

our neighbors through this difficult time, just as they so selflessly helped us during our time of need last year.

We, as a nation, have all begun to appreciate how fragile our very existence is in the face of this incredible force of nature. The loss of life and the scope of the destruction are beyond our capacity to understand. The feeling of isolation, despair, desolation experienced by those in the wake of a storm, and their families, is beyond consolation.

Having only too recently been the recipient of our own neighbors' good will, comfort, and support in the wake of our own struggles, Floridians stand ready to respond in kind. Today the news reports that over 25,000 evacuees are expected in central Florida, bringing it close to the point of strain on the local resources because of that kind of activity. Thousands of Floridians are already helping. More are asking how they can help. Citizens have contributed to numerous nonprofit groups that in turn are sending truckloads of supplies to hurricane-damaged areas.

Our National Guard troops are now stationed in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama, providing much needed manpower to the ongoing recovery efforts. Our law enforcement and fire department personnel have sacrificed time with their families so they can be in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi providing emergency aid and security. Church groups have offered temporary housing, and schools in Florida have offered to take students displaced by the disaster.

I am proud of the way Floridians and all Americans have reached out in this great time of need for our country. We will continue to help our neighbors, continue to keep them in our prayers, and continue to mourn the loss of so many of our fellow Americans through such a powerful natural disaster.

While we certainly cannot avert our eyes and attention from the human suffering, we must also recognize the tremendous outpouring of love, support, and compassion directed to those who have lost so much. The American spirit of unity and survival is reflected in the response to the American Red Cross, the Office of Housing and Employment for the Displaced, the offer of neighboring public universities to accept students from Louisiana to avoid interruption in their education. These all serve to remind us that for all our differences, we are all one people, and we will take care of our own.

Many have raised legitimate concerns about the level of our preparedness as a nation for the disaster, but now is not the time for recrimination. The time for examination and for determining lessons learned will soon come, but for now we must not be distracted from the mission of delivering aid and comfort to those who so desperately are in need and we must begin the process of rebuilding.

The rise of rhetoric will not empty the flood waters, provide relief to the

living, bury the dead or rebuild our cities. Together we can begin to restore hope to those where hope has been lost. Together we must move forward in good faith as one nation.

As we look to the future, we have a responsibility to examine our disaster readiness at every level of Government. When lives are at stake, there is no room for territorial or jurisdictional turf wars. We must make certain no lives are lost that might otherwise be saved with proper planning, training, and cooperation among Government agencies at every level. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Congress to be certain that that goal is achieved.

Our country has been through very challenging times. We have suffered through terrorist attacks on our homeland, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and most recently Hurricane Katrina and surging oil prices. Yet through all of this, the American people have moved forward with optimism and determination. It is our way. We are a resilient people. Because of the incredible resiliency of the American people, we will recover from Katrina and we will be stronger and we will be better.

#### HONORING CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to say what a great loss our country has experienced with the passing of our Chief Justice William Rehnquist. William Rehnquist was a man of deep integrity and honor, a true public servant. He served our country well, always keeping an eye toward tradition and working to bring constitutional reason to the complex questions of our nation. Our country is better for the guiding hand he placed on the Court. His resolute spirit will be missed.

Chief Justice Rehnquist's leadership brought the Court through three decades of very tumultuous times. September 17 of this year would mark the 29th year of his tenure as Chief Justice. This term exceeds that of every other Chief Justice in our nation's history, with the exception of Chief Justice John Marshall, who served for 34 years.

He led the judiciary with resolve and a steady hand. He will be greatly missed by his family, his colleagues, the Court, and by a grateful nation.

As we turn our attention in the coming weeks to the confirmation process to consider the President's nominee to serve as the next Chief Justice, it would be appropriate to pause and reflect on the service to our country provided by this man of exceptional intellect who served his Nation long and faithfully.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I join with my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Florida, in expressing my personal condolences and those of my

fellow Minnesotans to the family and friends of the former Chief Justice, and I share the sentiments in regard to his distinguished service to our nation.

#### HURRICANE KATRINA AND SOARING GAS PRICES

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I also want to join with others of my colleagues today who have expressed the concerns, condolences, and sympathies to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, which has so horribly claimed so many of our fellow Americans' lives, families and friends, homes, businesses, farms, schools, and entire communities that are the worst victims of this unprecedented disaster. Our hearts go out to all of them. Our helping hands are being extended and must continue to be extended to them.

There are millions of other victims of this disaster, Americans nationwide whose economic well-being has been harmed by price increases and supply or service disruptions.

In my State of Minnesota, probably the worst economic damage and financial hardships have been caused by the skyrocketing prices for gasoline and other essential energy supplies. Even before Hurricane Katrina, those prices had been increasing sharply. In the 3 months from May 28 to August 28 of this year, the average price of regular unleaded gasoline throughout Minnesota has risen from \$1.92 a gallon to \$2.55 a gallon. That is an increase of 63 cents a gallon, a one-third increase in just 3 months.

Then, in 3 days last week, from August 29 to September 1, the average gasoline prices in Minnesota jumped another 46 cents a gallon, according to one Web site that has spot check reports from throughout the State. So in 3 months and 3 days, the average gasoline prices, according to this Web site, in Minnesota, jumped from \$1.92 a gallon to \$3.01 a gallon, a 57-percent increase. That is not as bad as some other parts of the country, but it is sure worse than bad enough for Minnesota.

I know from direct personal experience driving around northern Minnesota last week that actual prices were much higher, as high as \$3.46 a gallon for regular unleaded gasoline, which was up almost \$1 a gallon from 2 weeks before. Unfortunately, that up-to-date, accurate information is not available from the Energy Information Administration Web site, and that is one of the defects that needs to be remedied.

Most of Minnesota's oil and gasoline supplies originate from Canada, come in either by gasoline or oil pipelines and then refined within our State. So almost all of our price increases for gasoline and other energy products were not directly the result of Katrina's supply disruptions. Rather, they were the result of other people taking advantage of that disaster to take advantage of the people of Minnesota.