



Congressman **Jim Sensenbrenner**

News From *Congress*

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Lessons Learned from Katrina

Before Hurricane Katrina reached the Gulf Coast at the end of August, meteorologists tracked its course for several days, and continually informed people living in the coastal area of its impending arrival and potential for damage. Yet, once the hurricane struck, the response by local, state and federal officials was unsatisfactory, to say the least.

It was difficult and frustrating to watch people suffer amidst this scene of destruction, while no one was able to cut through red tape and help those in need. The breakdown in the response to this awful tragedy was the result of many factors. Congress and the Bush Administration are launching separate inquiries to determine exactly what went wrong and how we can fix it, but some errors are already all too clear. Mike Brown, the former head of FEMA who was ill-prepared to deal with this disaster, has been replaced. Local officials who squandered federal resources targeted for New Orleans are coming under increased scrutiny. Inadequate evacuation planning and operations by the City of New Orleans has been revealed. As the investigations move forward, I will work to ensure that we find the true failures that exacerbated the effects of Katrina.

President Bush has personally accepted responsibility for the extent to which the federal government failed the American people in this disaster. Just as important, the President discussed meaningful ways to assist the people of the Gulf Coast as they try to get their lives back in order. He offered ideas like creating a Gulf Opportunity Zone with tax relief for individuals and businesses, making available free building sites on federal land to low-income citizens, and providing evacuees with job training and education. These are the kinds of steps our nation can take to overcome this disaster, and these are the kinds of steps I will support in Congress.

Hurricane Katrina has provided the nation with many lessons, and I hope we all learn from them. Just as the President tasked his federal agencies to re-evaluate their response plans, so too should city and state officials review theirs, and ensure that they have better coordination amongst themselves and with the Administration. Local and federal officials need to be able to cut through the bureaucracy during emergencies in order to ensure that next time we are better prepared for disasters.

Cracking Down on Pedophiles

Researchers estimate that 10% of boys and 25% of girls are sexually abused as children. The ones we hear about in the media, who at first are usually introduced to American households as missing children, are only a fraction of the thousands of children who are victims of sexual abuse.

In yet another step to address this horrific behavior, I introduced the Children's Safety Act this year, which the House of Representatives approved in September by a vote of 371 to 52. This bipartisan legislation focuses on sex offenders and others preying upon children.

For most parents, losing a child is their greatest fear. My bill addresses the growing epidemic of violence against children, and the need for greater protection from convicted sex offenders through state registration and notification programs. The Children's Safety Act will enhance the safety of America's families and communities.

For more information about this legislation and my efforts to fight child abuse, please visit the House Judiciary Committee's website at: <http://judiciary.house.gov>.



Congressman Sensenbrenner and his colleagues discuss the merits of H.R. 3132, the Children's Safety Act, during a press conference in September.



Trim the Fat

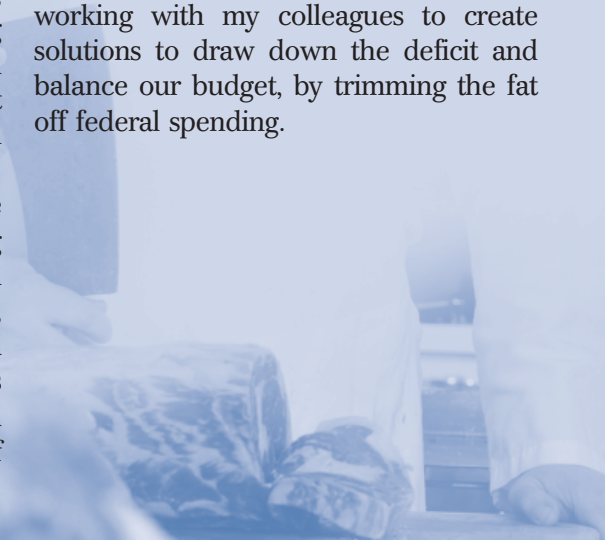
The massive amount of taxpayer money that will need to be spent to adequately respond to Hurricane Katrina has brought to light an issue that receives far too little attention: the ballooning federal deficit.

From bridges to nowhere in rural Alaska, to offensive “art” paid for by the National Endowment for the Arts, the government squanders billions of your dollars every year. This has always been a priority for me, as witnessed by my vote earlier this year against the \$286.4 billion transportation bill that contained 6,371 pork projects. But the need to adequately assist Katrina victims makes this issue even more important.

Though I supported the initial \$10.5 billion dollars Congress appropriated in August, I could not support the \$51.8 billion dollar supplemental bill that Congress passed in September. In light of the confused response to the hurricane, the problems experienced in providing aid to people in the Gulf Coast states, and the stories of fraud and mismanagement of emergency funds at all levels, I could not in good conscience support a \$52 billion blank check to FEMA and state and local officials. Rather than passing gigantic spending bills, Congress should take its oversight responsibility seriously, pass the spending in a more piecemeal fashion to ensure that only money that is needed is appropriated, and demand accountability for the expenditure of each taxpayer dollar spent.

Even more money will need to be spent to help Katrina victims. Instead of racking up the deficit further, or jeopardizing our economic growth by raising taxes, I support funding this aid with offsets from government programs that are lower priorities. Billions of dollars worth of offsets can be found in wasteful legislation, such as the transportation bill.

Due to this tragedy, sacrifices are being made across the country. Gulf state residents have lost their homes and livelihoods. American consumers are in essence paying an added tax through inflated gas prices. Families have opened their wallets and their homes to contribute to a multitude of private relief efforts. Allowing pork projects and bloated federal spending to not bear some of this sacrifice would be unconscionable. I look forward to working with my colleagues to create solutions to draw down the deficit and balance our budget, by trimming the fat off federal spending.



Town Hall Meetings

Please contact my district office if you require any assistance or special accommodations to attend a Town Hall Meeting.

Saturday, October 15

9:00am

Thiensville Village Hall

Saturday, October 15

1:00pm

Glendale North Shore
Public Library

Sunday, October 16

7:00pm

Delafield Town Hall

Saturday, October 29

9:00am

West Allis Public Library

Saturday, October 29

1:00pm

Hartland Village Hall

Sunday, October 30

7:00pm

Germantown Village Hall

Friday, November 11

1:00pm

Slinger Village Hall

Saturday, November 12

9:00am

Mequon Public Safety Bldg

Saturday, November 12

1:00pm

Brown Deer Public Library

Sunday, November 13

7:00pm

Pewaukee City Hall

CONTACT INFORMATION

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