

# One-Year Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina

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On the One-Year Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. Rep. Steve Rothman's statement follows:

"The federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina was terrible, but the Bush Administration's gross incompetence had an even greater impact because many of Hurricane Katrina's victims were our nation's poorest and most vulnerable. With the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina upon us, I believe there are two important lessons to remember.

"The first lesson is that we have a shared responsibility as a nation to ensure that access to opportunity exists for all Americans. Reasonable health care, good-paying jobs, affordable housing, and quality schools are needed countywide, statewide, and nationwide. Without these key ingredients for success, poverty is only one catastrophic illness, layoff, or natural disaster away for too many Americans.

"The second lesson is that people count on government to keep them safe. That is not a call for big government, but a call for smart government. With regard to Hurricane Katrina, our federal emergency services suffered from a shameful lack of informed and experienced leadership in the Bush Administration. As just one example among many, under no circumstances should someone with zero experience in emergency preparedness have been put in charge of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"Yet, FEMA's failures did not teach us that this agency is useless or that the federal government should avoid any future responsibility. On the contrary, these failures showed us that the federal government must dramatically improve our nation's emergency preparedness. This applies to natural disasters and potential homeland security threats."

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