

CONGRESSMAN

MIKE ROGERS

*Veterans Update*

SEPTEMBER 2005

■ **CONGRESS PROVIDES \$10.5 BILLION IN EMERGENCY FUNDS**

On Friday, September 2, Congress approved \$10.5 billion in emergency funds in response to the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. Other organizations including Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America are collecting donations to buy basic supplies such as clothing, food and building materials.

Congress has provided emergency funds to help the victims of this disaster; however, this is only a first step. In addition to more funding, we will also continue to monitor the Department of Veterans' Affairs progress to ensure that our veterans have been safely evacuated and continue to receive uninterrupted care. The VA has extensive facilities in the region hit by the hurricane, including a medical center in New Orleans.

I applaud veterans service organizations such as VFW and VVA, which have quickly stepped forward to help collect donations. The VFW is sending aid through direct donations to the Department Headquarters of Mississippi and Louisiana, while the VVA relief efforts will be coordinated by the organization's Florida State Council.

■ **NEW WEBSITE FOR WAR WIDOWS AND SURVIVORS**

A new website for surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died while in the service of their nation has been launched by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It is located at <http://www.vba.va.gov/Survivors>.

Congress has requested the Department of Veterans Affairs do a better job of informing survivors about the benefits they have coming and I am extremely pleased that this new 'one stop' website is now up and running. These benefits are of little use if survivors do not know about them. This new website will help as those left behind cope with the loss of a loved one, killed in the service of our nation.

According to calculations run by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a surviving spouse and two children of an enlisted servicemember killed while serving in the military could receive over \$600,000 in benefits.

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