are cared for after their loved ones make the greatest sacrifice for our country and our freedom.

Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, FY 2005 – P.L. 109-13

This law provides \$82.04 billion for ongoing military operations, postwar reconstruction and relief in Iraq and Afghanistan, aid for international partners in the war on terrorism, and homeland security needs. It includes \$907.3 million in relief for victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami, including \$656 million for the Recovery and Reconstruction Fund.

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, FY 2007 (H.R. 5441) – Passed Senate

This bill would provide \$32.79 billion in new budget authority for the Department of Homeland Security. Significant initiatives include the following: funding for an additional 1,000 Border Patrol Agents to help prevent illegal border crossings and the addition of 5,000 detention beds so law enforcement no longer have to abide by a policy of "catch and release"; \$745 million for high-threat, high-density urban area grants; \$500 million for the State and local basic grant program to keep our communities safer; and \$399.5 million for the US Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology (US VISIT), which enhances the security of the U.S. by verifying the fingerprint and identity of visitors with visas at ports of entry.

North Korea Nonproliferation Act of 2006 (S. 3728) – Passed Senate

This bill would make North Korea subject to the requirements of the Iran and Syria Nonproliferation Act, which would direct the President to impose additional sanctions against governments and individuals responsible for transferring missile, weapons of mass destruction, and advanced conventional weapons technologies to North Korea.

Foreign Investment and National Security Act of 2006 (S. 3549) – Passed Senate

This bill would amend current law to increase congressional oversight and to clarify the process for reviewing and investigating foreign acquisitions of U.S. companies that have potential national security implications.

Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2006 (S. 3322) – Passed Senate

This bill would help to reduce the burden on the armed services by providing for the creation of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, a civilian-run response effort, which would work with the Department of State and the Agency for International Development to carry out reconstruction and stabilization activities in regions around the globe affected by conflict or civil strife.

Defense Authorization Bill FY 2007 (S. 2766) – Passed Senate

This bill would authorize defense programs in FY 2007 including an additional \$50.0 billion supplemental for the ongoing military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and operations in the global war on terrorism. The bill would also authorize an across-the-board military pay raise of 2.2 percent and targeted pay raises for mid-career and senior enlisted personnel and warrant officers.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (S. 2611) – Passed Senate

This bill would authorize a number of internal enforcement and border security programs to assist in controlling illegal immigration. Among the programs is the creation of an “instant-check” electronic employment verification system for all employers to check the work eligibility of new hires. The bill would also legalize in some form unauthorized aliens who have resided in the United States since January 7, 2004, and create 200,000 new foreign worker visas per annum. Certain specialized “H-1b” temporary work visa quotas would be increased. Permanent resident “green card” quotas would be increased by two to three times their present number to eliminate most of the waiting line for green cards; new quota rules would be created. The bill would also make it more difficult for children born abroad of American parents to acquire citizenship but easier for those adopted abroad. Finally, the bill would institute a number of changes to the immigration litigation regime.

Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 (S. 2370) – Passed Senate

This bill would promote peace through condemning terrorist organizations and urging the international community to participate in isolating terrorist groups. The bill also amends current law to encourage reform within the Palestinian Authority through the withholding of international assistance unless Hamas both publicly acknowledges Israel’s right to exist and purges any persons with terrorist ties from Hamas’ security forces.

Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (S. 362) – Passed Senate

This bill would establish within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the United States Coast Guard a program to identify, reduce, and remove ocean debris to mitigate the harmful effects of debris on marine and coastal environments and to improve navigation.

Ocean and Coastal Observation System Act of 2005 (S. 361) – Passed Senate

Under the direction of the National Oceanic Research Leadership Council, this bill would establish an advanced warning system along the coastlines of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Great Lakes to improve early warning and detection systems for tsunamis and other maritime natural disasters.

State Criminal Alien Assistance Program Reauthorization (S. 188) – Passed Senate

This bill would reauthorize the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). SCAAP provides financial assistance to states and local governments with authority over correctional facilities that incarcerate or detain undocumented criminal aliens. This bill reflects Republicans' commitment to provide the necessary federal support to keep our homeland safe.

National Ocean Exploration Program Act (S. 39) – Passed Senate

This bill would provide for the establishment of a national ocean exploration program under the direction of the Secretary of Commerce and within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). This program will do the following: conduct archeological and scientific explorations of ocean environments including historic shipwrecks and little-known undersea regions; promote public education and discourse of ocean science; and work to improve the technical capability of U.S. oceanographic research.

PROMOTING FREEDOM AND SECURING OUR VALUES

Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act – P.L. 109-248

This law creates a National Sex Offender Registry that includes detailed information on sex offenders, requires uniform registration standards with a lifetime registration requirement for the most serious offenders, and will allow officials in all 50 states to share information and more effectively investigate and prevent child abuse cases. The law also imposes enhanced penalties for the most serious crimes against children, as well as mandatory minimum penalties for repeat offenders. John Walsh, the host of "America's Most Wanted," and also the father of Adam Walsh (who was murdered 25 years ago and for whom the bill was named), described this bill as "the toughest piece of child protection legislation in 25 years."

Schools Safely Acquiring Faculty Excellence (SAFE) Act (Provision of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety bill) – P.L. 109-248

This provision would allow schools to access existing national databases of child predators when making hiring decisions. Allowing schools to access this information would provide another tool to help ensure that our nation's classrooms are secure and our children are protected from those who might seek to do them harm.

Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Corretta Scott King Voting Rights Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 – P.L. 109-246

This law will provide for the 25-year extension of several provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which were previously set to expire on August 6, 2007. The expiring provisions include “pre-clearance” of voting changes and requirements that voting material be printed in non-English languages to accommodate non-native speakers.

Fetus Farming Prohibition Act of 2006 – P.L. 109-242

This law prohibits any person or entity from soliciting or knowingly acquiring, receiving, or accepting a donation of human fetal tissue resulting from a human pregnancy that was deliberately initiated to provide such tissue. The law also prohibits knowingly acquiring, receiving, or accepting tissue or cells obtained from a human embryo or fetus that was gestated in the uterus of a nonhuman animal.

Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 – P.L. 109-239

This bill would amend current law to require states to establish procedures that encourage cooperation between state and private agencies for the placement of children.

Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act – P.L. 109-235

This law increases the penalties for violations by television and radio broadcasters of the prohibitions against transmission of obscene or indecent material and profane language. This law reflects the Senate’s commitment to protecting children and families from being exposed to offensive material, and encourages media outlets to provide additional family-tiered programming.

Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act – P.L. 109-228

This law ensures that America’s fallen heroes will receive the level of dignity and honor befitting their service to our country during their funeral services. It would restrict protests at funeral services conducted on grounds controlled by the National Cemetery Administration or at Arlington National Cemetery and prohibit distracting protests within 500 feet of a cemetery at which a funeral or memorial service is to be held, for a period beginning 60 minutes before and ending 60 minutes after the service. The law also imposes penalties for violating this law.

Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 (Provision of the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act) – P.L. 109-177

This provision addresses the growing epidemic of the use and trafficking of methamphetamines through restricting over-the-counter sales of medicines that contain ingredients used to make methamphetamines, increasing penalties for the trafficking or production of methamphetamines, and providing additional resources for state and local law enforcement agencies to target methamphetamine “hot spots.” In 2005, the Office of National Drug Control Policy reported that there has been a 17-percent reduction in youth drug use over the last 3 years. This provision will continue the federal and state efforts toward bolstering this positive trend.

Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization of 2005 – P.L. 109-164

This law reflects America's commitment to fighting human trafficking, a crime in which human beings, including children, are essentially bought and sold as slaves. It will assist authorities in investigating and prosecuting traffickers and customers, provide grants to state and local law enforcement, and provide services to victims.

Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization (Provision included in the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005) – P.L. 109-162

This provision ensures that the protections of the Violence Against Women Act continue in force. It authorizes grant monies to combat domestic violence, stalking, and domestic violence against children through services to victims and increased public education. The law also adds regulations of international marriage brokers and increases protections for American Indian women through grants and better coordination between Indian and federal law enforcement.

Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-129

This law provides for the collection of human umbilical cord blood to be used for treatment, transplant, and research, and creates the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program, an umbrella program containing activities related to the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry and the new Cord Blood program. An advisory council will be created to coordinate with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to oversee this program and ensure that donated cord blood not appropriate for transplant use will be made available for use in peer-reviewed research. The collection of umbilical-cord-blood stem cells after childbirth causes no harm to mother or child, and research has shown that cord-blood stem cells can be effectively used to treat several diseases, including leukemia, Fanconi anemia, and sickle cell disease.

Water for the Poor Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-121

This law reflects America's compassion for our neighbors around the world, by addressing an issue that affects 1.2 billion people worldwide, and is responsible for the death of one child every 15 seconds. It would establish that providing safe, clean, and renewable water for poor countries should be part of America's foreign policy. Specifically, it authorizes the President to provide increased assistance to developing countries, and directs the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to develop a strategy to increase people's access to safe water.

Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-95

This law provides increased assistance to vulnerable children in developing countries through both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The law also directs the President to establish a system for monitoring this effort, and directs the Secretary of State to appoint a Special Advisor for Assistance to Vulnerable Populations.

Renewal of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act – P.L. 109-39

As a means of promoting democratic rule and freedom of expression in Burma, this law places sanctions on the ruling Burmese military junta and supports and recognizes the National League of Democracy as the legitimate representative of the Burmese people.

Federal Acquisition of Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California (H.R. 5683) – Passed Senate

This bill would direct the federal government to acquire the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial, which is marked by a 29-foot cross, and was built in 1954 in honor of the American war dead of World War I, World War II, and the Korean conflict. The federal government will maintain the site as a national war memorial honoring veterans. This bill would help protect the Memorial from future court challenges by groups who wish to see this Memorial taken down.

Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act (S. 2754) – Passed Senate

This bill would direct the Secretary of HHS to conduct and support basic and applied research to develop alternative techniques for the isolation, derivation, production, or testing of pluripotent stem cells. However, research authorized under this bill could not use cells derived from a human embryo, but is intended to encourage the derivation of pluripotent cells from alternative sources or techniques.

The Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act (S. 2349) – Passed Senate

This bill would help to establish greater transparency and accountability in Congress by reforming the process through which the public may lobby members of Legislative Branch. The bill would specifically prohibit all gifts from lobbyists to Members of Congress, require the Ethics Committee to pre-approve privately funded travel, and increase transparency over the use of so-called earmarks. The bill would also strengthen reporting requirements of lobbyists and, for the first time, would require disclosure by large-scale, paid grassroots lobbying organizations.

Child Custody Protection Act (S. 403) – Passed Senate

This bill would prohibit the transport of a minor across state lines for the purpose of receiving an abortion if doing so abridges a parental notification or consent statute in the minor's residing state, while providing an exception if the abortion is necessary to save the minor's life. This bill would help to protect the health and safety of pregnant minors, through ensuring the involvement of parents in the medical decisions of their minor daughters seeking to obtain an abortion.

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE AND DEPENDABLE ENERGY

The Low-Income Home and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) bill – P.L. 109-204

This law advances \$1.0 billion in funding allocated for FY 2007 to be available for use in FY 2006 to provide energy assistance to low-income individuals. As amended, the bill requires that 50 percent of the \$1 billion provided in the underlying bill for FY 2006 be distributed under the standard LIHEAP formula with the other 50 percent going into a contingency fund to be distributed by the Administration.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) (Provision in the Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-149

This provision would add \$2.18 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This additional funding will help to ensure that the elderly and those on low incomes will not have to face a cold winter without being able to pay their heating bills.

Energy and Water Development Appropriations, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-103

This law provides more than \$31 billion for fiscal year 2006. It supplies funds for water resources development programs and related activities of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works Program and for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation. It also supplies funds for the Department of Energy's energy research activities, including environmental restoration and waste management, and atomic energy defense activities of the National Nuclear Security.

Energy Policy Act – P.L. 109-58

This law provides a comprehensive national energy policy that will help meet America's long-term energy demands by encouraging greater domestic production, greater fuel diversity, and improved energy infrastructure. It also provides funds for the research and development of new energy technologies and encourages energy efficiency.

Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 2006 – P.L. 109-54

This law provides more than \$26.20 billion in discretionary funding for fiscal year 2006. It includes the following: funding for the Department of Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency; Clean Water State Revolving Fund; cultural agencies; and various other agencies. This law significantly increases funding for wildland fire management activities.

Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (S. 3711) – Passed Senate

This bill would open selected portions of the Gulf of Mexico, including a portion of Lease Sale 181, for oil and gas leasing. Allowing for production in this area would make an additional 1.26 billion barrels of domestically produced oil and 5.83 trillion cubic feet of natural gas available to American consumers. Providing this additional energy supply will help to meet our country's needs, reduce our dependence on foreign supplies of energy, and help to stabilize energy prices.

United States-India Energy Security Cooperation Act of 2006 (S. 1950) – Passed Senate

This bill would improve cooperation and collaboration between the United States and India to increase global access to more secure and cleaner sources of energy, while encouraging market-driven advancements in energy production to decrease global dependence on oil. The bill also authorizes the President to establish programs in support of greater energy cooperation between the United States and India.

Mercury Rule Allowed to Stand (Senate failed to pass S.J. Res. 20, resolution of disapproval)

This Senate resolution would have expressed disapproval with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposal to allow a cap-and-trade regulatory system for mercury-emitting, coal-fired power plants. If passed, this resolution would have effectively repealed the EPA's Clean Air Mercury Rule to reduce mercury emissions by 70 percent over 12 years. The Mercury Rule also provides incentives to the power sector to invest in the development of mercury-control technologies. The United States currently produces approximately one percent of the world's mercury, and the Mercury Rule represents the first-ever attempt by any country to restrict mercury emissions. In 2003, the EPA's analysis concluded that the public health threat caused by mercury could be adequately addressed with a 70-percent reduction over 12 years (rather than the 90 percent as had been required), a change which will save an estimated \$356 billion over 20 years.

**HELPING TO ENSURE QUALITY HEALTHCARE
FOR ALL AMERICANS**

State High Risk Pool Funding Extension Act of 2006 – P.L. 109-172

This provision reauthorizes funding for grants to each state that has not created a qualified high risk pool for the state's cost of creation and initial operation of a high risk health insurance pool. The legislation also provides relief to certain states that experience losses in connection with the operation of existing high risk pools and establishes reporting requirements for the Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to high risk pool funding.

Pandemic Flu Preparedness (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This provision provides \$3.8 billion for pandemic flu preparedness. It will help the United States prepare for a potential outbreak of pandemic flu by authorizing funding for stockpiling antivirals and medical supplies, promoting vaccine development and research, monitoring global avian influenza, providing grants for local public health centers, and providing additional funds for risk communication and outreach.

Medicare Cost Sharing, TMA, and Abstinence Programs Extension – P.L. 109-91

This law extends the qualified individual Medicare program through September 2007. This program provides medical assistance for Medicare cost-sharing for individuals who would be qualified Medicaid beneficiaries but for the fact that their income exceeds the state-established income level, and is between 120% and 135% of the official poverty line. The law also provided a three-month extension of Transitional Medical Assistance and the abstinence education program through December 31, 2005.

Veterans Medical Services Supplemental, FY 2005 (Section 601 of the Interior Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-54

This provision provides an additional \$1.5 billion in funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to cover budget shortfalls in veterans' healthcare. This funding reflects our commitment to supporting the troops both overseas and at home, and will ensure that our returning service members receive the quality care that they deserve.

Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act – P.L. 109-41

This law creates and implements a voluntary system of medical error reporting, so that preventable medical errors can be identified and actions can be taken to ensure that they do not continue to occur. The confidentiality protections provided in this law give more incentives for providers to voluntarily report errors. Such reporting is critical to efforts to ensure patient safety and improve the quality of patient care.

Wired for Health Care Quality Act (S. 1418) – Passed Senate

This bill would formally establish the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology (ONCHIT), previously organized by Executive Order. The National Coordinator, through ONCHIT, serves as the principle advisor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the President for federal health information technology programs. ONCHIT is responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing national health information programs that protect the privacy of health information, facilitating patient access to information while protecting it against unauthorized access. The bill also requires the Secretary to develop or adopt a system to measure the quality of care that patients receive.

Combating Autism Act (S. 843) – Passed Senate

This bill would increase investment in the National Institutes of Health for autism-related research to promote early detection, early evidence-based interventions, and services for individuals affected by autism spectrum disorder, which affects approximately 1 out of every 166 children born in this country. The bill would also reauthorize the epidemiologic surveillance programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and establish regional centers of excellence for collection, analysis and reporting of epidemiological data on autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (S. 306) – Passed Senate

This bill would prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment. It would prohibit a group health plan or other provider of health insurance from adjusting premiums on the basis of genetic information and requesting or requiring an individual or a family member of such individual to undergo a genetic test. In the employment context, it prohibits the use of genetic information for employment decisions, such as hiring, firing, job assignments, and promotions.

ENSURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (S. 250) – Presented to the President

This bill would reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins vocational education program with a number of reforms. These reforms would improve the academic focus and performance of all students, create a more effective and accountable system, build stronger partnerships between technical education and related businesses, and require states to develop an integrated curriculum of high school, college, and technical coursework to create an industry-recognized degree.

Increasing Grant Aid for Students Studying Math and Science (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171

This provision authorizes \$4.53 billion in spending over five years to create a new program that awards Academic Competitiveness Grants (for first or second academic year) and SMART grants (for third and fourth academic years) to Pell-eligible students in an undergraduate program of study. Students in their first and second years may receive awards of \$700 and \$1300 respectively, provided that they have completed a rigorous program of study at the secondary level. Undergraduate students in their third and fourth years may receive up to \$4,000 in grant aid if they major in a math or science subject or foreign language determined to be critical for national security and make progress toward a degree.

Student Loan Loophole (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171

This provision closes loopholes in existing law that made the student loan program too expensive for taxpayers. Provisions include the elimination of the guaranteed 9.5 percent floor rate for student loans, which was instituted in 1980 when interest rates were much higher. The bill would fix the borrower interest rate at 6.8 percent, and fix the parent interest rate at 8.5 percent. The law also increases loan limits for first and second year students to \$3,500 and \$4,500 respectively, and increases graduate borrowing limits to \$12,000.

Teacher Incentive Fund (Provision in the Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-149

This law provides \$100 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund, a pilot program for states and school districts to provide additional compensation to teachers who make a measurable impact on raising student achievement, and to provide an incentive to attract effective teachers to what the Department of Education calls “high-need” schools – schools with high poverty rates and poor performance on state assessments. The Teacher Incentive Fund was first proposed in the President’s FY 2006 Budget, and offers an appropriate incentive to states and local education agencies to advance the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act.

ENDING FRIVOLOUS LAWSUITS

Pandemic Counter Measure Protections (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

The provision provides targeted liability protections under State and Federal law for manufacturers and distributors of pandemic and epidemic products (including vaccines) and security countermeasures, in the event that the Secretary of Health and Human Services makes a declaration of a public health emergency as a result of a disease or other health condition. The provision also provides a process for providing compensation for any cases in which the administration or use of a product covered by the emergency declaration caused injury or death.

The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act – P.L. 109-92

This law addresses the politicization of our court system by a small number of anti-gun activists who have attempted to hold the firearm industry legally responsible for the criminal conduct of others. These frivolous lawsuits have forced the firearms industry to spend nearly \$200 million defending the right to produce a legal product. In the event of a large verdict, this relatively small industry could be destroyed, and Americans’ ability to exercise their Second Amendment rights could be dramatically curtailed.

Class Action Fairness Act – P.L. 109-2

The law curbs abuses in our courts that have driven up costs to consumers without benefiting the public. Over the past decade, class action lawsuits have grown over 1,000 percent nationwide, leading to increasingly unjust settlements that enrich a select few lawyers, while hurting plaintiffs and businesses in virtually every sector of America’s economy. This law addresses these abuses by moving certain large, interstate class actions from state courts into federal courts and creates a consumer bill of rights to ensure that the class-action legal process protects the rights of plaintiffs.

CONFIRMING FAIR JUDGES THROUGH A FAIR PROCESS

Nomination of Samuel Alito, of New Jersey, to be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court – Confirmed 58-42

Nomination of Jerome A. Holmes, of Oklahoma, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit – Confirmed 67-30

Nomination of Milan D. Smith, Jr., of California, to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit – Confirmed 94-0

Nomination of Brian M. Cogan, of New York, to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York – Confirmed 95-0

Nomination of Thomas M. Golden, of Pennsylvania, to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania – Confirmed 96-0

Nomination of Michael A. Chagares, of New Jersey, to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit – Confirmed 98-0

Nomination of Michael Ryan Barrett, of Ohio, to be a United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio – Confirmed 90-0

Nomination of Jack Zouhary, of Ohio, to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio – Confirmed 96-0

Nomination of Grey Hampton Miller, of Texas, to be a United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas – Confirmed 93-0

Nomination of Leo Maury Gordon, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade – Confirmed 82-0

Nomination of Thomas E. Johnston, of West Virginia, to be a United States District Judge for the Southern District of West Virginia – Confirmed 89-0

Nomination of Timothy C. Batten, Sr., of Georgia, to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia – Confirmed 88-0

Nomination of Sandra Segal Ikuta, of California, to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit – Confirmed 81-0

Nomination of John G. Roberts, of Maryland, to be Chief Justice of the United States – Confirmed 78-22

Nomination of Priscilla Owen, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit – Confirmed 56-43

Nomination of Janice Rogers Brown, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit – Confirmed 56-43

Nomination of William H. Pryor, Jr., of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the 11th Circuit – Confirmed 53-45

Nomination of David W. McKeague, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the 6th Circuit – Confirmed 96-0

Nomination of Richard Griffin, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for 6th Circuit – Confirmed 96-0

Nomination of Thomas Griffith, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit – Confirmed 73-24

Nomination of Susan Neilson, of Michigan to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit – Confirmed 97-0

PROVIDING RELIEF TO AMERICANS IN GULF STATES AFFECTED BY HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA

Hurricane Relief (Provision of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006) – P.L. 109-234
This provision provides an additional \$19.8 billion to meet the needs of the individuals and families in regions devastated by gulf coast hurricanes.

Judicial Branch Employee Participation in Federal Leave Transfer Program for Disasters and Emergencies – P.L. 109-229
This bill would allow employees of the Federal Judiciary branch of government to participate in emergency-leave transfer programs for disasters and emergencies.

Hurricane Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-176
This law provides additional assistance for individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina by extending disaster unemployment benefits to 39 weeks from 26 weeks and extending the period during which unemployed workers may apply for assistance. The law also provides for reimbursement of communities for expenses incurred while housing individuals displaced by the hurricane.

Temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for Katrina Areas (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171
This provision provides a temporary increase in FMAP percentages for states affected by Hurricane Katrina. States will receive 100-percent FMAP reimbursement for Medicaid and SCHIP assistance for individuals who, during the week prior to Hurricane Katrina, were living in one of the parishes of Louisiana or counties of Mississippi and Alabama specified in the bill. Costs directly attributable to related administrative activities would also be fully reimbursed.

Coastal Disaster Assistance (Provision in the Deficit Reduction Act) – P.L. 109-171

This provision provides an additional \$200 million to assist states and local Indian tribes affected by hurricanes and other coastal disasters.

Third Emergency Katrina Supplemental (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This law provides \$29 billion in aid for victims of Hurricane Katrina, including \$3 billion in funding to help strengthen Louisiana levees, \$6.2 billion in Community Development Block Grants to help Gulf Coast communities rebuild, and \$1.6 billion in funding to school districts educating students displaced by hurricanes. Of this funding, \$23.40 billion is offset by reallocations from the Federal Emergency Management Disaster Relief Fund, and the remaining Katrina funding is offset by various rescissions and an across-the-board-cut of one percent that applies to most discretionary accounts.

Elementary and Secondary Education Recovery Act (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This provision authorizes \$1.66 billion in funds to provide aid for states affected by Hurricane Katrina to restart school operations, provide temporary emergency aid for displaced students, and assist homeless youth. This law also permits the Secretary of Education to extend deadlines under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for those affected by Katrina or Rita.

Katrina Higher Education Relief (Provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-148

This provision would provide waivers for certain student loans for students who were attending institutions of higher learning in the Gulf Coast region affected by Hurricane Katrina. It also provides assistance under the Higher Education Act to students and institutions affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Coast Guard Hurricane Relief Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-141

This law authorizes the Coast Guard to extend the duration of a license or certificate for Merchant Seamen in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, or those whose records were destroyed due to flooding in New Orleans. It also extends inspection compliance certificates for vessels last inspected in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, and it allows Coast Guard personnel who served on active duty for 30 days in areas affected by Katrina to retain accumulated leave, which otherwise would have been forfeited.

Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-135

This law creates a Gulf Opportunity Zone in the region affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma to encourage businesses to rebuild in the region and provide employment opportunities. In particular the law provides tax provisions such as a bonus depreciation and enhanced small business expensing, and it also provides for the issuance of tax exempt bonds to help finance reconstruction costs.

Study and Report on Catastrophic Hurricane Evacuation Plans (S.A. 2168, to H.R. 3058, the Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-115

This law provides \$1 million in funding for the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security to conduct a joint review to assess catastrophic hurricane evacuation plans and submit their findings to Congress by June 1, 2006.

Funds for Louisiana for Increased Traffic due to Hurricanes (Provision included in the Conference Report to Accompany the Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-115

The conference agreement provides \$1.5 million to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to establish a grant program for implementation of plans to alleviate traffic congestion and address increased transportation demands for parish and municipal governments that experienced a significant spike in population due to an influx of hurricane evacuees.

Additional Forecasters for the National Hurricane Center (Provision included in the Conference Report to accompany the Science, State, Justice, Commerce Appropriations bill, FY 2006) – P.L. 109-108

This provision provides \$500,000 in funding to the National Hurricane Center for the purpose of hiring four new hurricane forecasters.

National Flood Insurance Program Further Enhanced Borrowing Authority Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-106

This law increases the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from \$3.5 billion to \$18.5 billion through FY 2008 to pay the National Flood Insurance Program's flood damage claims through the next few months.

Hurricane Katrina Unemployment Relief (Provision in the QI, TMA & Abstinence Programs Extension and Hurricane Katrina Unemployment Relief Act) – P.L. 109-91

This law transfers money from the federal trust fund to the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama unemployment trust funds to help those states pay unemployment benefits.

Community Disaster Loan Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-88

This law will allow up to \$750 million of the funds appropriated under P.L. 109-62, the Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Hurricane Katrina, to be transferred to the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program to be used to assist local governments in providing essential services.

Emergency Airport Improvement Project Grants in Aid – P.L. 109-87

This law authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to provide airport development project grants to support infrastructure repair projects for public-use airports in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas that were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Natural Disaster Student Aid Fairness Act – P.L. 109-86

This law authorizes the Secretary of Education during FY 2006 to reallocate campus-based student aid funds to institutions of higher learning in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas, or institutions that have accepted students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita. The law also waives requirements for matching funds that are normally imposed on institutions and students.

Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-82

This law empowers the Department of Education to waive the non-federal share for states affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that seek unused FY 2005 funds for vocational rehabilitation. Additional funds may be used for supplemental training to help individuals with disabilities gain the necessary skills to help with the reconstruction and redevelopment of impacted communities.

Student Aid Waiver – P.L. 109-78

This law extends the authority of the Secretary of the Department of Education to waive student loan rules during a war or national emergency until September 30, 2007.

Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-73

This law provides tax relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina and contains provisions to encourage charitable contributions toward the relief effort in the affected region. Specifically, the law allows affected individuals to access their retirement savings without incurring penalties for early withdrawals, to deduct 100 percent of casualty losses, and to exclude from tax certain relief assistance. The act also provides incentives for businesses in the region to hire displaced workers and additional tax incentives to support regional employment and reconstruction, with an emphasis on encouraging displaced residents to return to the affected areas.

Flexibility for Displaced Workers Act – P.L. 109-72

This law allows for greater flexibility in the use of National Emergency Grants to provide temporary disaster relief and training for individuals who have relocated to regions outside of the Katrina-affected areas and to those who assist in disaster recovery.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Response and Recovery Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-68

This law makes immediate payment of TANF funds for the first quarter of FY 2006 to all states, and makes additional TANF funds available to states devastated by Hurricane Katrina by converting an existing loan fund into a contingency fund for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. It holds states harmless for costs incurred to immediately assist evacuees, provides states with flexibility to spend unused TANF funds for families impacted by the hurricane, waives program rules for hurricane victims receiving short-term TANF assistance, and waives penalties on states that resulted from efforts to support families impacted by the hurricane.

Student Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act – P.L. 109-67

This law authorizes the Secretary of Education to waive certain repayment requirements for students receiving campus-based federal grant assistance efforts if they were residing in, employed in, or attending an institution of higher education located in a major disaster area, or their attendance was interrupted because of the disaster.

Pell Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act – P.L. 109-66

This law authorizes the Secretary of Education to waive certain repayment requirements for hurricane-affected students receiving federal Pell Grants. This waiver is necessary because under current law, Pell Grant recipients who are forced to withdraw from classes due to a natural disaster are required to repay any Pell Grant funds used to pay for school expenses, or they will be barred from enrolling in future classes.

Income Exclusion of Flood Insurance Mitigation Payments – P.L. 109-64

This law allows for the exclusion of federal flood mitigation assistance from consideration as income or a resource for purposes of determining an applicant's eligibility for certain federal income-assistance or resourced-based programs.

Federal Judiciary Emergency Special Sessions Act of 2005 – P.L. 109-63

This law authorizes courts displaced by Hurricane Katrina to operate outside of the courts' regular circuit or district.

Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, 2005 – P.L. 109-62

This law provides an additional \$51.8 billion in emergency funding to continue recovery and relief efforts in the areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, 2005 – P.L. 109-61

This law provides \$10.5 billion in emergency funding to provide immediate assistance to Gulf States affected by Hurricane Katrina. Specifically, this law provides \$10 billion to the Department of Homeland Security for disaster relief and \$500 million to the Department of Defense for operations and maintenance.

Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005 (H.R. 3858) – Passed Senate

This bill would require the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness plans provide for the safe evacuation of individuals with households pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency.

Katrina Education Reimbursement (S. 1764) – Passed Senate

This bill would allow the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to transfer funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to the Department of Education in order to provide assistance to schools that have accepted students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Gulf Coast Emergency Water Infrastructure Assistance Act (S. 1709) – Passed Senate

This bill would allow states to provide subsidies and loan forgiveness for water treatment and water quality projects related to Hurricane Katrina, for a two-year period, from funds allocated to states from the revolving loans under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. The bill also allows states to provide funds to water treatment plants that are not included under the Safe Drinking Water Act for up to two years, and authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to test drinking water from private wells that may be contaminated as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Disaster Recovery and Debris Removal Act of 2005 (S. 939) – Passed Senate

This bill would authorize the payment to disaster relief applicants of up to 50 percent of the Federal share for which that applicant is eligible. This assistance will expedite the process of clearing and removing hurricane-related debris from public access roads and private property.

A resolution to permit the solicitation of donations in Senate buildings for the relief of victims of Hurricane Katrina (S. Res. 235) – Passed Senate

This bill allows Senators or Senate employees to solicit another Senator or Senate employee for non-monetary donations for the relief of victims of Hurricane Katrina and to work with nonprofit organizations to deliver those donations.