

# Nancy Johnson



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## Johnson Stands Up for Union Workers

### *Calls for Upholding Fundamental Wage Protections*

WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Nancy Johnson today urged President Bush to reinstate fundamental wage protections for union workers that were rescinded for federally-funded Gulf Coast construction projects.

**“Our reconstruction effort on the Gulf Coast should not come at the expense of the workers who will be the ones to rebuild the homes and businesses devastated by the Hurricane,” Johnson said. “The massive reconstruction project will not only rebuild homes, but in providing new jobs to hurricane victims, it will help rebuild lives. The recovery must be done in a fiscally responsible manner, but we cannot short-change workers by repealing wage protections.”**

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, President Bush suspended indefinitely the application of the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 in devastated areas stretching from Louisiana through Mississippi and Alabama. The Davis-Bacon Act requires an area’s prevailing (or average) wages be paid to workers on federally-funded construction projects. Davis-Bacon’s fundamental, 74-year-old wage protections ensure that jobs pay both union and non-union workers fairly and competitively. Under the law, the President has the authority to suspend these protections in the event of a national emergency like Katrina.

In a letter being sent today, Johnson and two dozen congressional colleagues urge the President to set a date certain for the reinstatement of Davis-Bacon protections in Gulf Coast disaster areas. Johnson said Congress will act if the President does not.

Studies have shown Davis-Bacon protections not only ensure fair wages for union and non-union workers but also keep costs down in the long-run. Fair, competitive wages attract workers with higher skills and more experience, meaning projects will be completed in less time, lowering overall costs.

**“Davis-Bacon prevailing wages will not drive up the reconstruction costs in the Gulf region; rather they will help ensure quality work and fair wages for those impacted by the storm. We respect your statutory prerogative to suspend application of Davis-Bacon in times of a national emergency. However, we also feel strongly that an indefinite suspension is fundamentally unfair to Gulf Coast construction workers,”** Johnson wrote.

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