



BARACK OBAMA ON KATRINA AND THE GULF COAST

A PLAN TO REBUILD THE GULF COAST AND IMPROVE DISASTER RESPONSE

Barack Obama responded to Hurricane Katrina by introducing legislation with the Congressional Black Caucus to rebuild and provide housing, education and financial support. Obama also introduced legislation to help states plan for evacuating people with special needs, establish a national family locator system and minimize the use of wasteful no-bid contracts. As president, Barack Obama will keep the promises broken by President Bush to rebuild New Orleans and the Gulf Coast stronger than ever. And he will take steps to ensure that the federal government will never again allow such catastrophic failures in emergency planning and response to occur.

Rebuild Now, Stronger than Ever

Two years after Katrina and despite billions spent, New Orleans is still not safe from a major storm, less than half of schools have reopened, four of seven hospitals remain closed, and the murder rate leads the nation. Obama's plan to rebuild New Orleans will:

- Protect New Orleans by strengthening the levees to protect against a 100-year storm by 2011, with the ultimate goal of protection from a Category 5 storm
- Fight crime by helping communities hire and retain new officers and community prosecutors
- Build a major medical center and rebuild the Veterans Affairs hospital in New Orleans
- Increase funding and streamline applications for the Road Home program to help homeowners and renters
- Help school districts rebuild schools
- Create incentives for new jobs

Never Again

Katrina exposed the shocking deficiencies in the government's ability to deal with emergencies. Barack Obama's plan to prevent future failures will:

- Create a National Response Plan to coordinate local, state and federal bodies during a disaster
- Appoint a Federal Coordinating Officer, immediately to direct reconstruction.
- Minimize waste and abuse by appointing a Chief Financial Officer to oversee rebuilding after a catastrophe
- Make the FEMA directorship a cabinet-level position, with a fixed term
- Fix the Small Business Administration so that it can better help local businesses during disasters
- Provide an insurance backstop to protect homeowners and business owners from catastrophic loss.



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