

Nancy Johnson



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President Signs Johnson Relief Measure

Makes Available \$2 Billion to Help Families Hurt by Katrina

Included in Larger Hurricane Aid Bill Passed by Congress

WASHINGTON, DC – The President signed into law yesterday a provision Congresswoman Nancy Johnson included in hurricane relief legislation to provide as much as \$2 billion in federal financial assistance to low-income families devastated by Katrina.

"This new law will address the immediate needs of families devastated by the hurricane and its aftermath," Johnson said. "This catastrophe has left many American families with nothing and in need of our help. The law will fast-track important social services and financial assistance that these families need to start rebuilding their lives."

Johnson's provision allows states to use funds from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program's contingency account to provide emergency cash assistance to evacuees that qualify for TANF. States can access up to \$2 billion to help these families rebuild their lives.

The provision is part of the "TANF Emergency Response and Recovery Act of 2005," which passed the House and Senate without opposition. The relief bill expedites the delivery of TANF funds to the states and suspends many bureaucratic rules that may hinder or slow aid to low-income victims.

More than 235,400 evacuees are currently housed in 750 shelters in 20 states, according to federal authorities. Connecticut has provided shelter and services to at least 600 evacuees. All evacuees who qualify for TANF would benefit from the bill.

More specifically, the law provides immediate payment of \$4.2 billion in TANF funds for the first quarter of fiscal year 2006 to all states, money that would otherwise be delayed until next month. Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama would receive a 20 percent increase in their federal TANF allocation. In addition, the law waives time limits on TANF assistance for hurricane victims and waives penalties incurred by states resulting from hurricane damage or efforts to support victims.

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Johnson relief measure becomes law/2

The TANF program assists families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives cannot provide for the family's basic needs. The federal government provides grants to states to run the TANF program, which was created as a result of the 1996 welfare reform initiative. Johnson is a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over the TANF program.

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