Last week, President Bush called it ''price gouging at the gasoline pump,'' and I agree with the President. President Bush also said that there should be zero tolerance for gasoline price gouging, similar to looting in New Orleans, and I agree with the President on that as well because price gouging has the same effect as looting or other kinds of stealing. It is robbing the people of Minnesota and elsewhere throughout this country by overcharging them for their essential energy needs.

Given the similarity of the gasoline price increases throughout Minnesota, I think there is a strong possibility of pricing collusion by the major oil suppliers and distributors that demands immediate investigation and, where called for, vigorous prosecution of violators. What they have done is not only immoral, it is also illegal under Federal law.

I have written the United States Attorney General and urged him to back up the President's strong words with his strong immediate action to investigate all indications of price gouging and/or pricing collusion of gasoline, diesel fuel, aviation fuel, farm fertilizers, natural gas, liquid petroleum gas, home heating oil, ethanol, and any and all other oil supplies.

At this time, I urge the President to release whatever supplies are necessary from our Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserves to offset the loss of oil, gasoline, and other energy supplies resulting from Hurricane Katrina.

Last night, the Secretary of Energy told a number of us in the Senate, in a briefing, that gasoline prices have been stabilized. Well, with due respect, Mr. Secretary, I must say they have been stabilized far too high in Minnesota, if, in fact, they have been stabilized at all. Thus, whatever has been done so far is not enough. Gasoline prices are still unaffordably too high in Minnesota. Other energy prices are still unaffordably too high, and with the cold weather heating season soon upon Minnesotans and other Americans in the United States, it is imperative to act now and keep on doing whatever is necessary to get energy prices back down to pre-Katrina levels—which were still too high—and then deal with that continuing energy price crisis in Minnesota and other affected States and continue to do whatever is necessary to get those lower prices.

In the immediate term, we need to strive for lower energy prices, and we need executive action to prosecute price gouging, price collusion. We also, then, need, as a body of Congress, to do whatever is necessary to strengthen Federal legislation to prohibit and prevent this kind of economic looting of our fellow citizens.

A couple of my colleagues have announced, just in the last 2 days, their intentions to introduce legislation. Senator DORGAN of North Dakota intends to offer windfall profits tax legislation on U.S. oil companies and other energy suppliers. Senator CANTWELL of Washington has indicated her intention to offer legislation that would give the President additional powers to mitigate price increases in times of crisis.

I intend to introduce in the next 2 days, as soon as it is complete, legislation that would prevent and prosecute price gouging in energy and other essential commodities. In a nutshell, this legislation would make it illegal in any emergency situation to take advantage of consumers by raising energy prices or other essential commodity prices. It would give the U.S. Attorney General further authority to prosecute retail gasoline stations, oil companies, distributors—whoever is found to be in violation of this provision. It would require the Energy Information Administration to provide current prices for major metropolitan areas for every State and for our entire Nation on a daily basis so that we can evaluate those price increases so that citizens can know, in perspective, what they are being charged and how it compares with other parts of the country. They can then be our eyes and ears to report evidence of these rising prices that constitute price gouging, as the President said, at the gasoline pump.

We have witnessed once again, in the midst of this disaster affecting Southern United States, that such disasters bring out both the best and the worst of human nature. They bring out the best, as we have seen the courageous men and women of the National Guard, the medical personnel, and many others who are literally risking their own lives to save the lives of others. We have seen the best of human nature in the response of millions of Americans from all over the country who have contributed whatever they can and are offering to do more to alleviate this suffering.

Here in the Senate last week, and also in the House, we provided an additional $10.5 billion the President requested to continue emergency operations. All of us, including those at a meeting last night with a number of the Cabinet Secretaries, were asking the administration, What do you need us to do? Money? Authorizing legislation? Streamlining existing legislation? Tell us what we need to do in the Senate and House to expedite in the best possible ways the relief effort that must continue for months ahead.

This is not a Republican or Democratic disaster or Republican or Democratic response. It is an American disaster, and it is a response of all of us as Americans to our fellow citizens in need.

Unfortunately, there is another side to human nature, and that is what we must also address. It cannot be allowed. It certainly cannot be rewarded with profits to those who take advantage of the despair of their fellow citizens. Some cannot be allowed to cause even further economic hardship, even devastation, especially to those who can least afford the prices of energy essentials and other necessities of life. That is where our fellow citizens look to us to stand up on their behalf to prevent, prosecute, and to prohibit this kind of economic looting that the President called price gouging.

I support his statement. I urge the U.S. Attorney General to put action behind those words, and then I urge my colleagues to join with me in passing legislation to prohibit and prevent this from happening again and to prosecute those who are responsible for it.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, one of the pleasures I have as a Member of Congress, having served in the House and the Senate, is having the opportunity to meet people who are special, unique. During the time that I have had in Congress to meet some of these individuals, I have in my own frame of reference chosen a number of heroes. One of those heroes is a Congressman from the Fifth District of Georgia by the name of JOHN LEWIS.

At home last night, I read Newsweek magazine. I saw an opinion piece written by my hero, JOHN LEWIS. This appeared on page 52 of this week's Newsweek magazine, entitled ''Opinion: A Civil-rights Leader Mourns an African-American Population Left Behind.''

I will read what JOHN LEWIS said:

> I was headed to New Orleans as a Freedom Rider in May of 1961. It would've been my first visit, but we were arrested in Jackson, Miss., and never made it. In happier times, though, I have been able to visit New Orleans over the years. It's one of my favorite cities, one of the great Southern cities. The people are friendly, warm, helpful. In the old part of the city, there's so much history when you walk down Canal Street or Royal. One of my favorite places is a shop on Royal where they have lots of art posters by African-American artists. After Katrina, there's a loss of the music, the restaurants and the character in addition to the unbelievable loss of lives. Maybe we will never know the number of people who have been lost.
>
> It's very painful for me to watch and read about what is happening. I have a sense of righteous indignation. I think all Americans should rise up and speak out. It's not like 9/11 that just happened. We saw this in the making. The media told us for days this storm was coming and for years people have been telling us we need to do something to prepare. It took us so many days to make the full force of the government available afterwards.
>
> In 1957, during the crisis in Little Rock and President Dwight Eisenhower—maybe he was reluctant, maybe he had some reservations—but he put the full force of the government behind the decision to desegregate Central High. During the Freedom Rides, President

John Kennedy didn't hesitate to federalize the National Guard and put the whole city of Montgomery under martial law. It's baffling to me that we didn't have the ability or the will to do something much earlier. We still haven't had the passionate statement that should be made by officials in this administration.

It's so glaring that the great majority of people crying out for help are poor, they're black. There's a whole segment of society that's being left behind. When you tell people to evacuate, these people didn't have any way to leave. They didn't have any cars, any SUVs.

It's so strange that when we have something like this happening, the president gets two ex-presidents—his father and Bill Clinton—to raise money. What they propose to do is good and I appreciate all the work the private sector and the faith-based community are doing. But when we get ready to go to war, we don't go around soliciting resources with a bucket or an offering plate. We have the courage to come before Congress and debate the issue, authorize money. That's what we need to do here. By next year we'll have spent $400 to 500 billion in Afghanistan and Iraq. That money could be used to help rebuild the lives of people. If we fail to act as a nation, I don't think history will be kind to us.

We've got to do more than the $10 billion that Congress appropriated. We need a massive Marshall-type plan to rebuild New Orleans. But in rebuilding we should see this as an opportunity to rebuild urban America. New Orleans could be a model. There must be a commitment of billions and billions of dollars—maybe $50 to 100 billion. I think even in other urban centers, there are people who are just barely existing. We sing the song ''hope is on the way,'' but it's taking a long time before hope arrives. It becomes very discouraging where you see people dying—children, the elderly, the sick—the lack of food and water. I've cried a lot of tears the past few days as I watched television—to see some body lying dead outside the convention center. I went to Somalia in 1992 and I saw little babies dying before my eyes. This reminded me of Somalia. But this is America. We're not a third-world country. This is an embarrassment. It's a shame. It's a national disgrace.

John Lewis is the U.S. Congressman from the 5th District of Georgia.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING DAVE MATTIO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Dave Mattio, Marian Catholic High School graduate and head coach of the Spartan football squad for 29 seasons.

The message that Coach Mattio instills in his players is ''energy and ownership'' and his accomplishments demonstrate the success of this motto.

Over the course of his 29 seasons with the Spartans, Coach Mattio has created a football program that remains among the most successful in the state of Illinois. Among his many accomplishments, Coach Mattio has seen hundreds of his players go on to play football in college and three go on to the National Football League.

Coach Mattio has led the Marian Catholic Spartans to a state championship and a Chicagoland Prep Bowl championship. He has also shown consistency, with teams qualifying for the playoffs 16 times and compiling winning records 26 of the last 29 seasons.

Coach Mattio's successes have been recognized many times by his peers. He was inducted into the Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1997 as well as the Marian Catholic Alumni Association Hall of Fame in 1994. He was also named the Frank Leahy Prep Coach of the Year in 1994.

I congratulate Dave Mattio on his accomplishments as head coach of the Marian Catholic Spartans and wish him many more years of happiness and accomplishment, both on and off the football field.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On August 15, 2004, Joel Robles was stabbed 20 times in Fresno, CA. The apparent motivation for the stabbing was that he was a transgendered woman. Robles' body was later found inside his apartment where he had died, according to police.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that are born out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

A FORGOTTEN WAR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise to speak of Chechnya, a remote part of the world where horrific crimes and suffering are occurring every day, that has faded from the newspapers and the minds of many of us here.

Contrary to the myth perpetrated by the Russian Government that the conflict is over and life in Chechnya is returning to normal, the Russian military and the militias they support continue to use brutal, even barbaric tactics, including extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention, kidnappings, rape, and torture. Armed opposition forces are also terrifying innocent civilians with their indiscriminate attacks. There seems to be no end to this conflict or to the suffering of the Chechen people.

The Bush administration has been conspicuously silent about what is happening. One can only hope that President Bush has expressed alarm about the atrocities being committed by Russian soldiers in Chechnya in his meetings or conversations with President Putin, but there is no indication that if he has it has had any effect.

There is certainly no evidence that the administration has exerted any real pressure on President Putin to reign in the Russian military, presumably because it does not want to jeopardize Russia's support for U.S. operations in Iraq and combating international terrorism. But contrary to what the Russian Government and some in the Bush administration insist, the violence in Chechnya has far more to do with self-determination than with international terrorism. While acts of terrorism by all parties to the conflict remain common, most Chechen resistance fighters have taken up arms to seek revenge for the atrocities and impunity of Russian soldiers.

In each of the last 6 years, the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act has included a provision to withhold a portion of our assistance to the Russian Government unless the President certifies that international nongovernmental humanitarian organizations are provided full access to Chechnya. Every year, the Russian Government fails to comply.

In the Senate-passed version of the fiscal year 2006 Foreign Operations bill, we included $5 million for humanitarian, conflict mitigation, relief and recovery assistance for Chechnya, Ingushetia, and elsewhere in the North Caucasus region. This funding, in addition to the $5 million for this purpose in the fiscal year 2005 supplemental, will provide much needed relief and development assistance for civilians caught in the midst of this conflict.

But it is essential that this assistance be coupled with a strong message of concern and condemnation by the administration. The message should be loud and clear that war crimes by the Russian military, and by resistance fighters, must stop.

It is obvious that despite President Putin's rosy portrayal of the situation, there is no military solution to the Chechnyan conflict. The only hope for resolving it is through a process of demilitarization and political dialogue, and I suspect that will require the active and sustained participation of a credible third party, such as the United Nations. This is what the United States should be pressing for. It is long past time for the White House to stop giving the Russian Government a free pass on Chechnya.