



*Issue 158 – November 10 2005*

***Congressional Black Caucus  
Katrina Relief Bill***

(Use the back button on your browser to return to the previous page)

Printer Friendly Version



Copyright © 2002 - 2005  
www.BlackCommentator.com  
All Rights Reserved

*The following is based on a November 3 press release from the Congressional Black Caucus.*

All 42 House members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) today introduced HR 4197, the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act of 2005. The bill is designed to provide for the recovery of the Gulf Coast region and for the reunion of families devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

During the press conference, the CBC also called on President Bush and on Democratic and Republican members of the House and Senate to support its comprehensive legislative response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and to make a commitment to eradicate poverty.

A summary of the bill follows:

**BILL SUMMARY**

**HURRICANE KATRINA RECOVERY, RECLAMATION, RESTORATION,  
RECONSTRUCTION AND REUNION ACT OF 2005**

**HR 4197**

The bill introduced on November 2, 2005 by all 42 House members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) is called the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act of 2005. HR 4197 emphasizes two critical objectives the CBC and many others have considered most important since Hurricane Katrina — the desire to see the Gulf Coast restored fully and the desire to see the residents of the Gulf Coast reunited with their families. The following is a summary of some of the important provisions of the bill.

**Title I – Victim Restoration Fund: Uses the model approved by Congress after the 9/11**

## The Black Commentator – Congressional Black Caucus Katrina Relief Bill

terrorist attacks — having a Special Master make an individual evaluation of the amount each claimant is to receive. Instead of making a determination of the amount due for each claim as a result of death as was the case under the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, however, under the Victim Restoration Fund the Special Master's job would be to determine what compensation is necessary to restore each individual Hurricane Katrina claimant to his or her pre-Katrina condition. The Special Master would be required to offset recoveries to each claimant from collateral sources (insurance, government sources, etc) and would be authorized to accept non-government funds to help reduce the financial burden on the Federal government.

Title II – Environmental Provisions: Requires the EPA to develop, in consultation with state officials, a comprehensive environmental sampling and toxicity assessment plan (CESTAP) including public health assessments and monitoring, training of clean up workers, notification to the public of risks, a step-by-step process for allowing residents to return to their property, a process of compensating those unable to return to their property because of environmental conditions and independent review of determinations.

### Title III – Health Provisions:

- Subtitle A authorizes grants to rebuild and repair medical facilities destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Katrina and to help close health access and outcome disparities between minorities and others and provides coverage under Medicaid for each survivor of Hurricane Katrina whose income does not exceed 100% of the poverty line.
- Subtitle B authorizes 100% Federal payment for states to provide emergency Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits to survivors of Hurricane Katrina who meet eligibility standards regardless of where they are.
- Subtitle C provides 100% Federal coverage of unemployment benefits (marked up 25% or \$100 per week, whichever is greater) to Katrina survivors for 26 additional weeks.
- Subtitle D provides for Federal payment of private health insurance premiums for at least 12 months for employees and employers whose ability to continue payment of premiums was severely impaired as a result of Katrina and prohibits cancellation of policies by insurance providers who receive premium payments under the program.

Title IV – Housing & Community Rebuilding Provisions: Authorizes additional Federal funds for the Hurricane Katrina disaster area for the following purposes and in the following amounts:

- Public Housing Capital Funds — \$100 million;
- HOPE VI Community Revitalization — \$100 million;
- HOME — \$1 billion;
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) — \$1 billion;
- CDBG Section 108 Loan Guarantee Funds — \$10 million;
- YouthBuild — \$200 million;

## The Black Commentator – Congressional Black Caucus Katrina Relief Bill

- HUD Demonstration Act Funds — \$4.5 million;
- Funding for 300,000 additional tenant-based rental assistance (Section 8) Vouchers;
- \$10 million for Fair Housing Enforcement; and
- \$10 million for Housing Counseling for families in temporary shelters.

Title IV also prohibits placement of persons displaced by Katrina in substandard housing, provides for more vigorous enforcement of Fair Housing laws, gives people displaced by Katrina preference for HUD inventory and foreclosed properties, and establishes a mortgage payment fund for payment of mortgages similar to the fund authorized under Title III for the payment of private health insurance premiums.

Title V – Education Provisions: To help meet the educational needs of the Katrina areas and evacuees from these areas:

- Subtitle B provides additional emergency funding for Child Care
- Development Act Block Grants and Head Start Services;
- Subtitle C provides additional funding for elementary and secondary schools to help students relocated as a result of Hurricane Katrina and school systems to which they were relocated, to help rebuild and restart the operation of schools in the Katrina areas, to help homeless youth, for community learning centers, for construction, modernization and repair of school facilities damaged by Hurricane Katrina and for teacher incentive programs; and
- Subtitle D provides loan forgiveness for college students, grants for reconstruction and renovation of colleges damaged by Hurricane Katrina and grants for recruitment and retention of students and faculty at colleges impacted by Katrina.

Title VI – Voting Rights: Provides Katrina evacuees the same absentee ballot and registration provisions available to military personnel and authorizes up to \$50 million in grants for the restoration and replacement of election supplies, materials and equipment damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Title VII – Financial Services Provisions: Waives certain regulations, capital requirements, fees and customer identification requirements to facilitate financial transactions for persons displaced by Katrina, provides technical assistance to minority financial institutions and allows CDFI Fund resources to be used for disaster relief in the Katrina areas.

Title VIII – Expanded Opportunity and Small Business Provisions:

- Subtitle A reinstates Davis–Bacon wage requirements, sets small and minority business, local (Gulf Coast) business and local employee participation goals in post–Katrina contracting, requires financial incentives to be provided to meet these goals, requires contractors to provide apprenticeship opportunities and reinstates affirmative action requirements suspended by President Bush after Hurricane Katrina.
- Subtitle B authorizes additional funding for new SBA disaster loans and increases loan caps on SBA loans to small businesses impacted by Hurricane Katrina, allows the SBA to defer payments and

## The Black Commentator – Congressional Black Caucus Katrina Relief Bill

refinance existing loans, authorizes additional funding for business counseling, small business development centers and HubZones and increases the surety bonding threshold for Katrina related procurement contracts.

Title IX – Tax Provisions: Provides tax credits of up to \$5,000 for persons or families displaced by Hurricane Katrina who purchase or construct homes in Hurricane Katrina area, increases the low-income housing credit dollar amount and allows the issuance of federally guaranteed, tax exempt bonds for reconstruction of the Katrina disaster area.

Title X – Bankruptcy: Exempts victims of natural disasters from most provisions of the Bankruptcy reform law that recently became effective.

Title XI – Miscellaneous Provisions: Requires FEMA to reimburse entities that performed services that should have been performed by FEMA following Hurricane Katrina if the entity requests reimbursement and allows retroactive purchase of flood insurance by victims of Hurricane Katrina who did not live in a designated flood plain.

Title XII – Eradicating Poverty: Expresses the sense of Congress that the President should present within 6 months a plan to eradicate poverty in the United States within 10 years.

SOURCE Office of Representative Melvin Watt, Web Site: <http://www.congressionalblackcaucus.net>.