

**CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS: HELPING OUR
COMMUNITIES HELP THEMSELVES**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS, PREPAREDNESS,
AND RESPONSE**

OF THE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS: HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES HELP THEMSELVES

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS,
PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 11:01 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Henry Cuellar [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Cuellar, Dicks, Christensen, Etheridge, Jackson Lee, and Dent.

Mr. CUELLAR. [Presiding.] The subcommittee will come to order.

The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony from the Department of Homeland Security and key stakeholders involved in the Citizen Corps program. Witnesses will discuss the continuing effort to prepare our nation's citizens to be better prepared to deal with acts of terrorism, natural disasters or other emergencies. Specifically, the hearing will examine challenges faced by our state and local government first responders and nongovernmental organizations in the area of citizen preparedness.

We will review the effectiveness of the citizen preparedness programs at the department and the unique issues that are confronted by families, disadvantaged communities and individuals with disabilities during disasters.

The chair also would like to acknowledge that a member of the committee who does not sit on the subcommittee assembled today, the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, will participate, and she will be joining us after a while. Consistent with its rules and practices of the committee, we are pleased to honor her request.

I now ask for unanimous consent to allow Representative Jackson Lee to sit and question the witnesses today.

So, without objection, it is so ordered.

Again, I want to thank the witnesses for being here today, and on behalf of the members of the subcommittee, again, we welcome you, and we look forward to hearing your testimony. We are glad that you all are here to discuss the challenges that communities face in preparing citizens, including those with special needs, for all the disasters.

Adequate preparation, as you know, can reduce the fear and anxiety that accompany many of the disasters that we see. Communities, families, individuals need to know what to do in the event

of an emergency and be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in shelters. They need to know how to care for their basic medical needs.

If a disaster occurs in a community, the local government and disaster relief organizations will try to help, but citizens need to be ready as well. In the event the local responders are not able to reach everyone immediately, ample preparation can make a big difference.

I am looking forward to hearing about the critical federal citizen preparedness programs such as the Citizen Corps and ready.gov, as well as the roles that each of you play in executing those programs.

I welcome any suggestions you might have on how to enhance our efforts at the federal level, and I am also interested to hear about FEMA's implementation of the provisions of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act that pertain to engaging disadvantaged communities.

I am sure our witnesses from the National Council on Disability will address how they will work with FEMA to implement many of these reforms. I am particularly delighted to hear testimony today from Ms. Chapline, who is managing the Citizen Corps program in my home state of Texas.

And by the way, the Spurs are doing very well—3–0, for any persons from Cleveland here.

She is doing a great job at getting diverse communities across the state of Texas to get involved in preparedness.

Finally, I am interested in hearing from other key stakeholders present, such as the National Volunteer Fire Council and Disasters Preparedness Business Council. And I would like to hear about the increased volunteerism and the role of the business community in the disaster response efforts.

So again, I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here with us.

And at this time I would like to recognize my colleague, the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent, to go ahead and do his opening statement.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And certainly thanks to all of those who will testify today.

Preparing our citizens to help themselves and their communities in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack is one of the most important aspects of emergency preparedness and response.

Less than 1 percent of the U.S. population is formally trained to be an emergency responder. On average, there is just one firefighter for every 265 people, one paramedic for every 325 people, and one sworn law enforcement officer for every 334 people. This means that one of the best ways to ensure a quick and effective responses to an event is to prepare our citizens to help themselves and their neighbors.

To do this, and to foster a culture of personal responsibility, the Citizen Corps program was established within DHS through a model replicated at the Federal, State and local levels. Citizen Corps Councils bring together elected officials, business and community leaders, law enforcement, emergency management personnel, emergency medical personnel, school administrators, and others with an expertise or interest in emergency preparedness.

Council participants help assess emergency preparedness and response needs of communities, develop and implement homeland security goals and priorities, and participate in emergency preparedness training and exercise programs.

I am pleased that Mr. Corey Gruber, the Acting Deputy Administrator for National Preparedness, is here today to discuss how DHS supports the efforts of over 2,100 Citizen Corps Councils throughout the country. I am particularly interested in discussing with him how the Citizen Corps program leverages other Federal resources, including DHS's Ready Campaign, to promote citizen preparedness.

Also with us today are representatives of various State and local government and nongovernmental organizations that contribute to the work of the Citizen Corps Councils.

For instance, Johanna Schneider, who represents the Disaster Preparedness Initiative of the Business Roundtable, is here to discuss how businesses can serve as a force multiplier in community preparedness. As Ms. Schneider will discuss, businesses can not only encourage their employees to prepare themselves and their families for disaster, but also help to train and coordinate employees who choose to serve as volunteers during a disaster.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for joining us today and look forward to hearing your thoughts on this important topic.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Dent.

And as you know, members of the subcommittee are reminded under the committee rules that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

And now I welcome the panel of witnesses.

Our first witness will be Mr. Corey Gruber, who is the acting deputy administrator for national preparedness at the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Gruber has over 15 years of experience in the areas of emergency planning programming and response.

And again, Mr. Gruber, good seeing you again.

Our second witness is Mr. Graham Hill. He is a member of the National Council on Disability. Mr. Hill was recently confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve on the council. He previously served as the subcommittee staff director and senior counsel to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Welcome, Mr. Hill.

Our third witness is Regina Chapline, who is the Texas Citizen Corps manager for the Texas Associational of Regional Councils. Ms. Chapline works closely with the governor's division of emergency management as the state point of contact responsible for programmatic development and administration of the programs that fall under the Citizen Corps umbrella.

Welcome.

Our fourth witness is Mr. Phil Stittleburg, who is the chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council and chief of the LaFarge Fire Department of Wisconsin. He has been serving in the volunteer fire service since 1972.

And again, sir, welcome to our committee.

Our fifth witness is Ms. Johanna Schneider, who is the executive director of the Partnership for Disaster Response of the Business

Roundtable. She has been serving and managing communications in the communications field for over 12 years.

And again, welcome, Ms. Schneider.

And, all of you, we are pleased that you are here with us.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted into the record.

I now ask each of the witnesses to summarize his or her statement for 5 minutes, beginning with Mr. Gruber.

STATEMENT OF COREY GRUBER, ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. GRUBER. Chairman Cuellar, Ranking Member Dent, members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the department's citizens preparedness efforts this morning.

The department has a strong commitment to engage the public in preparedness. We recognize that the more engaged the public is in emergency planning preparedness and response, the more prepared and resilient our communities are when a disaster occurs.

As we have seen from Hurricane Katrina and other disasters, during the first 72 hours of a major incident, professional emergency responders can both be victims of the event and often spread too thin to take care of everyone in every location. Citizens must be prepared in advance to take immediate and effective steps to protect themselves and their families.

Even more importantly, citizens that have been trained in emergency preparedness can provide critically needed assistance to overburdened responders. For this reason we have included citizen preparedness and participation as key elements in all of our national preparedness guidance. This includes the national preparedness goal.

Homeland security strategies are developed by our states and urban areas that guide planning and resource investments and guidance that we develop for states, territories and urban areas that receive assistance under our Homeland Security grant program and, of course, the National Response Plan.

We are also working to address gaps in preparedness that were pointed out in the nationwide plan review that was conducted following Hurricane Katrina. That review found several critical areas for improvement. Those included the need to fully engage citizens in planning, training and exercises, the need to improve public alerts and warnings, the need to improve planning for evacuation and shelter in place, particularly for people with special needs, and the need to integrate volunteer resources to expand our emergency search capacity.

To address these issues, we are working closely with states and our major metropolitan areas to enhance their planning. This includes our community preparedness office participating in updates of FEMA's state and local planning guide, which provides guidance to states and communities in writing their emergency operations plans.

We are also advancing citizen preparedness through three major departmental initiatives. Those include the Ready Campaign, of course, Citizens Corps, and FEMA's disaster education program.

Ready is our department's public awareness campaign to encourage people to take simple steps to make themselves and their families prepared for emergencies. The Ready Campaign's messages are distributed through a variety of public outreach efforts, including advertisements, Web sites, brochures and media outreach, and the campaign focuses especially on kids, families, businesses and Spanish-speaking individuals through our Ready Kids, Ready Business and Listo programs. Ready works closely with Citizen Corps and our Citizen Corps Councils across the nation to implement Ready branded local initiatives.

Citizen Corps is, of course, the department's grassroots initiative to actively involve citizens in homeland security through their personal preparedness, training and volunteer service. Citizen Corps brings community and government leaders together to coordinate the involvement of community members and nongovernmental resources.

Since 2002 the department has awarded almost \$135 million to support Citizen Corps initiatives across the country. Citizen Corps has five programs—Community Emergency Response Teams, the Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, USAonWatch, and Volunteers in Police Services—that all provide national resources that our citizens apply at the state and local level.

Citizen Corps, of course, was highlighted in the White House Katrina report as one of the things that went right during the response. Thousands of volunteers worked across the country to provide shelter and services to victims of the hurricane. The White House report noted that Citizen Corps was successful because it had been coordinated ahead of time with local businesses and volunteer groups and because they were familiar with and implemented elements of the incident command system.

The Citizen Corps mission is accomplished through a national network of nearly 2,200 state, local, territorial and tribal Citizen Corps Councils that cover 75 percent of the total U.S. population. The councils are the key to help driving local citizen preparedness and participation. Citizen Corps also partners with 25 major non-profit organizations across the country that also promote community preparedness.

In addition to Citizen Corps and Ready, FEMA has a robust education program and a host of materials, a disaster preparedness curriculum, and a well-populated Web site that provides ample information to the public. Through these initiatives, the department is working to increase citizen preparedness, engage citizens across the country and leverage their assistance to support our emergency response officials.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide information on these efforts and initiatives, and I look forward to your and the members' questions.

[The statement of Mr. Gruber follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF COREY D. GRUBER

Introduction

Chairman Cuellar, Ranking Member Dent, and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Corey Gruber, and I serve as Acting Deputy Administrator of the National Preparedness Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the Department's citizen preparedness efforts. Today, I wish to highlight for you the Department's key efforts to engage the public in preparedness, primarily through the Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps.

We have many dramatic examples of the importance of citizen preparedness. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, in particular, illustrated that the more the public is engaged with government in emergency planning, preparedness, and response—particularly through social networks such as faith-based organizations, professional associations, business groups, and neighborhood associations—the more prepared and resilient our communities will be when an incident occurs.

The public must be part of local planning, training, and exercising so they will know what to do when the “real thing” happens. The American people are the ultimate stakeholders in the homeland security mission and must be an integral part of national preparedness efforts. Today, I will share with you key aspects of our national strategy for working with State, territorial, tribal, and local jurisdictions, as well as other partners, to engage the public in emergency preparedness.

National Strategy

Our national strategy for citizen preparedness recognizes that citizen preparedness, like emergency response, must be rooted in strong local efforts to integrate citizens and communities and requires locally or regionally developed plans to address each community's unique risks and capabilities. The Federal role is to provide national policy and guidance, a national-level awareness campaign, and resources to support State and local efforts to prepare and include citizens in homeland security.

National Guidance

DHS is committed to integrating citizen preparedness and participation in all appropriate national preparedness guidance. Citizen preparedness and participation are included as integral elements of key guidance documents, including the Interim National Preparedness Goal (NPG) and its Interim Target Capability List (TCL), State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategies, Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Guidance, and the National Response Plan.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD 8) specifically directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with other Federal departments and agencies, as well as State and local governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations, to encourage active citizen participation and involvement in preparedness efforts. This directive led to the development of the Interim National Preparedness Goal and its National Preparedness Priorities, including a National Priority specifically directed at strengthening planning and citizen preparedness. Citizen Preparedness and Participation is one of 37 target capabilities in the Target Capability List, and is identified as a “common capability” that cuts across all four mission areas: prevent, protect, respond, and recover. The capability is defined as ensuring that “. . .everyone in America is fully aware, trained, and practiced on how to prevent, protect/mitigate, prepare for, and respond to all threats and hazards. This requires a role for citizens in exercises, ongoing volunteer programs, and surge capacity response.”

Another of the National Preparedness Goal's associated tools, the Universal Task List (UTL), also addresses citizen participation. For example, the UTL lists the following required preparedness tasks: “. . .provide volunteer services, allocate volunteers across the emergency support functions, and utilize national, regional, and local volunteer services.”

In addition, in developing their Homeland Security Strategies, States and Urban Areas are required to tailor and update existing strategic goals and objectives to support citizen preparedness efforts. Citizen coordination is integrated throughout the guidance for States and Urban Areas receiving funding through the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). For example, the grant guidance directs States to “. . .include an integrated approach to engaging citizens in preparedness, training, exercises, and volunteer support for emergency responders through Citizen Corps Councils. States are encouraged to fully leverage HSGP resources to accomplish this goal.”

Need for Citizen Preparedness

Emergency responders in America make up less than one percent of the U.S. population. This roughly translates to one firefighter for every 280 people, one sworn officer for every 385 people, and one EMT/paramedic for every 325 people.

Hurricanes and other major incidents in recent years graphically demonstrate that there are not enough emergency responders to take care of everyone, in every location during the most critical time—the first 72 hours after a disaster. In fact, the Los Angeles Fire Department estimates that in 95 percent of all emergencies, it is bystanders or victims themselves who first provide emergency assistance or perform a rescue before a professionally trained emergency responder can arrive on the scene. Citizens must be aware of what steps to take to protect themselves and their families. We also encourage people to get trained in basic skills they can use to help themselves and others in an emergency. Importantly, citizens who acquire these skills can offer a pair of “trained hands” to help overwhelmed emergency responders during major disasters.

As part of the Nationwide Plan Review, conducted in the spring of 2006, the Federal government’s first comprehensive assessment of State and Urban Area catastrophic planning, citizen and community preparedness strengths and weaknesses were assessed in several areas: Warning, Emergency Public Information, Evacuation, and Mass Care and Resource Management. The findings of the assessment for all 50 States, 5 Territories, the District of Columbia, and 75 of the largest urban areas highlighted the need to improve how the Nation:

- Fully integrates citizens and non-governmental entities in planning, training, and exercises;
- Addresses effective public alerts and warnings;
- Plans for citizen protective actions, particularly evacuation and sheltering;
- Engages in planning and proactive thinking in preparing to meet the needs of special needs populations before, during and after emergencies; and
- Integrates volunteer and non-governmental resources (personnel, equipment, facilities, and consumable resources) for surge capacity.

To help jurisdictions address these findings as well as other Nationwide Plan Review findings, the DHS Citizen Corps program is participating in the current FEMA effort to update the “State and Local Guide 101” document, which provides guidance to State and local entities on writing Emergency Operations Plans.

The Department administers two main programs to encourage preparedness and engage citizens in local preparedness activities—the *Ready* Campaign and Citizen Corps. To complement these efforts, FEMA also develops, publishes, and distributes community preparedness informational materials. These three initiatives work hand-in-hand to build citizen preparedness.

Ready

Ready is the Department’s public awareness campaign to encourage people to take simple steps to make themselves and their families more prepared for emergencies. DHS and Citizen Corps work together with locally-based Citizen Corps Councils throughout the Nation to provide “*Ready*-branded” materials as a base for preparedness initiatives. In addition, Citizen Corps fully supports implementation of *Ready*’s National Preparedness Month initiative each September by hosting hundreds of local events around the country.

Ready encourages all individuals to do three key things to prepare for emergencies: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and become informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. The *Ready* Campaign’s messages are distributed through a variety of public outreach efforts, including advertisements, websites, brochures, partnerships, and media outreach. The campaign not only reaches out to individuals, but also targets children and families, businesses and Spanish-speaking individuals through *Ready Kids*, *Ready Business* and *Listo*—all extensions of the *Ready* Campaign.

The *Ready* Campaign partners with the Department’s Private Sector Office to promote *Ready Business*, which aims to help owners and managers of small-to-medium size businesses prepare their employees, operations, and assets in the event of an emergency. In response to requests by parents and teachers for information appropriate to share with children, the Department created *Ready Kids*, a family-friendly extension of the *Ready* Campaign. *Ready Kids* is a tool to help parents and teachers educate children, ages 8–12, about emergencies and how they can help their families prepare.

The *Ready* Campaign also has *Listo*, *Listo Negocios*, and *Listo Niños*, which are Spanish language versions of the *Ready* Campaign’s efforts. These companion materials ask individuals, businesses, and families to do the same things to prepare as

the English versions, but do so in a way to better facilitate outreach to the Hispanic community.

The Department has worked with The Advertising Council to develop, produce, and distribute television, radio, print, outdoor, and Internet Public Service Advertisements (PSAs). The campaign currently has more than 100 PSAs for *Ready*, *Ready Business* (business preparedness), and *Listo* in various formats, including documentary-style ads, Spanish ads, and ads featuring former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton and First Lady Laura Bush. All of these ads run in space donated by media companies across the Nation. To date, *Ready* has received more than \$642 million worth of donated broadcast air time and print advertisement space.

The *Ready* Campaign also delivers its message through the www.ready.gov and www.listo.gov websites, which feature information, materials, and local resources. As of March 31, 2007, these websites have received more than two billion hits and 26 million different visitors. The Department also operates toll-free phone lines, 1-800-BE-READY and 1-888-SE-LISTO, which provide basic information on personal preparedness and allow callers to order free publications. There are currently more than a dozen *Ready* brochures, including versions in English and Spanish that highlight individual, family, and business preparedness, as well as special publications for older and disabled Americans, pet owners, and teachers. As of March 31, 2007, the toll-free numbers have received more than 293,000 calls; and more than 11.5 million *Ready* materials have been requested or downloaded from the website. In the four years since it was launched, the *Ready* Campaign has established itself as a successful effort to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies. The Ad Council has declared *Ready* one of the most successful campaigns in its more than 60-year history.

The *Ready* Campaign also uses organizational and media outreach to spread its messages. *Ready* has relationships with a wide variety of public and private sector organizations. For example, Minor League Baseball and the Boy Scouts of America have partnered with *Ready* since 2003 to distribute emergency preparedness information at baseball games across the country. The Department has also been successful in encouraging State and local governments to play key roles in helping to create a culture of preparedness. When *Ready* was created, only a handful of State and local efforts existed; now nearly every State and major city is doing something to encourage their residents to prepare.

Over the past four years, there has been dramatic growth in these localized efforts to focus and re-emphasize the *Ready* message. Media coverage is another venue the Department has used to communicate with citizens about emergency preparedness. During 2006, the Department issued nearly a dozen news releases and conducted more than 340 media interviews on *Ready* with outlets across the Nation that reached an audience of more than 61 million Americans.

While it is too early to effectively gauge the long-term effects of *Ready* on public preparedness, thus far there are indications of progress. Annual national surveys conducted by the Ad Council for the campaign and its extensions have yielded positive results:

- A national survey of the general public conducted in June 2006 found that 91 percent of respondents said it is important for all Americans to be prepared for emergencies. From 2005 to 2006, the proportion of Americans who said they have taken *any* steps to prepare rose 10 points, from 45 percent to 55 percent.
- A national survey of Hispanic Americans conducted in August 2005 found that 96 percent of respondents said it is important for all Americans to take steps to be prepared for emergencies. Thirty-nine percent of Hispanic Americans report having put together an emergency supply kit.
- A national survey of businesses with fewer than 1,000 employees conducted in December 2006 found 88 percent of respondents said that it is important for businesses to take steps to prepare for a catastrophic disaster. Forty-seven percent said their company has an emergency plan in place in the event of a disaster, an increase of 8 percent from 2005.

FEMA's Citizen Corps

Citizen Corps is the Department's grassroots initiative to actively involve all citizens in the effort to secure the homeland through planning, personal preparedness, training, and volunteer service. Citizen Corps plays a critical role in facilitating and fostering preparedness activities among State and local entities that are not traditionally involved in emergency management.

Citizen Corps is coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security through the Community Preparedness Division in FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate. Citizen Corps provides a national strategy and program support for

State and local program implementation. In just five years since Citizen Corps was launched in 2002, it has grown to over 2,200 State, local, Tribal, and Territorial Councils, encompassing 75 percent of the nation's population.

Citizen Corps works with five national programs through partnerships with other Federal agencies and national organizations. The five programs—Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Fire Corps, USA On Watch/Neighborhood Watch (NWP), and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)—provide national resources for training and exercising citizens at the State and local level.

Citizen Corps was highlighted in the White House's report on the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina as one of the things that went right. In particular, the report described the efforts of the Harris County, Texas, Citizen Corps Council in providing shelter and services for hurricane victims at the Houston Astrodome. The Council built a functioning city virtually overnight to process over 65,000 evacuees from New Orleans. More than 60,000 Citizen Corps volunteers contributed to the success of the operation, while throughout the country, Citizen Corps and its program partners supported many other welcoming and shelter operations to receive displaced victims. The White House report noted that Citizen Corps was successful because "they had coordinated ahead of time with local businesses and volunteer groups, and because they were familiar with and implemented elements of the Incident Command System."

The concept behind Citizen Corps is that every State and territory should have a network that will implement the national citizen preparedness goals and guidance according to local needs and resources. Citizen Corps does not compete with existing volunteer organizations; rather it seeks to embrace all the organizations in a community and bring them together working towards homeland security. Because every community is unique, Citizen Corps is flexible to deal with each community's needs and priorities. However, every Citizen Corps initiative has a common thread: they all involve ordinary citizens volunteering in local communities to help secure the homeland.

Using Citizen Corps as its platform, a State or local government can launch a Ready Campaign, distribute emergency information, organize community resources for planning and preparedness efforts, or provide disaster readiness education.

Each of the 2,200 individual Citizen Corps Councils bring together the expertise of leaders from the emergency responder disciplines with the resources of volunteers, the private sector, elected officials, and other community stakeholders. These Councils examine community preparedness from a multi-discipline, comprehensive standpoint and work to engage citizens as strategic partners in community preparedness. Citizen Corps Councils integrate local programs and activities that engage everyone in hometown security and foster increased collaboration between citizens and all emergency responder disciplines.

Each community and region determines the appropriate geographic boundaries that its Council will serve and determines the Council membership. All Councils are connected to city, county, tribal, and State government through local elected leadership (mayor, county commissioner/county executive, or tribal chief), and emergency management or homeland security officials. State Citizen Corps points of contact are appointed by the governor. As part of its all-hazards mission, each Council looks for areas of focus unique to its community. For example, Councils in coastal or riverside communities might pay special attention to hurricanes and flooding, while Councils in areas with large immigrant populations might put more emphasis on multi-cultural and multi-lingual outreach. The Detroit Citizen Corps Council is one example of the latter. Due to the high population of Iraqi-Americans in the area, the Council has made a special effort to reach out to this community and integrate it into emergency planning and preparedness efforts.

At the national level, Citizen Corps works with offices within the Department of Homeland Security, as well as with other Federal agencies, to provide support for these targeted efforts at the State and local level. National priorities established by Citizen Corps include preparedness for individuals with disabilities, pet owners, senior citizens, and youth. Best practice examples from across the country are solicited as a base for leveraging the work of local Councils and communities. As such, the Department is working with Citizen Corps to provide expertise and support for community based outreach and inclusion of potentially isolated key communities.

Because Citizen Corps Councils can claim membership from an impressive array of groups including emergency responders, local volunteer organizations, business and civic leaders, and minority and special needs groups, the Councils provide a forum through which local homeland security leaders can work with community leaders and citizens to address the public safety and preparedness needs of the community. The multi-discipline collaboration achieved through Citizen Corps provides

economies of scope and scale in implementing programs and activities. Having all decision makers at the table enables the community to manage existing volunteer resources strategically, leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and direct the overall local plans. Having established working relationships before an incident occurs also makes response coordination more effective.

The programs and activities the Council implements help emergency responders tap the community's greatest resource—the voice and the power of the people. In addition, when emergency responders openly engage the public in preparedness and risk mitigation measures, training, exercises, and volunteer support, the public develops greater trust and appreciation for the responsibilities and services provided by those in uniform. This trust is critical when the public must respond to urgent information and directives during a crisis.

Citizen Corps involves a partnership of government and non-governmental organizations at all levels. Citizen Corps maintains an affiliation with 25 major nonprofit organizations and government agencies—such as the American Red Cross, the American Legion, and the Home Safety Council—whose programs promote community preparedness and through which individuals can find training and volunteer opportunities at the community level. Further, the Department has worked with partners such as AARP, the National Organization on Disability, the National Fire Protection Association, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the American Veterinary Medical Association, to create and distribute emergency information to targeted populations. The National Citizen Corps Council brings together more than 75 national non-governmental organizations and Federal agencies to collaborate across the responder disciplines and non-governmental sectors to support Federal, State, and local preparedness. Through these affiliations, the Citizen Corps network extends to tens of million of Americans.

Citizen Corps also has developed partnerships to support its five major programs, as noted earlier:

- The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program is administered by FEMA. CERT educates citizens about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. CERT courses are delivered in the community by a team of first responders who have completed CERT Train-the-Trainer (TTT) training conducted by their State Training Office for Emergency Management or the Emergency Management Institute.
- **Fire Corps** is also funded through a cooperative agreement with FEMA and is managed and implemented through a partnership among the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels: volunteer, combination, and career.
- The **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** program is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the Surgeon General. It strengthens communities by helping medical, public health, and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year, as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need.
- **Neighborhood Watch/USAonWatch** is funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and administered by the National Sheriffs' Association. The program incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission, while serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training.
- **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)** is funded through DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance and managed and implemented by DOJ and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. VIPS works to enhance the capacity of State and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers by serving as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. Today, there are 2,682 CERTs, 632 Fire Corps programs, 1,558 VIPS programs, 671 MRC units, and nearly 14,800 Neighborhood Watch programs.

As part of providing national support to increase the effectiveness of preparedness education nationwide, Citizen Corps has established a cooperative agreement to conduct research on citizen preparedness in America. The research includes tracking and analysis of community preparedness survey results from multiple sources, analysis of media treatment of preparedness and disasters, analysis and summary of multi-disciplinary research on factors that affect individual and community preparedness, and a review and analysis of national and field level expert advice on the top priorities for all-hazard protective measures that save lives. Research reviews are published quarterly through the Citizen Corps website. Four issues of the Citizen Preparedness Review have been published to date.

The most recent issue, on Citizen Corps' Personal Behavior Change Model for Disaster Preparedness, identifies the key factors needed to motivate citizens to take personal action to prepare. Key findings highlight the importance of localizing preparedness education to target local risks and plans for protective actions, and the critical role community networks play in preparing individuals by reinforcing preparedness in a community or organizational context.

Citizen Corps is also working closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate on research related to civic engagement and other factors affecting community resiliency. These research areas will provide a more robust basis for measuring preparedness and the impact of preparedness on both consequences and recovery.

Since 2003, the Department has awarded over \$100 million to support Citizen Corps. Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, Citizen Corps Program funding has been included as one of the five grant programs under the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). In order to leverage additional funding for this important priority, the Department has integrated community preparedness throughout the HSGP guidance as grant expenditures across all five HSGP grant programs. States use these funds to support a broad range of citizen preparedness activities that can include establishing a Citizen Corps Council, providing citizens with preparedness training—including CERT training, communicating citizen preparedness messages, and developing professional responder exercises that include a test of the citizen response role.

From fiscal year 2004 through fiscal year 2006, States spent nearly \$140 million to establish and enhance citizen volunteer initiatives, citizen awareness of emergency preparedness, prevention, and response measures, and Citizen Corps Councils. Fifty-one percent of the \$140 million is DHS funding beyond the Citizen Corps Program dollars, with the remainder being supported by Citizen Corps Program funding alone.

FEMA Disaster Education Materials

FEMA has developed disaster education materials, a disaster preparedness curriculum, and a well-populated website, which all provide a wide range of information to the public on preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. This includes training and related materials available through the Emergency Management Institute, such as the *Are You Ready?* Guide to Citizen Preparedness, independent study courses, and facilitator's guide.

The Guide to Citizen Preparedness is FEMA's most comprehensive source on individual, family, and community preparedness. It provides a step-by-step approach to disaster preparedness by walking the reader through how to get informed about local emergency plans, how to identify hazards that affect their local area, and how to develop and maintain an emergency communications plan and disaster supplies kit. Other topics covered include evacuation, emergency public shelters, animals in disaster, and information specific to people with disabilities. *Are You Ready?* also provides in-depth information on specific hazards, including what to do before, during, and after each hazard type.

Conclusion

Through Citizen Corps, *Ready*, and other initiatives, the Department is working to increase citizen preparedness, engage citizens in preparedness planning and programs, and leverage citizen assistance to support emergency response professionals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to provide information on these efforts and for your continued support for this important work. I would be happy to respond to any questions you or Members of the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Gruber. Good seeing you again. Thank you for your time. We do have some questions, and again, thank you.

At this time I would like to recognize Mr. Hill and ask you to summarize your statement in 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF GRAHAM HILL, MEMBER, NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Dent. It is good to see you again.

My name is Graham Hill, and I am here representing the National Council on Disability, which is a small, independent federal

agency that is charged with making recommendations to the president and Congress on improving the quality of life and government services for the disabled.

After 9/11, the National Council on Disability decided to begin in earnest studying and evaluating government's growing role in homeland security and emergency preparedness and evacuations. Our first report that summarized those evaluations came out in the early spring of 2005 and was called "Saving Lives." This was about 6 months before Katrina.

The summary of Saving Lives is that too often the needs of the disabled are just overlooked in the actual practical local plans for emergency evacuation in manmade and natural disasters. The content of Saving Lives was—after Katrina—looked at as kind of prophetic and became a building block when Congress was constructing the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act that was passed by Congress last fall in the Homeland Security Approps Bill.

The National Council on Disability was included in aspects of the Reform Act to address the issues that were raised in the Saving Lives report. Section 513 of that act lists 10 activities that a new disability coordinator that would be housed at FEMA will undertake. And our job under that act is to interact with FEMA to build capabilities at the local level that improve the responsiveness and preparedness of the local emergency planners for the disabled.

Before this act and before Katrina, we noted in our study and our evaluation of government that a lot of practical, difficult to plan from a national point of view, aspects of the disabled were being overlooked—accessible bathroom facilities, for example, accessible emergency notification procedures were not in place, and a host of other items that if you look at section 513, you can get a sense of how locally rooted they are.

As a result of that, we have concluded that community-based organizations such as the ones that Mr. Gruber has mentioned and other witnesses here at the table are going to be critical for FEMA to help locals plan to those requirements that were in the Reform Act. As a practical matter, they have to be included as our frontline disaster preparedness planning groups. Their familiarity with the local disability community is the best source of accurate information for local emergency planners.

The strength and skills of these CBOs are currently not fully integrated into these plans, and that is one thing that the National Council on Disability and FEMA are going to work together on under section 513 to accomplish. Without that involvement, we will be left with a variety of disabled people who either don't receive notification in time or don't know themselves what to do in the event of an emergency.

For example, after Katrina the Kaiser Family Foundation did a poll of people in New Orleans that were evacuated to the Astrodome. When asked what was the biggest reason you did not leave New Orleans earlier, 22 percent of the respondents said, "I was physically unable to leave." An additional 23 percent said, "I had to stay and care for someone who was disabled and couldn't leave." Together, that makes about 45 percent of the folks that wound up at the Astrodome not otherwise earlier evacuating because of something linked to a disabled person.

That is a lot of people for a local emergency planner to have to deal with if they don't know in advance who they are, where they are and what kind of plan is in place. And so the National Council on Disability is happy and looking forward to working with FEMA as the disability coordinator is appointed. We understand from correspondence we received from FEMA yesterday that that will occur very soon, and we will then be working with them to go through the list of plan activities included in section 513.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Hill follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GRAHAM HILL

Background

The national Council on Disability (NCD) is an independent federal agency making recommendations to the President and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families. NCD is composed of 15 members appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. In 2003, NCD committed itself to evaluating government's developing role and work in the areas of homeland security, emergency preparation and disaster relief. This commitment occurred, in large measure, as a result of the man-made homeland security terrorist event of September 11, 2001, and the creation of a new Executive Branch agency—i.e., the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. NCD's first evaluation findings were issued in April of 2005 in the report, *Saving Lives: Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning* (http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2005/saving_lives.htm).

I would like to bring to your attention the following information that was included in the letter of transmittal to the President that accompanied NCD's *Saving Lives* report. "All too often in emergency situations the legitimate concerns of people with disabilities are overlooked or swept aside. In areas ranging from the accessibility of emergency information to the evacuation plans for high-rise buildings, great urgency surrounds the need for responding to these people's concerns in all planning, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities."

Saving Lives was eerily prophetic. At a Congressional Briefing on November 10, 2005, according to Representative Jim Ramstad, Co-Chair of the Congressional Bipartisan Disability Caucus, "Certainly, the disaster in the Gulf Coast region exposed the enormous gaps in the emergency planning preparedness and management for people with disabilities. . . . In a truly remarkable show of foresight, the National Council on Disability (NCD) released a report last April outlining steps that the federal government should take to include people with disabilities in emergency preparedness, disaster relief, and homeland security."

Saving Lives provided examples of emergency preparation and disaster relief efforts that work. It provided an overview of steps the Federal Government must take to include people with disabilities in America's emergency preparedness, disaster relief, and homeland security programs. These steps involve access to technology, physical plants, programs, and communications, procurement and emergency programs and services.

Subsequent events also have contributed to NCD's ongoing interest and concern, including: the recent energy blackouts in the U.S. Northeast and Midwest, the Asian tsunami of December 26, 2004, and the hurricane disasters of 2005 in the Gulf Coast. The Kaiser Family Foundation took a poll of people from New Orleans who were evacuated to the Astrodome, asking, "Which of these was the biggest reason you did not leave (New Orleans earlier)?" 22 percent of the respondents said, "I was physically unable to leave." In addition, 23 percent said, "I had to care for someone who was unable to leave." Together this makes 45 percent of the people who did not leave New Orleans early due to disability-related reasons.

Also of note, in April of 2004, the California State Independent Living Council delivered a report to Governor Schwarzenegger detailing the treatment of people with disabilities during the 2003 firestorms. That report indicated that many of California's 19 percent of persons with disabilities were unable to evacuate themselves because of poor notification methods. In March 2005, newspapers in Virginia and Maryland reported on concerns raised by parents and students about public school systems' use of strategies to determine whether to evacuate or not evacuate students during fire emergency situations. Additionally, a March 2005 Fire Chief article describes a survey of 30 cities/counties where natural or man-made disasters occurred between 1999 and 2004. The survey revealed that emergency managers still

don't have a good handle on where people with disabilities are, and how to find ways to rescue and then accommodate them when they get to a place of safety.

All of these natural and man-made disasters underscore the need to maintain a critical focus on improving the quality of our nation's homeland security, emergency preparedness and disaster relief systems and efforts, at all levels, and for all people.

II. Key Issues

Based on NCD's own research over the past 3 years in the area of homeland security, as well as Congressional and Executive Branch investigations, NCD identified a number of key issues as critical and related to people with disabilities. The key issues are as follows:

- People with disabilities frequently encounter barriers to physical plants, communications, and programs in shelters and recovery centers and in other facilities or with devices used in connection with disaster operations such as first aid stations, mass feeding areas, portable payphone stations, portable toilets, and temporary housing.
- Many of these barriers are not new. Information and lessons learned are not shared across agency lines, and thus experience does not enlighten the development of new practices.
- Many accessibility lessons learned during previous disasters are not incorporated in subsequent planning, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.
- People with disabilities are too often left out of preparedness and planning activities. These activities include analyzing and documenting the possibility of an emergency or disaster and the potential consequences or impacts on life and/or property.
- Disaster preparedness and response systems are usually designed for people without disabilities, for whom escape or rescue involves walking, running, driving, seeing, hearing, and responding quickly to instructions and evacuation announcements.
- Access to emergency public warnings, as well as preparedness and mitigation information and materials, does not adequately include people who cannot depend on sight and hearing to receive their information.
- The strengths and skills of community-based organizations (CBOs) serving people with disabilities are not well integrated into the emergency service plans and strategies of local government. Emergency managers need to strengthen their relationships with these organizations by recruiting, encouraging, and providing funding and incentives to CBOs so that they can participate and assist in disaster preparedness and relief.

III. How Have We Responded, As A Nation, to These Key Issues?

Over the past several years, there has been much work that government at all levels—as well as private sector entities—has undertaken: such as attempting to strengthen the nation's emergency preparedness system, emergency communications infrastructure (e.g., the emergency alert system and all-hazard warnings), and public safety communications networks, to name just a few examples.

Not surprisingly, over the past three years, federal policymakers have used NCD's research and input and lessons learned to design promising solutions. In addition, and as a result of Congressional hearings and Executive Branch evaluations of America's response to Katrina and Rita, a specific set of legislated federal policy and organizational changes that will affect Americans with disabilities have been made.

For example, a number of critical changes were enumerated in the Homeland Security Appropriations bill (H.R. 5441) signed by President Bush on October 4, 2006. Some of the more notable changes targeted to Americans with disabilities are that the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

1. Will appoint a Disability Coordinator who will assess the coordination of emergency management policies and practices;
2. Will interact with stakeholders regarding emergency planning requirements and relief efforts in case of disaster;
3. Will revise and update guidelines for government disaster emergency preparedness;
4. Will carry out and will test or evaluate a national training program to implement the national preparedness goal, National Incident Management System, and National Response Plan;
5. Will assess the Nation's prevention capabilities and overall preparedness, including operational readiness;
6. Will identify and share best practices, after-action reports to participants, and conduct long-term trend analysis;
7. Will coordinate and maintain a National Disaster Housing Strategy;

8. Will develop accessibility guidelines for communications and programs in shelters and recovery centers;
9. Will set up evacuations standards and requirements, and help all levels of government in the planning of evacuation facilities that house people with disabilities.

A few critical changes were also recently introduced as a result of the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 (PETS Act). The PETS Act requires FEMA to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness operational and evacuation plans take into account the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals before, during, and after a major disaster or emergency.

The challenges faced by people with disabilities—and their governments—during and after the Hurricanes, while unique in scope and proportion, were similar to the challenges people with disabilities face on a day-to-day basis. Our nation must continue to build on its commitment to creating a critical infrastructure that incorporates access to emergency programs and services and includes physical, program, communication, and technological access for people with disabilities. When America embraces the twin principles of inclusion and accessibility for everyday programs, policies, and infrastructure, Americans with disabilities surely will be counted among the survivors of the next disasters.

IV. Additional Information and Recommendations from NCD's *Saving Lives* Report

A. From the Executive Summary

I would like to bring the following information from the Executive Summary of the *Saving Lives* report (http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2005/saving_lives.htm#executive) to the attention of the Subcommittee.

The decisions the Federal Government makes, the priority it accords civil rights, and the methods it adopts to ensure uniformity in the ways agencies handle their disability-related responsibilities are likely to be established in the early days of an emergency situation and be difficult to change if not set on the right course at the outset. By way of the *Saving Lives* report, NCD offers advice to help the Federal Government establish policies and practices in these areas. The report also gives examples of community efforts to take account of the needs of people with disabilities, but by no means does it provide a comprehensive treatment of the emergency preparedness, disaster relief, or homeland security program efforts by state and local governments.

This report provides an overview of steps the Federal Government should take to build a solid and resilient infrastructure that will enable the government to include the diverse populations of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness, disaster relief, and homeland security programs. This infrastructure incorporates access to technology, physical plants, programs, and communications. It also includes procurement and emergency programs and services.

The report's recommendations urge the Federal Government to influence its state and local government partners, as well as community-based partners, to assume major roles in implementing key recommendations.

Who Are People with Disabilities?

Individuals with disabilities make up a sizable portion of the general population of the United States. According to the U.S. Census of 2000, they represent 19.3 percent of the 257.2 million people ages 5 and older in the civilian noninstitutionalized population, or nearly one person in five.

In disaster management activities it is important to think about disability broadly. Traditional narrow definitions of disability are not appropriate. The term disability does not apply just to people whose disabilities are noticeable, such as wheelchair users and people who are blind or deaf. The term also applies to people with heart disease, emotional or psychiatric conditions, arthritis, significant allergies, asthma, multiple chemical sensitivities, respiratory conditions, and some visual, hearing, and cognitive disabilities.

Adopting a broad definition leaves no one behind, and the imperative is clear that emergency managers address the broad spectrum of disability and activity limitation issues. People with disabilities should be able to use the same services as do other residents of the community in which they live. Although they may need additional services, the emergency management system must work to build provisions for these services into its plans so that people with disabilities are not excluded from services available to the rest of the community. If planning does not embrace the value that everyone should survive, they will not.

B. Role of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

In Part III of the *Saving Lives* report, NCD discusses the role of CBOs in effective emergency preparedness planning. (http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2005/saving_lives.htm#disasters)

CBOs are local organizations (usually nonprofit) serving the needs of specific populations within the community. They represent a vast array of human and social service organizations, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood associations.

Experiences of CBOs in Disasters

These are a few of many examples of the experiences of CBOs in disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response:

- After Hurricane Andrew in Florida in 1991, no plans existed for people with disabilities who use group homes, residential programs, day programs, and other supportive communities and environments to continue to receive the assistance and services that were essential for their daily living.
- Service organizations lacked emergency plans that would have enabled them to locate the people they work with and inquire about their needs.
- Group homes did not have plans for emergency housing of residents, with the result that some people were reinstitutionalized.
- There were few disability-specific agencies to pitch in and help the affected areas.
- After the 1997 Minnesota Red River flood, many people with disabilities were displaced from their homes. Finding no housing and other resources to meet their needs, people in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks had to band together with CBOs to find ways to meet individual needs and design a recovery plan.

Networking with Other CBOs and Government Emergency Response Agencies

On 9/11 the executive director of CIDNY (the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York) watched the World Trade Towers collapse. "An act of war happened down the street from us!" CIDNY was simply not prepared to handle a disaster of this magnitude. "I think we were on the right track with everything we've been doing [beginning to plan for emergencies]. I wish we had been further along."

I wish we'd had a stronger relationship with all the other community-based agencies so we could coordinate efforts," CIDNY's executive director said. "The time to build relationships is not in the middle of a crisis. I wish we'd paid more attention to efforts to include people with disabilities in disaster planning. I wish we'd had better mechanisms in place to get the word out that we exist and what we can do for people who need help.

Before September 11, CIDNY had no relationship with the big players—FEMA, the Red Cross, and many other local, state, and federal assistance agencies. Now the big players realize that the independent living community has a responsibility to educate and work with these agencies on an ongoing basis.

An important lesson these agencies learned after 9/11 was not to trust that the needs of their clients would be met by emergency management personnel during an emergency. Emergency personnel do not have the knowledge or the resources to provide all the necessary services to these populations. People with disabilities should not assume that emergency and relief agencies understand accessibility, accommodations, communication, transportation issues, or any other aspect of disability or independent living. If people with disabilities haven't worked to raise the awareness of emergency personnel before the emergency, people can plan to spend a lot of time educating them in the midst of the crisis.

In the past, CIDNY had been invited to participate in various emergency preparedness meetings; but in the day-to-day reality of providing independent living services after 9/11, those meetings were not given much priority. That has changed now, and CIDNY hopes to build on the relationships and learning that have occurred since 9/11.

Individual Preparedness Plans for People with Disabilities

CIDNY will also pay more attention to helping consumers develop personal emergency preparedness plans. The executive director explains, "We've come to know a lot of people who were doing their own things and had successfully created their own support networks. When their support systems crumbled," as they so dramatically did, "many still thought they could work things out themselves. But as things dragged on, they found they needed assistance."

Funding

Federal and state legislation is often a major obstacle because it is not geared toward emergency response. Social services agencies often are reluctant to take on added responsibility during a disaster because spending additional money may leave them unable to provide basic services to their clients for the rest of the fiscal year.

Private nonprofit organizations and private for-profit organizations are not eligible for reimbursement from federal disaster funds unless they are mandated or identified before a disaster by a local or state agency to have specific disaster responsibilities.

CIDNY's first attempts to get the attention of FEMA and the Red Cross were hampered by the general lack of understanding about the diverse, and sometimes complex, needs of people with disabilities. The funding organization was finally convinced after CIDNY submitted a grant application explicitly detailing real-life examples of the problems people are facing and the center for independent living's unique capability to understand and help resolve those problems.

Shortly after 9/11, CIDNY staff and volunteers started a log to track the multitude of contacts and requests for assistance. This is a sampling of log notations from November 5, 2001. It is a chronicle of the diverse ways people with disabilities were affected when New York City's complex system of services and supports collapsed in the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center.

- . . . young architect has multiple sclerosis. . . uses a scooter that he had to leave behind. . . went to parents' home. . . 60-year-old father carrying him up and down stairs daily. . .
- . . . has CP. . . uses walker. . . was told he would have to walk from Brooklyn Bridge or Canal Street to his school. . .
- . . . had to stay in the hospital because there was no way to get back and forth for dialysis. . .
- . . . 21-year-old woman with significant traumatic brain injury. . . witnessed WTC collapse and is traumatized. . . has no food/income. . . is scared and highly vulnerable. . .
- . . . claims she has made 36 trips to four different Red Cross centers. . .
- . . . consumer with lung and brain cancer was displaced from her home. . . currently staying in hotel. . . needs transportation to her medical appointment next week. . .

Recognizing the Value and Talent of CBOs in Disaster Activities

Although local, state, regional, and federal government agencies play a major role in disaster planning and response, traditional government response agencies are often ill-equipped to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations. The traditional response and recovery systems often are unable to satisfy many human needs successfully. The usual approach to delivering emergency services does not always provide the essential services for segments of the population.

It is critical for emergency preparedness and response plans to address and accommodate all individuals, including vulnerable populations. Numerous agencies and organizations exist that have extensive knowledge and expertise on the needs of these populations. CBOs are often a part of naturally occurring local networks, which are powerful support tools.

CBOs have unique and credible connections with—and expertise in delivering services to—people with disabilities and activity limitations. This unique know-how and understanding can be a valuable resource during planning, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities. CBOs should be included as partners in working with local, state, regional, and federal public and private response agencies to deal more effectively with and understand the needs, geography, demographics, and resources of their local areas.

Emergency managers generally have little knowledge about the needs of people with disabilities. "To effectively provide services to these populations and meet the requirements for accommodations under ADA, emergency managers must understand the needs of these groups, the social services mechanisms that are in place to serve them, and how to work with social service agencies to integrate these mechanisms into emergency planning."

The social services network for people with disabilities is based on categorical needs and therefore is fragmented. As a result, it is not easy to make this network fit into a network to provide general services. No single specific-needs system exists, and agencies that provide services to a particular group of people often are unaware of agencies with similar missions for other groups.

Disability-specific CBOs often:

- Are able to assist in preparedness planning and disaster assistance because they know and can protect best the specific interests and needs of groups that they assist on a daily basis.
- Know best how to reach out to the populations they assist.
- Have the most current records.
- Are accessible in terms of design and layout of facilities, environmental needs such as indoor air quality and temperature, and communication—the way infor-

mation is delivered through signage, technology, interpersonal exchanges, sign language interpreters, picture books for people with cognitive disabilities, and materials in alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, disks, audio cassettes).

- Are able to distribute supplies and administer emergency aid.
- Can serve as satellite distribution sites to provide alternatives, for some individuals, to traditional shelters.
- Because effective disaster response always takes place locally, the challenge for emergency management professionals is to integrate the CBOs' skill and knowledge into the emergency service plans and strategy, and connect them to local government. Emergency managers need to recognize, recruit, encourage, and provide funding and incentives so that CBOs can participate in disaster preparedness and relief.

Working with CBOs as partners in disaster response and relief does not relieve government responsibility. It augments government efforts and forms a critical partnership with the community. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should value and offer funding and other incentives to encourage CBOs to become involved in disaster activities.

CBOs can do the following:

- Develop organization disaster plans that include information about how CBOs can survive a disaster and continue to serve people.
- Participate in Community Emergency Response Teams and Citizen Corps.
- Participate in cross-training with disaster response personnel and disability-specific organizations personnel so both groups gain a better understanding of each other's expertise and roles and can plan together for a coordinated response.
- Assist the people they support in developing individual and family preparedness and mitigation plans.
- Preestablish contracts so that CBOs are not encumbered by procedural delays. Such contracts would allow emergency response funds—from local, state, regional, and Federal Government agencies as well as foundations and corporations—to be immediately appropriated and used. This would allow for quick deployment of disability-specific relief services. For example, relocation to shelters might not be needed if such backup services were available. Provision through contracts for backup electrical units, such as standalone or portable generators to reactivate or recharge assistive devices, elevators, and appliances, can alleviate overcrowding at shelters and help people with disabilities remain in their home or communities in potentially safer and more accessible environments.

CBOs have an important role to play in helping develop and implement state and local emergency plans, to help communities prepare and respond to natural and man-made disasters.

V. Emergency Preparedness Issues and Disaster Planning for People with Mental Health Issues

In July of 2006, NCD released *The Needs of People with Psychiatric Disabilities During and After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: Position Paper and Recommendations* (<http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2006/peopleneeds.htm>), which examined the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the emotional as well as physical toll these storms wreaked on residents of the Gulf Coast region, and on hurricane survivors with mental health needs, in particular.

For hurricane survivors with psychiatric disabilities, the hurricanes' destruction resulted in "trauma that didn't last 24 hours, then go away. . . . It goes on and on." Some of these challenges were unavoidable. As one government official said, "No one ever planned for 'what happens when your social service infrastructure is completely wiped out.'" Nonetheless, many of the problems could have been avoided with proper planning. As NCD predicted in its 2005 report, *Saving Lives*, "[i]f planning does not embrace the value that everyone should survive, they will not."

Major Recommendations

Nondiscrimination in the Administration of Emergency Services

The federal National Response Plan and state and local emergency plans should require that services and shelters be accessible to people with disabilities, including people with psychiatric disabilities (who live independently or in congregate living situations such as hospitals, group homes, or assisted living), in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. State plans should be reviewed by independent disability experts familiar with that state.

Plans for the Evacuation of People with Psychiatric Disabilities

Evacuation planners should have a plan that (a) tracks the transfer of residents of group homes and psychiatric facilities; (b) maintains contact between people with psychiatric disabilities and their family members and caretakers; (c) helps facilitate the return of evacuees to their homes; (d) ensures that sites that receive evacuees are equipped to meet the needs of people with psychiatric disabilities; and (e) prevents the inappropriate institutionalization of evacuees with psychiatric disabilities.

Inclusion of People with Psychiatric Disabilities in Emergency Planning

People with psychiatric disabilities must be involved at every stage of disaster and evacuation planning and with the administration of relief and recovery efforts. Communities should develop interagency, multi-level disaster planning coalitions that include people with disabilities.

Person or Office Responsible for Disability Issues During Disasters

A single person or office must be responsible, accountable and able to make decisions related to disability issues. This person or office would be responsible for training first responders and organizing disability-specific evacuation, relief and recovery efforts. This person or office would also serve as a communication link between people with disabilities and the respective local, state or federal government.

Disaster Relief Should Continue for at least Two Years After the Disaster

Relief and recovery efforts should continue for at least two years from the date of the disaster, including Medicaid waivers, HUD housing waivers, and FEMA housing for people with disabilities. Disasters often result in long-term psychiatric consequences for people, and in some cases, the traumatic impact of the disaster does not manifest itself until many months or years later. Additionally, the social service infrastructure in some locations was utterly wiped out. Emergency planners should ensure treatment continuity by planning for relief services to be available for at least two years after the disaster.

VI. Additional Recommendations

In August of 2006, NCD released *The Impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on People with Disabilities: A Look Back and Remaining Challenges* (http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2006/hurricanes_impact.htm#preparedness). The paper revisited the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the lives of people who lived in the Gulf Coast region.

Recommendations for Emergency Preparedness

In conjunction with the recommendations delineated in NCD's *Saving Lives* report and other pertinent NCD reports on inclusive transportation and community design, including the *2006 National Disability Policy: A Progress Report*, (http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2006/progress_report.htm) NCD made the following recommendations:

- Congress should amend the Stafford Act to increase the funds or loan amounts that are available to hurricane victims who rebuild their homes according to accessibility standards, e.g. S. 2124, H.R. 4704 (109th Congress).
- Congress should establish an office or person within DHS who is solely responsible for disability issues and who reports directly to the Secretary, e.g. S. 2124, H.R. 4704 (109th Congress).
- Congress should waive the Medicaid citizenship documentation requirement for hurricane survivors.
- Congress should adopt the principles embodied in Livable Communities to guide the provision of reconstruction funds, promoting a Gulf Coast that includes:
 - Affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
 - Accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation
 - Physical environments adjusted for inclusiveness and accessibility
 - Work, volunteer, and education opportunities
 - Access to key health and support services
 - Access to civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities
- Congress should require the inclusion of people with disabilities in the creation of the National Response Plan, e.g. RESPOND Act (H.R. 5316, 109th Congress) that would require NCD to review and revise the National Response Plan.
- Congress should consider how the National Disaster Medical Systems may be expanded or modified to include the critical evacuation needs of nursing home residents.
- Congress should consider how nursing home accreditation programs, e.g. Medicaid and Medicare or the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations could be strengthened to ensure the evacuation of people in nursing homes in times of emergency.

- Congress should review all emergency planning mechanisms with a view to incorporating procedural and outreach provisions aimed at guaranteeing timely participation in preparedness planning by individuals with disabilities and groups representing them, and so as to maximize the responsiveness of plans, emergency services and emergency response practices to the issues facing these citizens. Congress should also provide for monitoring of the effectiveness of these procedures, so that any lack of timely and effective input can be quickly identified and remedied. Persons with disabilities should play a leading role in this monitoring.

Communities and City Governments

- Establish voluntary self-registries to facilitate the provision of emergency services people with disabilities, such as evacuation.
- Include people with disabilities in emergency planning at all levels.
- Ensure that emergency plans are well coordinated among other state, federal and non-governmental entities.
- Develop a communications plan to ensure that people with disabilities are familiar with local emergency preparedness plans.
- Establish an office or person who is solely responsible for disability issues.

Non-Profit and Community Based Organizations

- The American Red Cross should establish an office or person responsible solely for disability issues who reports directly to the Red Cross CEO.
- The American Red Cross should ensure that shelters and other emergency services are compliant with the ADA and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. NCD recognizes that the American Red Cross does not have the licensure to meet the needs of “individuals who require care in an institutionalized setting,” but the “reality is that people with special needs will show up at public shelters. . . the American Red Cross needs to be prepared to assist these individuals until they can be moved somewhere else” and cannot avoid the legal responsibility to admit people who do not require care in an institutionalized setting.

The American Red Cross should continue to improve its volunteer training programs to ensure that shelter staff is familiar with disability issues.

- Community based organizations that wish to donate resources, e.g. wheelchairs and medical supplies, to disaster stricken areas, should coordinate with federal agencies and national organizations to distribute supplies in an efficient manner.

In conclusion, NCD wishes to highlight two key recommendations from the 2005 *Saving Lives report and the 2006 update, A Look Back*. First, people with disabilities, including psychiatric disabilities, must be included in emergency planning and in relief efforts. Emergency management planners should not merely plan *about* people with disabilities; rather they must plan *with* people with disabilities. Second, emergency management planners at the local, state and federal levels must remember that federal laws and policies require that emergency services be administered in a nondiscriminatory fashion. The ADA and Section 504 require evacuation services and emergency shelters to be accessible to people with disabilities. Congress and the President should ensure that federal funds are used only for nondiscriminatory emergency services and relief and recovery efforts. As we plan to ensure that all people, regardless of disability, survive catastrophes such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we will incorporate the principles of inclusion and nondiscrimination into our national consciousness.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Communications Preparedness and Response on this important subject.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Hill.

At this time I would recognize Ms. Chapline to summarize your statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF REGINA CHAPLINE, TEXAS CITIZEN CORPS MANAGER, TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

Ms. CHAPLINE. Good morning. Thank you.

I wanted to tell you a little bit about Citizen Corps, and this is a program that I work on every day in my state. This program, as you are aware, was created in response to the September 11th at-

tack, and it sought to engage Americans to help make our nation's communities safer, stronger and better prepared.

This program drives local citizen participation in emergency and community preparedness response and volunteer service. Citizen Corps answers the question that every citizen has: How can I help? And by providing local opportunities for every citizen to prepare, train and volunteer, that question is answered.

The successes of the Citizen Corps program are many. In 2004, if you will recall, hurricanes Frances and Ivan destroyed a significant amount of our eastern seaboard. During that time there were more than 2,600 Citizen Corps volunteers at the Citizen Corps office who worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to deploy those volunteers up and down the eastern seaboard. They provided damage assessments. They provided numerous other forms of community service.

The largest utilization of Texas Citizen Corps volunteers occurred in 2005 in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Over 6,500 Citizen Corps volunteers from across the state worked in the hundreds of shelters that went up across Texas. Many of those volunteers worked in the Astrodome in Houston under the leadership of then Harris County Judge Robert Eckles, and as a result the Harris County Citizen Corps coordinator was even named ABC News Person of the Week.

There were 3,000 Citizen Corps volunteers at minimum that worked at the Astrodome, and they processed over 60,000 spontaneous volunteers who wanted to help at the Astrodome. Citizen Corps volunteers coordinated volunteer assignments and managed volunteer shifts until the Astrodome closed.

In rural communities across our nation, Citizen Corps volunteers have been used in many different capacities. They assisted many different first responders during 2006 when the wildfires burned up hundreds of thousands of acres across our country. There were many other ways that they were able to assist first responders. They assisted in warning citizens of evacuations and in numerous other ways.

Citizen Corps volunteers have also assisted in searches for missing people and flood victims. They have also assessed damage caused by storms and provided invaluable assistance to citizens and jurisdictions in numerous ways.

Citizen Corps training and information is offered nationally in English and Spanish. In the local jurisdictions we have higher concentrations of different nationalities that have been able to reproduce that information and offer both information and training to many different citizens of many different nationalities.

If we were to calculate the return on investment for this program, I would ask you to think of this. The value of one volunteer hour in Texas is \$18.20. If we were to assume that the 6,500 Citizen Corps volunteers worked at least two 8-hour shifts—and I know that they worked a lot more than that—that value would be over \$1.8 million. And that was more money than was allocated to the Texas Citizen Corps program that year.

Along other lines, we are also looking to involve some of our Citizen Corps volunteers in the fight for border security, and we look forward to implementing those plans very soon.

The Citizen Corps program is also very interested in school safety in response to a lot of the recent disasters. As a result, the Teen CERT program—the Teen Community Emergency Response Team—curriculum was nationally approved and is being implemented in many states across our nation.

In order to ensure that these goals and these objectives are achieved for the entire Citizen Corps program, we must turn to Congress for continued support of these programs through proper funding appropriations.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you very much for the incredible honor of being before you today, and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

[The statement of Ms. Chapline follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REGINA CHAPLINE

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Regina Chapline, and I am pleased to be here this morning to discuss the Citizen Corps Program.

My testimony will focus on (1) the accomplishments and impact of the Citizen Corps Program, and (2) future challenges in maintaining and improving the Citizen Corps Program.

The program was created in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and sought to engage Americans to help make our nation's communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to terrorism and natural disasters. This program drives local citizen participation in emergency and community preparedness, response, and volunteer service. Citizen Corps answers the essential question of every citizen: "How can I help?" by providing local opportunities for every citizen to prepare, train, and volunteer. By partnering with their community's emergency service providers, citizens participate in making themselves and their communities safer.

The programs under Citizen Corps are:

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) provides education and training to citizens in basic disaster response skills;

Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to provide support to fire and rescue departments;

Medical Reserve Corps, helps medical, public health and other medical volunteers offer their expertise;

Neighborhood/USA On Watch incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission;

Volunteers In Police Service works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement by utilizing volunteers.

The successes of the Citizen Corps Program are many. In response to Hurricanes Frances and Ivan in 2004, the national Citizen Corps Office worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the first ever nationwide deployment of Citizen Corps volunteers. More than 2,600 Citizen Corps volunteers responded and worked across the eastern sea board to provide victim relief, damage assessments, and many other services. Citizen Corps has traditionally been a grassroots, local movement. This nationwide activation of Citizen Corps members expanded the mission of Citizen Corps from a locally-based program to a national resource. By tapping Citizen Corps Members who have received first aid or disaster response training and who volunteer in their communities, the state and federal response systems gain an additional response resource for large scale disasters.

The largest utilization of Texas Citizen Corps volunteers was in 2005, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Over 250 shelters were in operation during that time all across Texas, and over 6,500 Citizen Corps volunteers worked in those shelters. Many worked in the Astrodome in Houston, under the leadership of then Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, and as a result, the Harris County Citizen Corps Volunteer Coordinator was named ABC News Person of the Week. 3,000 Citizen Corps Volunteers processed the 60,000 spontaneous volunteers who came to the Astrodome to help. Citizen Corps Volunteers coordinated volunteer assignments and managed volunteer shifts until the Astrodome closed.

In rural communities across the nation, Citizen Corps Volunteers have been used in different capacities. During the 2006 wildfires that burned hundreds of thousands of acres across the United States, Citizen Corps volunteers worked with the Forest Service and many other first responder agencies to notify citizens of imminent evac-

uations, while other volunteers provided rehabilitation to firefighters who had been fighting fires for hours, worked in temporary shelters and provided information to the public regarding road closures. Citizen Corps volunteers have assisted in searches for missing people and flood victims, assessed damage caused by storms, and provided invaluable assistance to citizens and jurisdictions in numerous other ways. They continue to train and to prepare on an ongoing basis, and always work at the direction of local first responders.

In Texas, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security decided that the Governor's Planning Regions, (regional councils of government or COGs) would be utilized to quickly and effectively plan and administer all Homeland Security funds, including Citizen Corps. Today, the Governor's Division of Emergency Management, with the help of the 24 regional councils of government, administer all Homeland Security planning funds for local jurisdictions across our state on a regional basis.

Nationally, there are approximately 2,196 Citizen Corps Councils, 2,667 Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), 629 Fire Corps programs, 667 Medical Reserve Corps programs, 14,791 Neighborhood Watch programs, 1,556 Volunteers in Police Service programs and 25 Affiliate Programs.

Citizen Corps training and information is offered nationally in both English and Spanish. Local jurisdictions with high concentrations of other nationalities have developed preparedness materials and training in many different languages.

Local jurisdictions have also been able to effectively leverage the resources in their own communities through the various Citizen Corps programs. Many programs have been successful in working with Community Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired population, and are planning training exclusively for deaf and hearing impaired later this fall. They also have trained people from the low socio economic areas.

To calculate the return on investment for this program, think of this: The value of one volunteer hour in Texas is \$18.20. Assuming that each of the 6,500 Citizen Corps Volunteers worked two eight-hour shifts in a shelter, it would total \$1,892,800. This is more than the federal Citizen Corps Allocation to Texas for an entire year.

In 2005, the Office of the Governor released our state's Homeland Security Strategic Plan. The goals of this plan are aligned with the National Response Plan, as developed by the Department of Homeland Security, but have been tailored for Texas. The state is prepared to utilize all resources, including Citizen Corps volunteers, in fighting terrorism by securing our borders. The utilization of Citizen Corps volunteers is outlined in the following Objectives and Priority Actions listed in the Texas Statewide Strategic Plan:

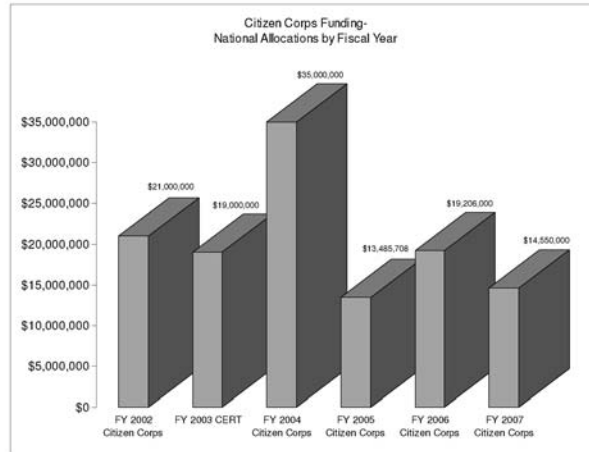
- Strategic Objective 1.3: Prevent terrorists from exploiting the Texas Mexico Border;
- Priority Action 1.3.4: Work with local law enforcement leaders along the Texas-Mexico Border to expand the Neighborhood Watch, Reserve Deputy, Reserve Police Officer, and Citizen Academy programs along the border;
- Strategic Objective 3.8: Increase citizen participation in statewide preparedness efforts;
- Priority Action 3.8.1: Expand the Texas Citizen Corps by establishing and sustaining Citizen Corps Councils in each of the Governor's 24 Council of Government Regions;
- Priority Action 3.8.2: Develop and execute a state-level media and communications campaign to increase participation in the Texas Citizen Corps;
- Priority Action 3.8.3: Conduct regional train-the-trainer classes to expand the capabilities of Citizen Corps and Community Emergency Response Teams.

The Citizen Corps Program is particularly concerned about school safety, in the wake of recent tragic incidents, and as a result, the TEEN CERT Curriculum, which was recently developed and nationally approved. The curriculum is being considered for use in cooperation with our secondary schools and universities.

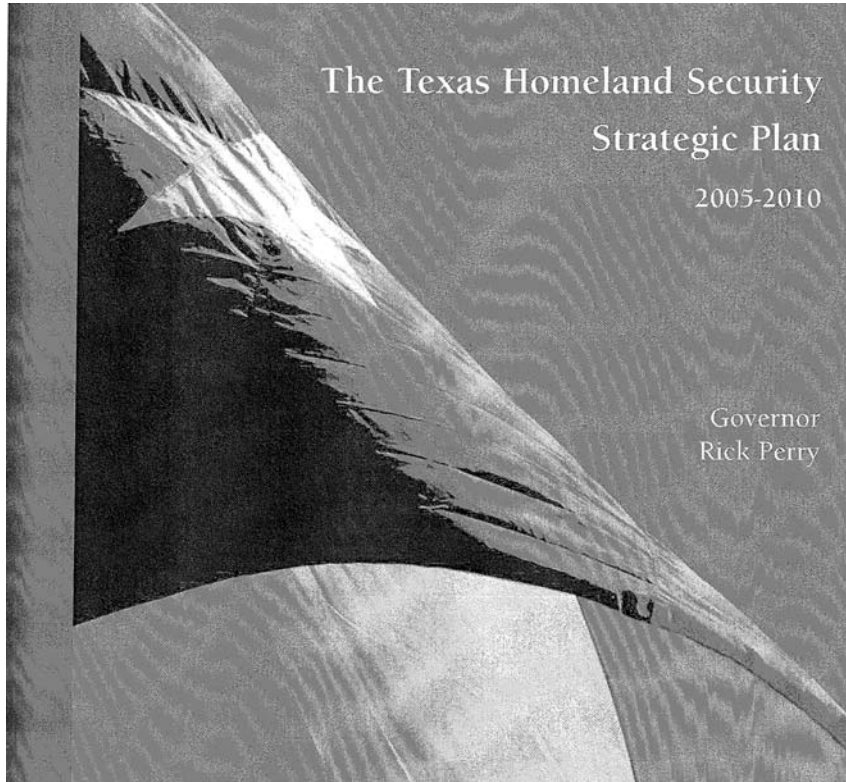
In order to ensure that these goals and objectives are achieved, we must turn to Congress for continued support of these programs through proper funding appropriations.

This concludes my testimony. I appreciate your time and attention. I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

ATTACHMENT A



ATTACHMENT B



opportunities for private security personnel to receive counterterrorism training to ensure they are integrated into the prevention framework, to include IED detection, prevention and response.

3) It is impossible to prevent all attacks; however, law enforcement and security officials who patrol our streets and guard our critical assets and key resources must be trained to recognize the suspicious activities, tradecraft and precursor crimes that often precede a WMD or an IED attack. These can include theft of explosives or chemicals used in explosives, surveillance activities, rental of self-storage space to store chemicals or mixing apparatus, unusual deliveries to residential or rural addresses, signs of chemical fires or toxic odors in hotels or apartment complexes, the modification of vehicles to handle heavier loads, and small test explosions in remote areas. Information related to these precursor activities and crimes must be incorporated into law enforcement and homeland security personnel training and activities across Texas.

3. OBJECTIVE 1.3: PREVENT TERRORISTS FROM EXPLOITING THE TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- 1.3.1. Increase local and state patrols of the border region to increase security, particularly between the ports-of-entry.
- 1.3.2. Support integrated, multi-agency investigations to address violent criminal organizations operating in the Texas border region which threaten public safety and national security.
- 1.3.3. Enlist the National Guard to provide homeland security support, training and exercises without militarizing the border.
- 1.3.4. Work with local law enforcement leaders along the Texas-Mexico Border to expand the Neighborhood Watch, Reserve Deputy, Reserve Police Officer and the Citizen Academy programs along the border.
- 1.3.5. Support federal efforts to expand the US-VISIT program, to include the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, to increase the speed and security of commerce and tourism at points of entry.

8. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.8: INCREASE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN STATEWIDE PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS.

PRIORITY ACTIONS:

- 3.8.1. Expand the Texas Citizen Corp by establishing and sustaining Citizen Corps Councils in each of the Governor's 24 state Councils of Government (COGs).
- 3.8.2. Develop and execute a state-level media and communications campaign to increase participation in the Texas Citizen Corps.
- 3.8.3. Conduct regional train-the-trainer classes to expand the capabilities of Citizen Corps and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs).

a. The citizens of Texas are the most important homeland security stakeholders; all statewide homeland security efforts are designed to protect the lives and property of Texans in the event of a natural or manmade disaster. Texans have a long history of community involvement. Citizens are a valuable source of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery capabilities. By getting citizens involved in homeland security efforts, every community will be safer and better prepared.

b. The Texas Citizen Corps program, which is managed locally by local Citizen Corps Councils, helps drive local citizen participation by coordinating various disaster preparedness programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats and identifying local resources. Citizen Corps programs include the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program which trains people in basic disaster response skills; the new Fire Corps Program which allows citizens to assist local fire departments in a range of activities including fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support; the Volunteers in Policing (VIPs) Program which connects citizens to law enforcement volunteer opportunities; the Neighborhood Watch Program which incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing neighborhood crime prevention organizations; and the Medical Reserve Corps Program which allows medical, public health and other volunteers offer their expertise to their communities, particularly during emergencies and other times of need.

c. In Texas there are currently 54 Citizen Corps Councils, 179 CERTs, 33 Fire Corps Programs, 63 VIP Programs, and 427 Neighborhood Watches that leverage Citizen Corps resources. Texas ranks first in the nation in CERT and Fire Corps involvement. This level of citizen participation across the State is evidence that Texans are eager to play a role in homeland security. Texas will continue to expand and fully leverage citizens to help protect our communities from all threats and hazards.

Mr. CUELLAR. Again, thank you very much for your testimony. I now recognize Mr. Stittleburg to summarize your statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF PHIL STITTLEBURG, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

Mr. STITTLEBURG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to be here today.

My name is Phil Stittleburg. I am chief of the LaFarge Fire Department and have spent the last 35 years of my life in the volunteer fire service. I chair the National Volunteer Fire Council, which represents the interests of in excess of one million volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel throughout our country.

I want to speak today about Fire Corps, which is a program administered by the NVFC in partnership with the International Association of Fire Chiefs. It is a component, as you know, of Citizen Corps.

9/11 ended many lives, and it certainly changed the lives of all who survived. It unified our nation in a way that rarely occurs, and it fostered a sense of patriotism and compassion. Arising from that, President Bush called on all Americans to donate either 2 years or 4,000 hours over their lifetime in service to others. And that led to the establishment of the USA Freedom Corps, which has a goal of fostering a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility.

A component, of course, of Freedom Corps, is Citizen Corps, which is an effort to engage citizens and their communities to prevent, prepare for and respond to both manmade and natural disasters, as well as other emergencies.

Citizen Corps then developed four partner programs—USAonWatch, formerly Neighborhood Watch; Medical Reserve Corps; Community Emergency Response Teams, the CERT teams that we all know about; and Volunteers in Police Service—but it had missed one very important group, one very large component. It had missed the fire service.

It is the fire service today that is facing many challenges. We have a continually expanding role, particularly since 9/11. There is more demand for services, a better quality of services, and an expectation that it all be done with less. That gap in Citizen Corps was filled in December 2004 when Fire Corps was launched.

Fire Corps has the mission of increasing the capacity of volunteer, career and combination fire and EMS organizations through the use of community volunteers. These volunteers perform in what we call non-operational—that is non-emergency—roles, which means they free up firefighters and EMS personnel to do things like keeping up their training, meeting their expanding roles, responding and providing other services.

What do Fire Corps people do? Well, they perform a myriad of roles. It may be fire prevention, fundraising, canteen services at emergency scenes, vehicle maintenance, budgeting, accounting, administrative duties. In fact, the range of tasks that are performed by Fire Corps personnel are limited really only by the needs of the department and the bounds of one's imagination.

And those citizens who volunteer likewise benefit not only, of course, from the very altruistic benefit of giving back to one's community, but also they gain a better understanding of the emergency services and in turn are better prepared for their own emergencies.

Fire Corps has been a noteworthy success. In its 2.5 years in existence, it has achieved over 10,000 engaged community volunteers, and there are many success stories.

Just to mention one, Johnson County Rural Fire District No. 1 in Clarksville, Arkansas, in 2003 was spending about 30 minutes a year on fire safety programs. Although it was trying to increase that, by 2005 it had still only gotten to 100 hours a year. When Fire Corps arrived, actually they were able to increase those program hours to 8,600 hours a year and developed a program that has been seen by we estimate as many as a million people. That is reflected in a 34 percent decrease in fire-related property loss, and all at little or no cost to the fire department.

I believe I have time to mention one more, and that is to point out that Fire Corps is not just related to small communities. Mesa, Arizona, has a population of in excess of 455,000 people. It estab-

lished a Fire Corps program in 2005 and now has, I believe, about 148 community volunteers ranging in age from 18 to 89, and they donate more than 29,000 hours a year.

Fire Corps fits the fires service wonderfully because it stresses volunteerism and teamwork, two qualities that we exercise on a routine basis. Citizen Corps, as you know, was founded by the administration and funded through appropriations, but it has never been separately authorized. Last year the Medical Reserve Corps, which, as you know, is part of Citizen Corps, was separately authorized. It is our suggestion that Citizen Corps be authorized, with a subauthorization for Fire Corps, which we believe would give Fire Corps an increased stature and also preserve unique characteristics of the fires service in that program.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you.

[The statement of Mr. Stittleburg follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PHILIP C. STITTLEBURG

Chairman Cuellar, Ranking Member Dent and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the extremely important issue of Citizen Preparedness. My name is Philip C. Stittleburg and I am the Chief of the La Farge Fire Department in Wisconsin as well as the Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). My testimony today will focus on the Fire Corps program, which is administered by the NVFC and is a component of Citizen Corps.

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the nation came together in a rare show of unified support and human compassion. Capitalizing on our need to support each other and our nation in these trying times, President Bush called upon every American to dedicate two years or 4,000 hours over the course of their lives to serving others. This call to action launched USA Freedom Corps, an effort to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility, building on the generous nature of the American people. As a component of USA Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps was also created as a national grassroots effort to involve citizens in helping their communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies.

Citizens have become increasingly important in making our nation and communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to emergencies of all kinds. As a result, state and local government officials have increased opportunities for citizens to become an integral part of protecting the homeland and supporting emergency responders. Today, many of these opportunities are coordinated through Citizen Corps Councils and the five partner programs: USAon-Watch/Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and Fire Corps. Together, these programs provide volunteer opportunities for citizens and community members to support all aspects of emergency response.

Fire and other emergency service departments across the nation are struggling with increasing demands for service coupled with inadequate funding. In addition to responding to fires and medical emergencies, firefighters and EMS personnel are called upon to respond to major disasters, both natural and manmade. In an effort to help departments face these increasing demands, Fire Corps was launched in December 2004, making it the newest of the five partner programs under Citizen Corps.

Administered by the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) in partnership with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), Fire Corps' mission is to increase the capacity of volunteer, career, and combination fire and EMS departments through the use of community volunteers. These volunteers help resource-constrained departments by performing non-operational or non-emergency roles, making departments better able to develop, implement, expand, and sustain programs and services that meet the needs of their communities. In fulfilling these roles, citizens allow their local firefighters and emergency medical personnel to focus their efforts on training for and responding to critical, life-threatening situations while also increasing the ability of the department to provide additional programs and services for the community it serves.

Through Fire Corps, individuals across the country assist their local departments in a myriad of roles, including conducting fire prevention activities at the state and local levels, fundraising, providing canteen services (drinks and food) for emergency responders during lengthy incidents, maintaining emergency apparatus, performing administrative duties, and much more. The range of tasks citizens can perform is limited only by the needs of the department. In return, citizens gain an intimate understanding of the fire and emergency services and become better prepared to handle their own emergencies as well as those of their neighbors.

In its short two and half year history, Fire Corps has grown to include hundreds of programs representing more than 10,000 engaged community volunteers across America, and the U.S. Territories. Together, these programs are greatly increasing the ability of our nation's fire service to provide, maintain, and increase services to those they serve. The successes of these programs are abundant and I'd like to share just a few of these success stories with you.

In 2005, the Johnson County Rural Fire District 1 in Clarksville, Arkansas implemented a Fire Corps program by partnering with students from the local University of the Ozarks' Phi Beta Lamda organization. Today over 100 students assist this small rural department with their fire safety programming. With the help of the department's firefighters and Fire Corps members, the Johnson County RFD 1 increased the hours of its fire safety programming and activities from 30 minutes to 8,600 hours a year between 2003 and 2006. Since the inception of its Fire Corps program, the group's efforts have reached nearly 1 million people on the local, state, and national levels with their important fire safety messages. Through these efforts, this small department has effected a dramatic 34% decrease in fire-related property loss. . .all at little to no cost to the department. This was made possible by Fire Corps.

Fire Corps is helping fire/EMS departments and communities of all sizes. The Mesa Fire Department in Mesa, Arizona has also increased its ability to respond to emergencies of all kinds while providing more services to their community. Serving a population of over 455,151, the Mesa Fire Department launched their Fire Corps program in 2005. Today, 148 community volunteers, ranging in age from 18 to 89 assist the department in conducting home safety checks for senior citizens, provide translation services so the department can reach out to its non-English speaking residents, and assist family members after the death of a loved one by providing emotional support and assisting them through the necessary processes. This valuable team also assists the department by responding to non-emergency incidents, such as providing individuals with disabled cars with transportation, resourcing, and other services. Such services are vital for the safety and well-being of a community, but can also take first responders away from their primary duties of fighting fires and responding to life-threatening emergencies. Through the more than 29,040 volunteer hours donated through Fire Corps each year, the Mesa Fire Department is able to accomplish all of its programming goals, keep its community safe, and still focus on life-threatening emergency situations. Again, this was made possible through Fire Corps.

The Stayton Fire District located outside of Salem, Oregon launched its Fire Corps program in 2005 in an effort to carry on its commitment to providing outstanding service while saving lives and property. Today, the department's Fire Corps volunteers assist the department in fundraising, canteen and chaplain services, fire prevention and life safety education, and provide support for the department's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention program. The department's Fire Corps team also installed reflective address signs in rural areas of the 104-square-mile district. These signs were needed to locate homes that were not well marked or addresses that were not visible at night. Through the efforts of the departments Fire Corps team, the department has been able improve their response time to these residents, increasing their ability to save lives and property.

A program like Fire Corps that stresses volunteerism and teamwork is a perfect fit in the fire service where those values are prevalent. Prior to the creation of Fire Corps, Citizen Corps programs did not address the needs of the fire service, leaving out this crucial component of our nation's emergency services. In addition to addressing this critical need, one of the reasons that Fire Corps has been so successful is due to the guidance of the National Advisory Committee (NAC), which I sit on, which includes members of all the major national fire service organizations. The NAC's involvement ensures that Fire Corps meets the unique needs of the fire service.

Citizen Corps was created by the administration and has been funded through appropriations, but has never been authorized. Last year, the Medical Reserve Corps, a Citizen Corps program, received a separate authorization. The NVFC believes that Congress should pass a Citizen Corps authorization that includes a sub-authorization.

tion for Fire Corps. The NVFC feels that a Congressional authorization would give this valuable program increased stature. Furthermore, the NVFC believes that a sub-authorization for Fire Corps is necessary to ensure that it retains its unique characteristics linking Citizen Corps efforts to the fire service.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony.

At this time I now recognize Ms. Schneider to summarize her statement for 5 minutes, and welcome.

**STATEMENT OF JOHANNA SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, PARTNERSHIP FOR DISASTER RESPONSE**

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, and I would like to thank all the members of the committee for this opportunity.

By way of background, the Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of the leading U.S. companies. We have \$4.5 trillion in annual revenues. We have over 10 million employees that we represent. Collectively, our members donate over \$7 billion a year in philanthropic donations, and that represents approximately 60 percent of total giving.

The Business Roundtable launched the Partnership for Disaster Response approximately 2 years ago, following the devastation of the Southeast Asian tsunami. Even though our companies contributed generously, our CEOs felt a need to create a more coordinated effort to prepare for and respond to catastrophic events.

To that end, the partnership aims to capitalize on the many resources and the capabilities of the private sector to accelerate on the ground relief and recovery activities to help save lives.

The partnership works to foster public-private collaborations to prepare for the health, social and economic burdens created by disasters in the United States and abroad. The partnership also works to ensure that the business community's response efforts address a community's most critical needs by mobilizing the unique and diverse assets of our member companies.

As you know, the U.S. private sector owns and operates nearly 85 percent of the nation's critical infrastructure and thus has a myriad of resources of value in preparing to and responding to disasters. These range from basic necessities such as food and drinking water to communications and energy networks, as well as logistics and technical expertise.

Business Roundtable member companies contributed more than \$550 million following the Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and Rita and Wilma, in addition to the South Asian earthquake in Pakistan.

In addition to quickly responding to these disasters with money and products, we feel that there is an important role for us to play in public education surrounding disasters. As major employers, our companies can be important vehicles for communicating preparedness. If our employees and their families are equipped with the appropriate information and tools to protect themselves and their families in the event of a disaster, our communities will be better prepared.

First and foremost, the partnership serves as a valuable resource. One year ago we launched a Web site,

www.respondtodisaster.org, which is the first, that we know of, comprehensive clearinghouse of information to help the business community, both large and small, prepare for and respond to disasters.

This Web site, which I would urge you to go on, is literally a one stop shop for information and valuable tools for companies of all size. It includes company best practices on disaster preparedness, guidance for employee volunteers and matching gift programs to respond quickly in the event of a disaster, information on human resources and human resource benefits and financial issues, as well as strategies for tracking employees during a disaster—very important—and information on relief agencies and how best to support their work.

We have developed a series of guides, which I believe each member of the committee has, and I would urge you to take a look at those. They are all filled with valuable information. For instance, we have just released a family preparedness guide to all of our 160-member companies, who are then releasing it to our 10 million employees. We have 35 million people that we represent in terms of our employees and their families.

This guide identifies crucial actions that families can take: where to meet following a disaster, updating emergency contact information, protecting vital records, reviewing insurance and healthcare coverage, and stocking emergency supplies.

In closing, I would just like to mention three very, very brief programs that our companies have undertaken which represent a broad array. Grainger, which is a company based in Illinois, has created a program called “Ready When the Time Comes.” It provides time and expertise through the American Red Cross to train employees, so with one call the new head of the American Red Cross can call Grainger and have 500 Red Cross volunteers, as opposed to one.

My time is up, and the rest of my examples are for the record. Thank you so much.

[The statement of Ms. Schneider follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHANNA SCHNEIDER

Introduction

On behalf of Business Roundtable and our members, I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity today to talk with you about the Partnership for Disaster Response.

Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies with over \$4.5 trillion in annual revenues and more than 10 million employees. Our companies comprise nearly a third of the total value of the U.S. stock market and represent more than 40 percent of all corporate income taxes paid.

Collectively, our members returned more than \$112 billion in dividends to shareholders and the economy in 2005. Roundtable member companies are also extremely generous, with more than \$7 billion a year in combined charitable contributions—nearly 60 percent of average total corporate giving. Our members are also technology innovation leaders, with \$90 billion in annual research and development spending—nearly half of the total private R&D spending in the U.S.

We launched the Partnership for Disaster Response in May of 2005 following the devastating tsunami in Asia and the subsequent outpouring of contributions from the business community. Even though companies contributed generously—cash, products, services and expertise—our CEOs saw a need to create a more coordinated effort to prepare for and respond to catastrophic disasters.

To that end, the Partnership aims to capitalize on the many resources and capabilities of the private sector to accelerate on-the-ground relief and recovery activities

to help save lives. The Partnership works to foster public-private collaborations to prepare for the health, social and economic burdens created by disasters in the United States and abroad. The Partnership also works to ensure that the business community's response efforts address a community's most critical needs, by mobilizing the unique and diverse assets of our member companies.

The U.S. private sector, which owns and operates nearly 85 percent of the nation's critical infrastructure, has myriad resources useful in disaster preparedness and response. These range from basic necessities such as food and safe drinking water to communications and energy networks, as well as logistics and technical expertise.

Business Roundtable member companies contributed more than \$515 million to the Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and the South Asia earthquake relief efforts. In addition to swiftly responding to disasters with money, products and expertise, they play an important role in public education about disasters.

As major employers, they can be important vehicles for communicating about preparedness. If our employees are equipped with the appropriate information and tools to protect themselves and their families in the event of a disaster, our communities will be better prepared.

Twenty-five CEOs—from across various industries—have joined forces as members of the Partnership for Disaster Response Task Force to leverage their corporate resources and expertise to create a more effective response to disasters. The new chairman of this Task Force is Richard L. Keyser, Chairman and CEO of W.W. Grainger, Inc. Task Force Members include:

Vice Chairman:

Mr. William R. McDermott
SAP Americas, Inc.

Mr. Charles Prince
Citigroup

Mr. Ramani Ayer
The Hartford Financial Services Group

Mr. David M. Ratcliffe
Southern Company

Mr. Gary D. Forsee
Sprint Nextel

Mr. Edward B. Rust, Jr.
State Farm Insurance Companies

Mr. H. Edward Hanway
CIGNA Corporation

Mr. Stephen W. Sanger
General Mills, Inc.

Mr. Charles O. Holliday, Jr.
DuPont

Mr. Robert W. Selander,
Mastercard

Mr. William G. Jurgensen
Nationwide

Mr. David B. Snow, Jr.
Medco Health Solutions, Inc.

Mr. Thomas W. LaSorda
DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Mr. J. Patrick Spainhour
The ServiceMaster Company

Mr. Edward M. Liddy
The Allstate Insurance Company

Mr. Sy Sternberg
New York Life Insurance Company

Mr. Steven J. Malcolm
The Williams Companies, Inc.

Mr. Douglas W. Stotlar
Con-way Incorporated

Mr. Charles G. McClure
ArvinMeritor, Inc.

Mr. Martin J. Sullivan
American International Group, Inc.

Mr. Daniel H. Mudd
Fannie Mae

Mr. Miles D. White
Abbott Laboratories

Mr. Thomas C. Nelson
National Gypsum Company

Mr. George Nolen
Siemens Corporation

The Partnership in Action—Providing Resources and Information

(www.respondtodisaster.org)

The Partnership serves as a valuable resource, helping companies and their employees better prepare for disasters. In October 2006, the Partnership launched www.respondtodisaster.org, the first comprehensive clearinghouse of information to help the business community better prepare and respond to disasters. The Web site features commonly requested information and valuable tools on how companies can better integrate disaster planning into their business continuity plans and communicate to their employees about disaster preparedness and response, including:

- Company best practices on disaster preparedness and response
- Guidance for developing employee volunteer and matching gifts programs

- Advice on HR benefits and financial issues concerning employees who may be affected by a disaster
- Strategies for tracking employees during a disaster
- Information on relief agencies and how best to support their work

The Partnership has also developed various information guides and resources designed to help companies and their employees during all phases of a disaster—prepare, respond and recover. Several were distributed at the Partnership’s 2006 Conference, “Beyond Cold Cash: Unlocking the Value of Corporate America’s Role in Disaster Response,” which included more than 100 representatives from business, government and relief agencies.

In time for the 2007 hurricane season, we created and distributed several new guides. All of the materials we have produced are posted on the Partnership’s Web site and are available to the general public.

Mr. Keyser, the chairman of the Partnership, sent a letter to the CEOs of all Roundtable member companies on June 1, the start of hurricane season, encouraging them to use the resources the Partnership had developed to help the business community more effectively prepare and respond to disasters. He highlighted the fact that advance planning and educating a company’s workforce about preparedness can help protect employees, businesses and communities and reduce the impact of a disaster.

We have developed six discrete guides to help companies in managing disaster-related issues:

1. Family Preparedness Guide

The Partnership understands how companies can be an important vehicle for educating the public—starting with their own workforces—about what to do to better prepare for a disaster.

To underscore the importance of this issue, the Partnership recently developed a *Family Preparedness Guide* to:

- Help companies educate their employees about personal/family disaster preparedness
- Encourage them to take specific actions with their family to better prepare for a disaster—including a checklist of emergency supplies
- Offer additional resources on disaster and family preparedness planning, such as The Department of Homeland Security’s *Ready.gov* program and information from the Centers for Disease Control on pandemic preparedness

Businesses are able to post the *Family Preparedness Guide* on their company’s intranet and distribute the guide through internal newsletters and emails to remind employees about the importance of having a plan in place with their family before a disaster strikes. The guide can be found at: *Family Preparedness Guide*

2. Top 10 Myths about Disaster Relief

Far too often individuals’ decisions about whether to contribute and how to contribute to disaster response and recovery efforts are influenced by false or inadequate information. Misinformation can inhibit the relief process and limit the usefulness of individual giving. The Partnership compiled the *Top Ten Myths of Disaster Relief*, which aims to identify and correct some of the most common misconceptions about disaster response.

The document can be found at: *Top Ten Myths on Disaster Relief*

3. Do’s and Don’ts of Effective Giving

Good decisions about how to assist the victims of disasters are invariably based on good information about what is actually needed to help with disaster relief and recovery efforts. The Partnership created *Do’s and Don’ts of Effective Giving* to provide employees with accurate information about how they can best contribute after a disaster. The guide explains why cash is almost always the most valuable contribution and how certain product donations—in spite of good intentions—can actually impede a relief effort by creating bottlenecks in transporting needed goods and taking up limited warehouse space.

The guide can be found at: *Do’s and Don’ts of Effective Giving*

4. Helping Employees Affected by a Disaster

In preparing for a disaster, companies should also consider how they could help employees who may be directly affected because they live in the region struck by a disaster. Human Resources departments can take steps regarding financial assistance and benefits programs well in advance of a disaster to help their employees and their families who might have suffered personal hardship because of a disaster.

The Partnership worked with KPMG, a leading financial services firm, and the Society of Human Resource Management to create *Helping Employees Affected by*

a Disaster: A Human Resource Guide on Benefits and Financial Issues, that covers the following issues:

- Financial assistance to employees through grants, loans and other vehicles
- Tax and legal implications of various employee benefit programs
- Advice on how to create an employee assistance program
- Contributions to charitable causes
- The importance of amending employee benefit plans in advance of a disaster

The guide is specifically designed for Human Resources professionals and is posted on the Partnership's Web site. It can be found at: *Helping Employees Affected By a Disaster*

5. Rebuilding Communities

Restoring a community devastated by disaster is critical in maintaining a robust workforce and customer base. A community's recovery from a disaster is a complex and long-term process that involves a range of activities and many participants. Recovery involves short-term restoration of essential community services as well as long-term rebuilding and, ideally, mitigation against future crises.

Historically, the private sector has contributed generously to immediate disaster response efforts. However, businesses often struggle to find the best way to help with a community's long-term recovery. Companies may be inundated with requests to rebuild health clinics, libraries, playgrounds, schools and other community services damaged during a disaster.

The challenge is deciding which of these worthwhile causes to support to help a community return to normal and how to best incorporate employees into the process. Employee volunteerism can bring myriad benefits to people who are in need of help, to companies and to employees themselves.

To address these issues, the Partnership created *Rebuilding Our Communities: Helping Companies Set Priorities to Aid Long-Term Recovery*, which outlines the issues companies should consider when setting priorities in contributing to recovery efforts. The guide is designed to help businesses ask the right questions to gather the information they need to use their resources effectively to help communities and their pool of employees recover from a disaster.

The guide is designed for Community Affairs and Philanthropy professionals and is posted on the Partnership's Web site. It can be found at: *Rebuilding Our Communities*

6. Protecting Businesses

During a disaster, companies have valuable physical, business and human assets to protect. Business continuity planning is a critical component of a company's preparedness for the disruptions that a disaster may bring and can help minimize or even prevent serious damage to a company's employees, facilities, reputation and future. An important element of business continuity planning is identifying and securing alternative locations to maintain a company's operations.

To help companies navigate the complicated process of sharing office space, the Partnership created *Protecting Your Business: Issues to Consider When Sharing Office Space After a Disaster*. The guide provides an overview of key issues that businesses should consider when entering into an office-sharing agreement immediately following a disaster. The guide provides helpful information for both the hosted company and the host company and addresses the following issues:

- Organizational and cultural differences
- Tax credits
- Insurance coverage
- Real estate and leasing concerns
- Security provisions
- Communications

The guide will be most useful for Security, Real Estate, Tax and Legal professionals and is posted on the Partnership's Web site. It can be found at: *Protecting Your Business*

The Partnership in Action—Examples of Preparedness

The following are three case studies of companies that excelled in different aspects of disaster preparedness, including training employees as volunteers; having a system in place to track missing employees; and helping small and medium-sized businesses prepare.

1. W.W. Grainger: Training Volunteers in Advance

For employees at Grainger, a distributor of facilities maintenance supplies, the phrase "ready when the time comes" took on a whole new meaning when Hurricane Katrina struck. Before the hurricane, Grainger had partnered with the American Red Cross to train employees to staff emergency call centers as part

of the NGO's "Ready When the Time Comes" disaster preparedness program. As a result of these efforts, Grainger had a cadre of well-trained, experienced employee volunteers ready to man Red Cross phone lines at Chicago and Denver chapters for more than 450 hours. The program made it possible for employees to personally assist people affected by the disaster, even from afar.

Grainger employees also made significant contributions to the American Red Cross' disaster relief fund, which the company complemented with a unique 4-to-1 employee matching gift program. Recognizing the dire needs of local business that accompany a calamity of this scope, Grainger also lent support to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, which is dedicated to helping small businesses based in Louisiana recover and grow. The company donated \$1 million, along with in-kind donations, to these efforts.

"The business community can be an enormous resource for providing disaster relief, not only with money and products but also with its greatest asset: hard-working, dedicated people," said Grainger CEO Richard L. Keyser. "By providing our volunteer employees with training in advance, we were able to become part of the solution when disaster struck."

2. PriceWaterhouseCoopers: Creating a Call Center for Employees

A system of logs, databases, and employee preparedness allowed financial services firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to account for all of its New Orleans employees within 48 hours of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Before the hurricane, PwC had set up an automated emergency check-in procedure for its employees. The process allows employees to check-in via phone, company e-mail (including Blackberry), and personal computers. Wallet cards, refrigerator magnets, and ID badge stickers serve as constant reminders.

In the wake of Katrina, PwC also was able to locate employees through company travel logs and, when necessary, through activity on company-issued laptops and credit cards. The company even tracked and located retired employees through up-to-date records, and helped employees who were not in the affected regions locate their relatives who were.

Once all employees were accounted for, PwC was able to provide short-term housing assistance for staff who needed it and longer-term financial relief to those most devastated by the disaster.

"Before PwC could even begin to provide the support we had available—temporary housing, temporary funding, cell phones for communication, rental cars—we had to locate our staff and establish contact," said Stephen Malloy, PwC's Crisis Assessment Team leader. "By planning ahead and establishing a proactive method of contacting our people in an emergency, we were able to quickly account for all of our staff even under the worst of conditions. It was a very stressful, emotional time for our people and their families, and we were glad we could be a source of information and support for them."

3. Office Depot: Protecting Your Most Important Assets

The massive destruction and dislocation caused by Katrina carried with it a lesson that disaster planning needed to be more comprehensive than anyone previously thought. Yet many small—and medium-sized businesses assumed disaster planning and preparation to be both complicated and expensive.

In 2005, Office Depot, a leading global provider of office products and services, weathered four major hurricanes at its corporate headquarters in South Florida and across nearly 100 stores in the Gulf region. As a result, Office Depot gained real world experience in disaster planning and recovery, and with those "lessons learned" in mind, the Company launched an educational campaign dubbed *Disaster Preparedness: Advice You Can Depend on to Weather Any Storm*.

The campaign launched prior to the 2006 hurricane season and consisted of an online brochure, free online seminar, broadcast media tour with Office Depot's internal expert, as well as simple tips and recommendations for how companies can protect their most important assets—their people and their data.

In times of disaster, it is not business as usual. Focus must be on getting business operations back and running quickly and helping employees navigate personal issues. Office Depot recommends establishing a clear process for how employees can contact one another in the event of a disaster and then periodically reviewing these plans with the employees.

This type of preparation and support will come back to the company in the form of loyalty. The key is to build a business case that outlines value beyond simple risk reduction. Simple tasks such as backing up data on a regular basis and storing it in alternative ways can improve the cost-efficiency of business operations and technology investments.

“Planning is essential,” said Tom Serio, Director of Global Business Continuity Management for Office Depot. “Ultimately, it is about business survival. A contingency plan can ensure that your business operations won’t come to a halt when faced with unexpected events. It doesn’t have to be a million dollar solution, just a common sense one that protects you, your employees and your business.”

The Partnership in Action—Collaboration and Outreach

Since its inception, the Task Force has been working closely with the federal government, relief agencies and business associations to ensure that the private sector is fully integrated into the nation’s disaster response planning.

Federal Government:

Systematic communication with the federal government at the time of a disaster is essential to maximize the effectiveness of the business response effort and protect employees, communities and facilities and maintain commerce.

Companies often need government assistance to coordinate supply chains within states, across state lines and nationally. On the flip side, Business Roundtable members have much to offer the government, including the ability to quickly provide on-the-ground information as well as resources to speed recovery efforts.

In December 2006, the Partnership organized a meeting with senior government officials from the White House, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Association to agree on priority areas of public/private collaboration. Since the meeting, we have been in regular contact with government officials to follow-up on action items and next steps. We have also been involved in contributing to the revision of the National Response Plan.

Business Associations:

To leverage the resources of the business community, the Partnership has joined forces with other business associations including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Business Executives for National Security (BENS), PhRMA, National Association of Manufacturers, and the Financial Services Roundtable. We are sharing best practices and collaborating to address issues of importance to all businesses, such as credentialing to ensure access to facilities in a disaster region. Our goal is to expand our reach, better coordinate emergency response efforts and advocate—with one voice—for strengthened private sector involvement in our nation’s disaster planning.

Relief Agencies:

We are working closely with the American Red Cross and a cross-section of international relief agencies to determine the best ways to enhance collaboration to aid in disaster preparedness and response.

The Partnership’s member companies have also developed and expanded their collaboration with relief agencies to maximize their impact after a disaster. Following are three examples of corporate employee disaster response initiatives:

The Partnership in Action—Communicating During a Disaster

In order to ensure a coordinated disaster response, the business community developed an Emergency Protocol, the first-ever protocol to codify how the business community will communicate with the federal government and relief agencies during a disaster to address critical issues and accelerate on-the-ground response and recovery. The Protocol’s objective is to provide quick, efficient support within the first 14 days of a natural or man-made disaster of such proportions that it requires the involvement of the greater business community.

This protocol will leverage the Partnership’s *Business Response Teams* to gather and communicate needs and concerns to the Task Force based on reports from member companies’ local staff and partners based at the site of the disaster. Companies will then have the information they need to quickly provide resources, ranging from product to personnel, and address problems hindering the response effort. Critical information will also be elevated to the federal government and relief agencies to speed the response and recovery effort.

Conclusion

Thank you again for this opportunity to talk with you about the work of the Partnership for Disaster Response. We look forward to continuing to work with the Administration and the Congress to enhance our nation’s disaster response system. Working together—business, government, relief agencies and many others—we will continue to be vigilant in preparing our businesses, our employees and our communities for a disaster.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you very much for your testimony.

And I want to, of course, thank you and all the witnesses for your testimony.

At this point members now have an opportunity to ask our witnesses questions. I will remind each member that he or she will have 5 minutes each for questions.

I will now recognize myself for questions.

Mr. Gruber, according to your testimony, in just 5 years since the Citizen Corps was launched in the year 2002, it has grown over 2,200 state, local, tribal, territorial councils encompassing 75 percent of the nation's population. This has been done with very limited funding and no congressional authorization.

In your opinion, how would increased funding and authorizing legislation positively impact the effectiveness of this program that you have been doing a good job on?

Mr. GRUBER. Sir, we would look forward to having an opportunity to discuss with you and the committee members an opportunity to look at authorization for Citizen Corps.

I might add that, while we run a very lean operation, I think we get a phenomenal return on investment for the amount of money that we apply to the program. And I also hope we will have an opportunity to discuss how we leverage other programs.

If I could just give you one example, in our most recent report on all our state and urban area projects—over 9,000 projects—ranking all of those in order—there were about 35 categories of capabilities—community preparedness, including citizen preparedness, was number three on states' and urban areas' priority ranking for investments.

So I think that suggests that, while, again, the program is a very lean operation, states and urban areas are capitalizing on all their other program investments to apply to this very important process.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Very good. Thank you.

Chief Stittleburg, in your testimony you mentioned the Five Corps programs that operate not only locally, but also on a statewide basis. How does the Fire Corps promote the development of statewide or even regional education and fire prevention programs?

Mr. STITTLEBURG. The Fire Corps program is initially directed at fire departments. It is, however, a fair analogy that it would be comparable to the national asset management system in the sense that it is expandable. The programs are designed to be used not only by local fire departments, but also regionally and statewide.

And in fact, the one program from Arkansas that I mentioned has done exactly that, where a local program was developed and then achieved actually statewide and national exposure.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Chapline, as you discussed in your testimony, the largest utilization of the Texas Citizen Corps volunteers was in 2005 in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Harris County—my former colleague in the state legislature, Robert Eckles—Texas council built a functioning city virtually overnight to process over 65,000 evacuees from the New Orleans area in the Astrodome in Houston. More than 60,000 Citizen Corps volunteers contributed to the success of this operation.

To what do you attribute the strength and success of the Citizen Corps Council in the Houston area, and what can other Citizen Corps Councils learn from that particular experience?

Ms. CHAPLINE. Thank you for your question.

I think probably one of the most valuable things that they learned was that they had to be communicating with every different agency in their community in advance.

That Harris County Citizen Corps Council meets on a very regular basis with many different nonprofits. They partner with Volunteers Houston. They partner with many different religious organizations. They partner with, of course, 211, with Red Cross, with Salvation Army and many other nonprofit organizations.

When they got the call and they got around the table, they already knew all the agencies and what resources were brought to the table.

The other thing that was very successful was that incident command worked. They had set up an incident command booth and center, and they managed that like a very tight ship. And they were able to very successful because of those two things, in addition to very good leadership.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Hill, the FEMA Reform Bill that Congress passed last year directs the National Council on Disability to be involved in the creation of everything from training and exercise programs to disaster housing strategies to the development of preparedness priorities for the department.

Can you discuss some of those initiatives that you have been involved with in FEMA in the recent months?

Mr. HILL. Thank you for your question.

Those initiatives are the 10-point planner section of 513, and it will be led by the disability coordinator, once that person is appointed, which we expect to be quite soon.

The National Council is going to bring the evaluations and the experiences that we have developed over the last 3 years to the FEMA effort to help FEMA network through community-based organizations that serve people with disabilities to take care of a lot of practical problems in some cases—for example, making sure that the vans that are intended to evacuate the disabled have wheelchair lifts; making sure that the locations that they are evacuated to are accessible, that the bathrooms are accessible; that if you have a disabled person who is on a ventilator, for example, or has special needs, that, one, the local emergency planner knows where those folks are, knows where to get them, has an accessible way to get them to a location where their needs can be taken care of, and they themselves, then, are more willing to evacuate.

In some cases we have seen a reluctance on the part of the disabled to evacuate because they are not sure where they are being taken. In some cases the process of evacuating can be as dangerous as what they think they are exposed to as a result of whatever is creating the disaster.

So our work is going to be to link FEMA in with the CBOs that can help with these kinds of local, practical, individual issues in advance, so that when an emergency occurs, you know in advance where all these folks are, and you have a plan, and perhaps mostly

importantly, the individual that is disabled or needs help knows himself what his responsibilities are. Who do they call? If they want to be evacuated, who do they alert and when, so that they can get out in time? They have to be found and want to be found and want to be integrated, too.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you very much.

I have a question for Ms. Schneider, but I will wait, since my time is up. I now recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent, for his questions.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gruber, in your written testimony you indicated that the Department's private sector office is working with the Ready campaign to promote Ready Business which, as you know, aims to help owners and managers of small and mid-size businesses to prepare for emergencies.

Can you tell us a little bit more about that initiative, and also what sort of feedback are you receiving on the Ready Initiative and if there are any constructive criticisms, too?

Mr. GRUBER. Well, let me just mention I would be remiss if I didn't let you know, sir, that Ready is a full partner in our efforts. And in fact this week, as you well know, we have our national conference on community preparedness, and Ready is there. Ready has a booth. Ready has been overwhelmed with requests for information and follow-up from the conference, which is a good representation of the level of interest.

And I think that these new initiatives, Ready Kids and Ready Businesses, are where we have often talked about families and individuals at home, but we overlook the fact of how much time—and I know you are probably an example of that—we end up spending in the workplace. And so we have to make sure we have the same emergency preparedness and thought process that goes into the workplace for individuals there as we do when they are home and when they are with their families.

And so I think that is critical, again, for the 60 or so percent of our population that is in the workforce out there. So that is a key audience. And I wouldn't speak for our Ready program leaders, but I think that has been very successful. Again, I use as the illustration just what we have seen with the conference here with the overwhelming requests for assistance from Ready.

Mr. DENT. You also indicated in your testimony that the Citizen Corps program is participating in the current FEMA effort to update the State and Local Guide 101, which, as you know, provides guidance to State and local officials on writing emergency operations plans.

Do you have any figures on what percentage of the States are lagging behind in updating their emergency operations plans?

Mr. GRUBER. Well, as you know, we went out and looked at 131 sets of plans, both state and 75 major urban areas. And we were out with technical assistance, providing support to them, but I think the best indicator of that is when I mentioned before about our report on 9,000 projects.

Community preparedness was the third highest category, but planning was the second highest category with over 1,500 projects.

So what that suggested to me was that, as a result of that plan review and providing them with that feedback onsite about their plans, they have now taken their investments and put those against updating and modernizing their plans.

If I could just throw one more point in there, it is not only about their emergency operations plans, but we are also getting terrific support from our office of civil rights and civil liberties on looking at peculiar special needs planning guides to make sure we address an area that we found that I think in general we would all say was deficient across the plan.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

And to Mr. Hill, it is good to see you here in this new capacity. It was great working with you on the T&I Committee.

What role has your council, the National Council on Disability, played in the development of the revised National Response Plan?

Mr. HILL. Well, I think the Saving Lives report was an important basis for the two committees that were drafting the Post-Katrina Reform Act to understand what deficiencies—and maybe deficiencies isn't the right word—but what improvements needed to be included—

Mr. DENT. Can I interrupt you real quick? On the Saving Lives plan, are you aware if any of those recommendations by your council have been adopted by the Federal government?

Mr. HILL. I think that certainly the performance goals that you would learn from what we produced in that report were included in section 513 of the Post-Katrina Reform Act.

For example, we noticed that a lot of sharing best practices was not occurring between and among CBOs. That was a finding in the Saving Lives report. That later became an aspect of section 513 that the disability coordinator needs to fix. He or she needs to get local emergency planners to share what works for them when they are planning on evacuation of the disabled.

Quite a bit of it went in there, in fact, and we were happy to see the Congress rely on that report, particularly to establish performance goals for the disability coordinator, and frankly, the existence of the disability coordinator. We hadn't had one before and didn't have the authority that it was given in that act, and we are very encouraged and think that working with FEMA, those goals in there are going to provide a much better evacuation and preparedness regime than we had previously.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

And finally, real quickly, to Ms. Schneider, what has been the general response from the Business Roundtable's membership and their respective employees on the Partnership for Disaster Response task force? Does the Roundtable keep track of any of this feedback?

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Thank you.

It has been overwhelming. The individual companies, each and every one, have very robust programs in terms of both preparing their own workforce to be prepared in the event of a disaster in their local communities.

So, in addition to their fiduciary responsibility for their employees and their communities, they have very robust programs where

their employees are actually engaged in volunteer efforts to broaden their reach through the community.

I don't have any number of employees that are currently active, but it is a good idea for us to start to track that. This is a very new initiative for the Business Roundtable. It has really just been a full-fledged effort over the last year.

But I will say it has been one of our most active task forces at the Business Roundtable in the short 13 months that it has been alive, and I think that is because, frankly, the private sector was so integral to the Katrina response, as you saw with Home Depot and Wal-Mart and others, that we felt that following that disaster, that if we did not get engaged, we would not be prepared for the next disaster.

Mr. DENT. Thank you.

I yield back the rest of my time.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Dent.

The chair would now recognize other members for the questions they may wish to ask the witnesses. In accordance with our committee rules and practices, I will recognize members who were present at the start of the hearing, based on seniority of the subcommittee, alternating between the majority and the minority. Those members coming in later will be recognized in the order of their arrival.

At this time the chair recognizes for 5 minutes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, Ms. Christensen.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, and thank you for being here for this hearing, to our panelists.

I want to address my first question to Ms. Chapline, because in your testimony you said you envisioned using the Citizen Corps in border security issues. Can you just briefly tell us in what way?

Ms. CHAPLINE. I can speak for our plans for our state.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Yes, just your state.

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, thank you. And that is one of the goals in our statewide strategic plan for homeland security. I have provided that as an attachment to my testimony.

And we are looking at potentially putting these volunteers possibly in an operations center, assisting the first responders. They will not be out on the front lines, but they will be assisting first responders in an operational manner. But it would be at the discretion of the local jurisdiction.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And, Mr. Gruber, and I guess anyone else could probably add an answer if you so desire, but I was trying to find an Institute of Medicine report that came out a few years back on the response of individuals and communities to instructions during a disaster.

And that report found that from the respondents that maybe as many as two-thirds in some instances would not likely respond appropriately to certain standard instructions in a disaster. Do these Citizen Corps programs help to address this?

And given the fact that it appears that your funding is going down—to me, any plan will require the citizens of the area to be a part of the response program—if that report is accurate and

these programs are important, then what is the reduced funding going to do to that?

Mr. GRUBER. Well, let me first say you hit on a very key point, and of course, one of the three important things Ready talks about is having a plan, having a kit, and most importantly, being informed, understanding the threats and hazards that you face as an individual or as a family, and whether you are at home or in a workplace.

So one of the most impressive things that I have been involved in recently is we did a research roundtable that citizens co-sponsored with a science and technology directorate. We now have with our centers of excellence in the department an opportunity to get to what I think are some of the best disaster researchers, social scientists and others that are available to us.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And can you tell me if they include any minority serving institutions, because different populations might respond differently?

Mr. GRUBER. Yes, ma'am, they are. These centers are generally consortiums of many institutions. They, in fact, do. But just quickly, to cut this—as others may want to join in here—that was very important.

We also are doing research and publishing reviews. We have done four so far that talk very specifically to behavioral models and how do we make sure that we change behavior and we have people alerted to the right kind of appropriate actions to take in a hazard. So that is the cornerstone of success for all of these programs.

Mr. HILL. If I can add just a—

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Yes.

Mr. HILL. Emergency communications to evacuate need to also be designed for folks that may be deaf, may be blind, may not be able to process the information correctly. And so long as that is covered, I think you vastly improve the chances of somebody with a disability like that actually being able to follow the instructions. They have got to first be able to read them.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Well, I think in your testimony, you talk about the mentally ill. What special preparations or considerations have taken place with regard to somebody who can't process or process it incorrectly?

Mr. HILL. Well, the NCD published a report that I will provide you after the hearing to drill more deeply into that.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I think we got it, but I got it too late to really get into it.

Mr. HILL. Part of the issue there, I think, was the question of a person with issues along those lines being accommodating and admitting them into a recovery center or an evacuation site afterwards.

In some cases they may have some medical needs that are not something that can be taken care of in a place like the Astrodome, for example. But that is not something unique to a psychiatric disability. For anybody with a disability, myself included, in a wheelchair, the Astrodome is no place where somebody like me could live for more than about a day. I have got to be somewhere where there are more physical resources. And so, in that sense, you face the same issues with someone like that.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CUELLAR. All right. Thank you.

At this time I will recognize the gentleman from Washington, Mr. Dicks.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Gruber, how long have you been with the department?

Mr. GRUBER. Sir, I was here since the start of the department. Our office was originally in the Department of Justice and then transferred into Homeland Security when it was established.

Mr. DICKS. And how long have you been the acting deputy administrator?

Mr. GRUBER. Sir, just since March.

Mr. DICKS. What happened to the predecessor?

Mr. GRUBER. Sir, this is a new organization. This is part of the realignment that was directed by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. Originally, we had a preparedness directorate that Undersecretary George Foresman was administering, and now that has been transferred into FEMA. And that happened on 1 April.

Mr. DICKS. Is there a search for a full-time person?

Mr. GRUBER. Yes, sir. There is an active search. Yes.

Mr. DICKS. Okay. In your statement I was impressed by what you said. Emergency responders in America make up less than one percent of the U.S. population. This roughly translates to one firefighter for every 280 people, one sworn officer for every 380 people and one EMT paramedic for every 325 people.

And hurricanes and other major incidents in recent years graphically demonstrate that there are not enough emergency responders to take care of everyone in every location during the most critical time, the first 72 hours after a disaster.

In fact, the Los Angeles Fire Department estimates that in 90 percent of all emergencies, it is bystanders or victims themselves who first provide emergency assistance or perform a rescue before a professionally trained emergency responder can arrive on the scene.

So what do we do? I know you are doing your Ready and your Citizen Corps and all these programs, but what do we do about helping people to get better trained to be responders?

Mr. GRUBER. Well, we have three major initiatives. And, of course, you alluded to the Ready program, which is most important for broadly getting the word out across the country; Citizen Corps, which very actively looks at education and training; and then our education efforts that FEMA has been doing for a long time.

But I wanted to hit on one key one, and that is that in my personal experience a long time ago as a volunteer emergency medical technician, I was always struck by the fact that citizens always have an imperative to action. And they are altruistic, and they are always looking for ways to help.

What we have to do is provide them with the skills and the knowledge and the ability to make sure that they are taking actions to keep themselves and their families safe, but also that they are complementing, as you pointed out, a very stretched emergency response community.

So everything we do to train—and the best example, I think, is our Community Emergency Response Teams. Just over the last 18 months we have seen a 30 percent increase. I think we now have 2,682 Community Emergency Response Teams across the country.

So I think that represents people wanting to engage, understanding what they need to do, as Regina talked about earlier, and again, these programs all provide them with that opportunity to do what that imperative is that they all have.

Mr. DICKS. Anybody else want to comment on that? Yes?

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Yes, Congressman Dicks, I think to your point, the only way that the U.S. will ever have a surge capacity in a disaster is to have a massive volunteer effort. That is the only way to be able in each community all around the country to respond to catastrophic events.

While we know the states and the belts where we can anticipate hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, terrorist attacks and other incidents that we cannot anticipate in regions that we cannot foresee will continue to need the same type of volunteer effort.

That is why U.S. companies are stepping forward. The workforce is a ready population to participate. They want to participate. Most of our member companies provide the time to support them. I think only through volunteer activities—

Mr. DICKS. Yes. Let me ask you this—

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Sure.

Mr. DICKS. —for the companies. Do you think they are doing a good job of providing security for their own assets? Are they into this idea of self-protection that they have got to protect their infrastructure themselves?

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Absolutely. Every single one of our member companies has a business continuity plan. Every single one of our member companies has a chief security and chief risk officer. Those who did not have those after 9/11 procured those and brought in deputies.

I think that is perhaps one of their highest orders of responsibility, to make certain that the workplace itself is safe and that the employees are safe and, frankly, that their shareholders and the fiduciary responsibility that they have to the shareholders is supported by these risk officers.

Mr. DICKS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is expired.

Mr. CUELLAR. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Dicks.

At this time I recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Etheridge.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank you all for being here.

Yesterday the GAO released a report that I, along with Chairman Thompson and Representative Lee, had asked for them to do on the status of emergency planning for school districts around the country, because as you probably know, our school children spend the majority of their time really outside the home, in school.

As a result of that, it is critically important that their safety at schools have the support they need to help with local officials, community organizations, that they are prepared to respond not only to natural disasters, but any manmade disasters that may occur.

In addition, I asked them to identify several areas in which the federal government could do more to support those emergency plans. And the report mentioned the need to help community partners work with schools in planning for those emergencies.

In its response to the draft report, the department liaison highlighted the role that Citizen Corps could play in helping schools in what it does in a number of states. The report recommended that DHS work to identify roadblocks to community partners who are training with schools and developing resources to address these factors.

So this is my question, having given that little bit of information. I would like to ask each of our nonfederal witnesses if you considered the needs of schools in your emergency planning, and whether you have or have not, what resources do you think would be helpful to enable you to work more closely with schools at your community's ability to ensure that schools have a robust emergency response plan, because in every community, that is a big piece.

So, in whatever order you would like to start, I would be interested in our nonfederal partners sharing your thoughts on that.

Ms. CHAPLINE. If I may, in our state in Texas, we have been begun collaborations with the Center for School Safety and many other locally based programs to promote preparedness and planning in schools.

It has been noted in the past that schools have somewhat been left out of the emergency planning loop, and probably one of the best ways for us to bring them more into the loop is to continue the collaboration and to continue, if there were an appropriation of funds specifically earmarked for schools and if those funds had an attachment or a requirement for additional collaboration—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Let me follow that with my next question I was going to ask you specifically. You are going to get this area because the department identified Citizen Corps Councils as a resource when they were here.

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, sir.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Do you think that you have the resources to bring together school districts, fire responders, first responders and community partners to be trained for this purpose, for responding?

And what limitations exist on the ability of the corps to fulfill this role? As the department has indicated, that is one they would like for you to fill. What are the limitations? You have just mentioned one in resources.

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, but Citizen Corps is a very grassroots effort, and we seek to partner with as many organizations as possible. We are fortunate that the Teen CERT curriculum was recently developed and nationally approved.

And we are probably looking at this point—if we want to bring this, there have been many states that have been able to provide this training on a small level to look—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Do you have any in place yet?

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Where?

Ms. CHAPLINE. In Texas. I know that Harris County, Texas, has been extremely successful in doing that. There is—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. That is one county. How many other counties?

Ms. CHAPLINE. In the state of Michigan, they have been extremely successful in doing that. I will be happy to provide you with—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Would you, please?

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, sir.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I would be interested in what the percentage is. When we are talking about the country, we are talking about a pretty good size place.

Ms. CHAPLINE. Right. And I—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. And if we are talking about two counties in two states, that probably is not—

Ms. CHAPLINE. I know that this program has been offered. They had a pilot program that they brought across the nation, and there were many other states that they have brought this program to. And I will get the exact information for you and for your staff on where these programs—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you. I would appreciate that.

The department has provided advice to the public and the community organizations, preparing through what is called ready.gov and other outlets. I would be interested in a response very quickly from each of you on how effective that is.

Is it too generic? Or is it confusion to navigate? Or does it work? Can I just get a quick yes, no from each one of you? If it is workable or needs changing?

Ms. CHAPLINE. The Ready campaign has been extremely successful. They develop things on a national scale, but you can localize all of these things. They have been very successful.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. All right. Anyone else?

Mr. HILL. I would add that the ability to localize issues there is I think from our point of view one of the best features of it.

Mr. STITTLEBURG. Mr. Congressman, if I might just respond to your previous question about school planning and where that might fit into Fire Corps. Actually, it fits in in a couple of different places.

As I mentioned, Fire Corps is non-operational personnel. In other words, we are not recruiting people to respond to emergencies. However, we are recruiting people from the community to provide skills that are of particular interest to us.

Fire Corps fits into the school planning picture in two ways. One is the ability to recruit people who may have skills, such as retired school administrators and that sort of thing, in preparing such plans. And two, also in recruiting people who may be able to relieve administration burdens from emergency responders that then in turn can engage in that sort of school planning.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you. And the Business Roundtable?

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Ready.gov, I think it is a work in progress. We have worked closely with the Homeland Security Department. I think that it is difficult for any federal entity, at least from our perspective, to understand how to integrate the private sector and the resources that we bring to bear. And so that is something we continue to work on almost on a daily basis.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. That would be my guess.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your indulgence, and I yield back.

Mr. CUELLAR. At this time we would like to recognize the gentleman from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, may I thank you for your leadership on this question and also for your kind indulgence, allowing me to join you this morning. I would like to personally work with you on these issues. I think both of us have jurisdictions that certainly find themselves in the eye of the storm on many occasions.

I would hope that your committee might consider Mr. Stittleburg, if I have it correctly—I want to call you “Chief,” but in any event, the idea of making the Fire Council a subset of the Citizen Corps. That might be a worthy idea to consider. I thought it was very thoughtful, so I thank him for that idea.

You witnesses have captured my concern and imagination. We are on the floor as we speak with the Homeland Security legislation, and there are two key elements that I feel that FEMA has been drastically lacking in.

Mr. Hill, you have literally given us a standard-bearer or roadmap for persons with disabilities and also persons suffering from mental illness. I am not sure whether you used New Orleans as a laboratory, but for those of us who spent time in New Orleans, you really could.

We know that individuals suffering from mental illness were in essence dispossessed with no oversight. We know that the disabled lost their lives. One of the most stark examples, Mr. Chairman, was the nursing home that individuals literally died in their beds because of no way of evacuating.

And also, the vulnerable communities. The largest loss of life came from the ninth ward, where people were not trained how to evacuate, how to stay in place, what to do.

And so I just want to cite out of your particular statement what you cited from Representative Jim Ramstad that indicated, “Certainly the disaster of the Gulf Coast region exposed the enormous gap in emergency planning preparedness and management for people with disabilities.”

I myself was at what we call TranStar during Hurricane Rita, fielding phone calls of people who were on dialysis or people who were on oxygen, could not move, were frightened, were not, if you will, able to remove themselves, neither their caretaker.

We have something in Houston called 211, and we have been announcing it. We were in this weekend doing a top-off, and that is 211 to let us know where you are.

My question, Mr. Hill, because my time is gone, just simply, would it be effective that FEMA particularly develops not a pilot program—there are some pilot programs that are addressing the question of vulnerabilities—but directly works to develop a scheme, a program that encompasses a roadmap, a directive, a special effort of those with disability?

Mr. HILL. Section 513 of the Post-Katrina Reform Act has several programs that are not pilot programs and plans that are designed to achieve the outcome that I believe the program you described would have.

Getting the local communities, the local emergency planners, to plan for evacuating the disabled, knowing where they are, what

their needs are, alerting them for what they need to do when there is a disaster that requires an evacuation—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Has that section passed yet?

Mr. HILL. Yes, ma'am. This was a feature of the Homeland Security Appropriations Act last fall, and part of the FEMA Reform Act. These amendments, Section 513, I would be happy to provide to your staff. But those are the goals for those sections.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But have they been implemented?

Mr. HILL. They are beginning to be implemented right now.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I don't think so. What example do you have of them being implemented?

Mr. HILL. Well, I have correspondence yesterday from FEMA to the chairman of our council that the disability coordinator is going to be appointed imminently.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Going to be appointed.

Mr. HILL. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So that means that no programs have been established, which is the real question.

Mr. HILL. Well, I would prefer to defer to Mr. Gruber on which programs have been established. From our point of view, we are partnering and working with them to implement that section, and it has the goals in mind that you are describing, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, it was over a year ago that you indicated that such programs were in, and the question I asked you, you did not answer. Would it be effective to have programs that particularly outreach to those who are disabled?

Mr. HILL. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And in those programs, do you need funding resources to make sure that that occurs?

Mr. HILL. In some cases that may be a need, yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, if you need equipment that is geared toward the disabled, would you not need funding to ensure that you had that?

Mr. HILL. It depends on what capabilities a community-based organization that serves people with disabilities already have in place.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And in vulnerable communities and rural communities that may be less resourced, would it seem that they would need to have a funding source?

Mr. HILL. I think that is reasonable, yes, ma'am. In the more rural areas, you are likely not to encounter a particularly sophisticated CBO with resources and equipment for the disabled.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And as well, you might not encounter an organized structure. Is that not correct?

Mr. HILL. It is more likely, yes, ma'am. Part of the work that we intend to do with FEMA is to answer the questions that you are asking so that what resources we have or ask for from Congress can be directed to the places most needed.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And do you know whether those vulnerable communities include populations of African Americans and Hispanics? Are they defined as vulnerable—racial categories?

Mr. HILL. Our work today is focused on physical disabilities. The only subset of that is a high preponderance of the elderly. A lot of elderly folks have things you would—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So there may be a slight difference in communities who may be disabled but also may be ethnic or may be poor. That poses even maybe more severe problems. They may not have a caretaker. They may be living by themselves. And maybe there should be defined programs that respond to those populations.

Mr. HILL. Yes, ma'am. In every case where there is someone disabled and they are suffering from economic hardship, their challenges are more dramatic.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Okay. And partly if they live in neighborhoods that may be racially isolated, which some of our communities do live in.

Mr. HILL. Yes, ma'am, I can see that contributing to the challenges.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Language questions—we had to deal with the Vietnamese, for example, fleeing from New Orleans. We needed individuals who were language sensitive. So if you look at these vulnerable communities, you need to have maybe more of a response that addresses some of their issues.

Mr. HILL. Yes, ma'am, I can see that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So they would be of benefit.

Let me quickly if I could, Mr. Chairman, just finish with Ms. Chapline.

Ms. Chapline, with respect to Citizen Corps, which I am a strong proponent of, just in Texas—do you know where Sunnyside, Texas, is?

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, ma'am, I do. I believe it is in the Houston area.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you have a Citizen Corps there?

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, ma'am, we do.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Those individuals have indicated they don't have a Citizen Corps there. Who is leading that one in Sunnyside, Texas?

Ms. CHAPLINE. It falls into the Harris County Citizen Corps program. I believe that they actually had an event. It is called the Harris County Stunt Rodeo that happened a few months ago. There were several teams from Sunnyside, one from I believe it was the third ward and another from the fifth ward in those general areas.

And I believe that is a population of senior citizens, and I could be mistaken, but I believe that they participated. And the Sunnyside group had participated in—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Have they organized the neighborhoods in that area besides having teams in that area? Do you know?

Ms. CHAPLINE. I know that they are working toward that. They have a very aggressive training schedule, and they are working to organize many teams—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Could you provide me with information as to any funding dollars that have come from Harris County on that particular issue?

And let me close, because time is gone, just to pose this question. I notice that you have from the state of Texas utilization of the Citizen Corps for border security. What is the basis for that?

Ms. CHAPLINE. We intend to use the Neighborhood Watch program, which is an already existing program. We want to use existing resources that we have. We have—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. What would they be doing at the border?

Ms. CHAPLINE. They could potentially be supporting our border security operations, and only an operational sense, within an operation center. They will not be on the front lines.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, let me just conclude by saying that I think this is an Achilles heel and a misuse of a Citizen Corps. I am reminded of going into Port Arthur right after Hurricane Rita and being on the telephone trying to find water and ice. I hope Citizen Corps to be part of that effort, either getting in front of a disaster—certainly a natural disaster—and being on the front lines when there is a manmade disaster.

I think it is very challenging to allow states to be so, if you will, broad-based in their use of citizens to be on the border. And I know that is a statement for conference with immigration reform.

I frankly totally disagree with that, and I would like to have a full explanation of why citizens are being used for border security that were initially intended, I think, in volunteer efforts that would enhance the safety of individuals and hopefully help them in the system as they evacuate.

I also think FEMA has not been effective in reaching vulnerable communities, and I hope that, Mr. Chairman, we might be able to work together to ensure that that happens.

Mr. CUELLAR. Yes, ma'am, and we will be happy to do that. If you want, I would be happy to extend your time longer if you want to ask more questions, because I am just going to ask a few more questions and then close it up. So if you want to go ahead and continue with any other questions, I would be happy to go ahead and extend that time to you.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You are very kind. Let me just get one further question to Ms. Chapline.

Were your Citizen Corps out on the ground after Hurricane Rita in places like Port Arthur and Beaumont? I did not see them. What kind of role would you believe that they could play in that instance?

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, ma'am, they were.

If I may clarify from a statement you had earlier, we were not speaking to use our Neighborhood Watch volunteers on the front lines at all. We would want to use them in an operational manner behind the safety of secure lines. So I just wanted to clarify that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I appreciate that. I don't believe they should be used for border security, period.

Ms. CHAPLINE. Okay.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. These are citizens, and there is far greater utilization of their needs, such as expanding their reach into vulnerable areas. So we have a philosophical disagreement, and I don't believe states should be using Citizen Corps individuals on difficult areas like the border security.

Ms. CHAPLINE. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But I would appreciate a report on where they were after Hurricane Rita and also their reach into those vulnerable communities.

Ms. CHAPLINE. In the areas that you mentioned specifically in Beaumont and Port Arthur, we do have a very strong following of Citizen Corps in Jefferson County, which I believe those jurisdictions encompass. They were at the staging center at Ford Park, which is in that area, and they were assisting in shelter operations for the most part.

After the shelter operations officially closed, they were working at the discretion of the local jurisdiction as far as how they were utilized.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I have a question, and I thank you for that, if I can get that in writing. Do you think, moving aside border security, that a Citizen Corps would also be helpful in the first moments after a disaster if they could be trained and protected?

And I say that, because again, another vulnerable site, a public housing site in Houston after Hurricane Rita was probably 95 percent full, meaning those individuals with meager resources had not evacuated. In that instance there were people with spoiled baby formula, individuals who were on various medical equipment that obviously was not working because of lack of electricity, and there were no frontline people there that could have begun helping, frankly, by having prepared enough to go out into that area after the storm had passed.

That would be, I think, an appropriate training facet of the Citizen Corps—in this instance, Texas—as opposed to border security. I just offer that. I am going to close without a response. I appreciate that in writing.

The chairman has been very generous, and I yield back my time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Ms. Jackson, and I also want to thank you for the leadership that you provide in our state, and you certainly got my interest on this Citizen Corps being from the border, from Laredo. I am certainly interested.

Whatever you provide to Ms. Jackson, I would like to see that also. I want to see what Governor Perry and you all have in mind in providing that type of service on the border.

Let me just, before I close—since each of you can ask each other questions, but I think you all got to listen to each other and had a good opportunity to see what all of you all are doing, and I am sure some of you all know each other.

Let me ask you, Mr. Gruber, do you have any questions? If you could ask a question, what question would you ask of any of the panel members that you have there?

Mr. GRUBER. I think it is the one that is always of greatest concern to me. How can we reach more citizens? How can we change that behavior model? How can we educate and reach the communities that the member talked about?

Again, we have a conference this week with over 600 personnel from across the country here, discussing community preparedness, and so we are eager to get feedback on how we can improve these programs and give them greater utility.

Mr. CUELLAR. Anybody want to answer that question?

Ms. SCHNEIDER. Yes, I would like to. I think our experience—brief, but our experience is that human behavior dictates that you have to find people where they already are congregating—probably

at school; it is church; it is their workplace. That is where you are going to find the pool of people who together feel like they can accomplish more united than they can individually.

And so you have ready-made audiences and you have ready-made groups to try to access their knowledge, their patriotism and their desire to help to be first responders.

So I agree that only a volunteer corps will do this, but the place to go, as we have, is into the areas where people are already working together in groups.

Mr. CUELLAR. And are we doing that to any extent, Mr. Gruber?

Mr. GRUBER. Yes, I think we talked, and I was remiss in not mentioning earlier that we have two new initiatives that we are looking at, which is a CERT program that we call All Ability CERT, which is specifically designed to reach people with disabilities.

And then also there is a Business CERT, so that again—and I think it was very ably discussed here—to reach people where they are, where they gather together, and that is the workforce, that is in community settings, not just in their homes. So I think those were all very important points that were made today.

Mr. CUELLAR. Do we have a one-stop center in your Web page, a toll-free number where anybody can call, whether it is a small business or big corporation or if it is a church or school—is there something that is easy to understand?

Mr. GRUBER. Yes, sir. There is, of course, ready.gov. There is citizen corps.gov. There are toll-free numbers, both in English and Spanish, that are available. And I won't bore you with the statistics, but I know the toll-free number the last time I checked was well over—

Mr. CUELLAR. But how do we get that? I mean, you might have a toll-free number or you might have a Web page, but if you don't know that it exists, how do you get—I mean, if you go to one of my colonias in Webb County on the border and you ask them about that, they have no clue.

Mr. GRUBER. Right. And that is exactly, I think, the point that we have made here about how do we reach underserved communities in particular. And that is why we rely very much on our local councils, county councils, the parishes where we have people that are familiar with those settings and can reach that community. But that is the toughest challenge.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. CUELLAR. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. This is the very line of reasoning I am going to. And let me just indicate why, just very briefly.

He is going to the top locally, and the question is whether you are penetrating, because if you are going to the top—and there are some very able leaders, I am sure, in his county; very able leaders in my county, which happens to be Harris County and I want to pay tribute to their leadership—but they are not, Mr. Gruber, penetrating the colonias. They are not penetrating Sunnyside, 5th Ward, the east end in Houston. They don't have a clue.

My question is, what is the oversight to know that these structures that you have are reaching these diverse communities and the resources getting to them?

Just an example, calling Sunnyside 10 people down to the Astrodome for training does not reach the rows and rows of homes of the elderly, and that is what I am hearing the complaints about. There is no one going out to that community, taking the neighborhood, no one going out to the colonias and going into that Spanish-speaking, if necessary, and organizing on the ground.

And so I am going to yield back to the chairman. I would like a full response of the funding. How far you are along on this new program that you are allegedly attempting, and what is the oversight for knowing that you are actually penetrating? Because I believe in the neighborhoods, we are not safe and we are not secure.

I yield back to the gentleman. That is the very point where I was going.

Mr. CUELLAR. And you are right about that.

Have you all worked with the national broadcasters? Years ago, remember the tests that used to be out there. Are you all using that?

Mr. GRUBER. I might just say for Ready that we have over—I think the last count was over \$642 million in donated broadcast airtime and to the print media. But I fully appreciate, as you pointed out earlier, there are many audiences.

We have to use every mechanism, whether it is going door to—and I know in Austin they have done that with firefighters going door to door with flyers to get the word out through the councils, through the media. We have to take every opportunity we can to get that word out to those communities, particularly those underserved.

Maybe Regina wants to add.

Ms. CHAPLINE. We have been able to provide outreach opportunities. Our goal is to be able to provide funds to local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions have a better idea of what the needs are in their community, and so providing funds to those local jurisdictions allows them to provide as much outreach as they can to all of those different populations.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay.

Mr. STITTLEBURG. I would simply suggest that with Fire Corps we have one additional advantage, and that is that we work through fire departments that are already in place, which is a major advantage for us.

And we have a national toll-free line, 1-800-FIRELINE, which nationwide anyone can dial and learn how they can provide service through their Fire Corps or to their own local fire department.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Hill, if you had a question to anybody in the panel, what would you ask?

Mr. HILL. I just look forward to looking with Mr. Gruber to get this disability coordinator appointed and get to work on section 513. That is it.

Mr. CUELLAR. An estimate when we can get that coordinator?

Mr. GRUBER. I think that is very close with naming the candidate, but we will say that in the absence of having the disability coordinator, we have been getting terrific support from our office of civil rights and civil liberties that have helped us over the course of several years.

So we very much look forward, because we understand particularly now in work we are doing in the Gulf Coast states, but we are looking—I think this is the most robust evacuation planning effort I have seen in 30 years of either emergency management or when I was in uniform in the military—very robust planning effort. And I think we will get a lot of lessons out of that that will help us address these issues.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Good. Well, make sure you all keep talking.

Ms. Chapline, if you had a question to any member of the panel, what would you ask?

Ms. CHAPLINE. If I were able to pose a question to the panel, I would want to make sure, I guess, first that we have made a positive impression of Citizen Corps upon you and upon your committee and would want to know if you ever had any specific concerns regarding our program, how we can improve. How do you see us as improving at this point? We seek to do that.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Good.

Mr. Stittleburg, questions to any of the panel? We are talking from this side, not this way up here.

Mr. STITTLEBURG. I don't have a question. I would simply request—as Fire Corps is concerned, we are still at early days; it is only 2.5 years old. I hope that we receive the support we need to continue with the program. I think it has shown remarkable success in a short period of time.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Question or just a statement? No question to any of the panel?

Mr. STITTLEBURG. No question. Only a statement.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. All right. Good.

Ms. Schneider, if you had a question to any of your panel members there?

Ms. SCHNEIDER. My question would be right now the response to disasters are a thousand strands that have to be woven together overnight to be able to respond to communities. And so my question is, how can the five of us in that vast array of a thousand strands work together better? Is it a yearly top-off exercise? Is it quarterly meetings?

I just would ask, what is the best way to take all of these diverse entities that are not—we are not, obviously, funded by the federal government. We are not here before the committee to ask for money; we are here to offer expertise. So how can we coordinate better? That is my question.

Mr. CUELLAR. That is a good question.

Mr. Gruber, do you want to answer that?

Mr. GRUBER. Sir, I would love to do that. I think the concept of Citizen Corps is what illustrates the best way to do that, and that is networks. And we have a highly decentralized structure in this nation—emergency management and all our disciplines. And it is huge, with over 3,000 counties and all the states and territories.

So it is really about establishing resilient networks where we communicate with a high degree of frequency. I think we are looking at every tool that is available to us at the best guidance we can give for all our programs. But at the end of the day, it is about mutual trust and shared confidence that we all have across levels of government, with government and the private sector.

And if I might, sir, just make one shameless plug for our National Preparedness Month that is coming in September, which is a great opportunity for all of us as leaders in this business to make the case to the nation. We had in 2006 almost 1,400 organizations that were involved in that. States do a terrific job, and it is just a great opportunity for all of us together to make that message to all of our citizens.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Let me ask you this just to tie in to the original question, I guess to everybody and the panel. If you had a map of the United States and you do a computer mapping as to where you have Citizen Corps, would you pretty much have it all covered or would there be a lot of empty spots?

Mr. GRUBER. And that is an excellent question, sir. We have, with the councils we have in existence, calculated that covers about 75 percent of the population. My concern is always about the underserved communities where we know we have income gaps in preparedness where we really have to focus and concentrate our efforts.

So we are encouraged by the growth of Citizen Corps, by the growth of CERT teams, but we have established very ambitious performance measures and goals in our target capabilities that we have specifically for community preparedness that we want to get the coverage.

We want to make sure 100 percent of all of our emergency plans appropriately show the role of citizens, address special needs populations, people with disabilities. So we have set out very clear benchmarks that we put out in our grant guidance. We have done that for 2 years.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Thank you.

Anybody want to answer that last question?

If not, I want to thank all the witnesses for their valuable testimony. I hope that you all learned from each other, and we certainly did. And we are going to follow up on some of the points that you all brought up.

Also keep in mind that the members of the subcommittee may have additional questions for you, and if you do have those questions and they do contact you, we ask you to provide your responses as soon as possible.

Hearing no further business, this hearing stands adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX: Additional Questions and Responses

QUESTIONS FROM HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

RESPONSES FROM COREY GRUBER

Question: According to your testimony, in just five years since Citizen Corps was launched in 2002, it has grown to over 2,200 State, local, Tribal, and Territorial Councils, encompassing 75 percent of the nation's population. This has been done with limited funding and no Congressional authorization.

Why do you think that these programs haven't received overwhelming Congressional support in the past few years?

Response:

Since its establishment, the Citizen Corps Program has focused on providing the tools and operational support for developing the national base of Citizen Corps Councils, Program Partners and Affiliates. The rapid growth of the community based network of Citizen Corps Councils and local Citizen Corps volunteer programs like Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) stems primarily from the community level response to recent disasters. First, in the aftermath of recent disasters, local governments and emergency management and responder disciplines recognized that, despite the proud history of dedicated and heroic emergency response, preparedness for major disaster response and resilient recovery requires broad community collaboration and resources in addition to strengthening government capabilities. Second, based on our strong American tradition of individual and civic responsibility, citizens from across the Nation have consistently responded to emergencies and disasters by offering a helping hand to fellow citizens in need. The important relationship between these factors is supported by the evidence that the development of the community based efforts is particularly strong in communities and neighborhoods with a tradition of supporting civic involvement with government.

The Administration has identified community preparedness as a national priority and the Citizen Corps Program as a key strategy for supporting government and nongovernmental collaboration for community preparedness. The Department provides critical resources to support this strategy through the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) and the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) in order to augment state and local resources for community preparedness based on state and local determination of Homeland Security priorities.

These successes have been achieved through the continued support of the Administration and Congress, and the Citizen Corps Program looks forward to continuing its collaborative relationship with the Committee. Further, it appreciates the opportunity to provide Members with additional information on the important contribution that citizens can make to their own and to our nation's preparedness and resiliency to all types of threats. At this point, the program can now focus on extending and strengthening the nationwide network to support preparedness and participation in all communities.

Question: Why did the Administration decide to keep the Ready program within in the Office of Public Affairs while Citizen Corps is moving into FEMA?

Response:

The *Ready* Campaign, launched in February 2003, is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's national public awareness campaign to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. The goal of the *Ready* Campaign is to encourage our citizens who can prepare to do so, freeing up valuable response resources and helping make our Nation more secure, strong and resilient.

Public communications and outreach is at the core of the *Ready* Campaign; therefore, it is important to keep it located in the Office of Public Affairs. The *Ready* Campaign has a Department-wide focus, providing a unified message on prepared-

ness for all Components of the Department. It is also necessary that the program receive senior Department visibility as well as strategic coordination across the range of homeland security and preparedness programs in DHS.

The Citizen Corps Program addresses a full range of hazards throughout each step of the emergency management cycle and, as such, the program fits well within the FEMA mission. Citizen Corps is a National hands-on, grassroots effort that improves individual and community preparedness and resilience, offering information, training, and active engagement through its five core Program Partners—Community Emergency Response Team, Fire Corps, Medical Reserve Corps, USA on Watch/Neighborhood Watch, and Volunteers in Police Service—as well as its extended network of 25 National Affiliate organizations. Citizen Corps and *Ready* work in tandem to promote community preparedness. In addition, Citizen Corps maintains a close, well-established relationship with the FEMA Office of Public Affairs. This relationship will help ensure that Citizen Corps activities and outreach will be coordinated with the activities through the DHS Office of Public Affairs.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON FOR RESPONSES FROM PHILIP C. STITTLEBURG



July 13, 2007

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Chairman
House Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response at the oversight hearing entitled "Citizen Preparedness: Helping Our Communities Help Themselves," on Wednesday, June 13, 2007.

Enclosed, please find my response to the two additional questions that the Committee had for me. I would be happy to provide you with any additional information that you request.

Sincerely,

Philip C. Stittleburg
Chairman

Enclosure

Question 1: Can the Fire Corps program assist local fire and emergency departments in locating citizens with special needs?

The ability to know where people with special needs are in any community is a challenge that is not easily met. This can require an extensive communications infrastructure and an ability on the part of the department (both through staffing and data management) to reach out to the community to determine where these persons reside. This is an ongoing effort as people leave and join the community, or move within the department's jurisdiction. It is also a challenge in that the needs of such community members may vary widely. For instance, while one disabled person may be largely mobile and able to evacuate with minimal assistance in the event of an emergency, another may be dependent upon electricity for oxygen or other life-saving support and therefore dependent upon immediate emergency response in the event of a power outage or other disaster. Many departments are already operating at maximum capacity for the resources at hand and don't have the personnel or data management capabilities or expertise to take on this enormous, yet vital, task. This is where Fire Corps assists departments by increasing their capacity to respond to community needs, such as in identifying residents with special needs that may require special assistance, that first responders don't have the time to address with the increased training and emergency response demands that are placed on them. By bringing in volunteers from the community to focus on non-emergency tasks, departments can greatly enhance their ability to respond in times of disaster.

One way that departments can improve their ability to meet the needs of persons with disabilities is through the use of technology. Geographic Information System (GIS) software is able to map where residents with disabilities reside, as well as determine whether they are in or near high-risk areas. For example, through the use of this software, department personnel would be able to see on a map and with a click of a button where persons with disabilities reside within a flood plain in the event of a hurricane. This would allow the department personnel to easily locate such residents and check on their welfare. GIS software requires extensive IT support and other technical expertise in order to be effective. Through Fire Corps, departments could reach out to individuals within their community with specialized IT or data management skills, and enlist their help in a non-emergency capacity to assist the department in compiling this data in a manner that is useful and effective.

The Tomball (TX) Fire Department Fire Corps team consists of retired engineers who develop fire incident pre-plans, assist the department in obtaining copies of construction drawings submitted to the City of Tomball Building Department and select the drawings that contain floor plans, utility connection points, roof structure and roof loads, and site layout to identify key features such as access points, water supply, and indications of special hazards. The Fire Corps members then take this information and transfer it to a specialized Computer-Aided Design (CAD) program that removes irrelevant information and clearly indicates the data that is important to emergency responders. This information is then printed out and placed in notebooks located in each emergency vehicle and will also soon be available electronically through the city's GIS system.

These pre-plans allow first responders to decrease response times when answering an emergency call by providing them with vital information up front – prior to even arriving on scene. Using this methodology, Fire Corps members could pinpoint where persons with special needs reside and make note of what those special needs are, whether they are mobility issues in times of emergency or a dependency upon electricity for life-saving devices. Fire Corps members could also potentially pinpoint residences and dwellings where English is not a first-language, allowing the department to call a translator to the scene immediately rather than post on-scene arrival. Once migrated to the city's GIS system, this information would be even more readily available to first responders and even dispatch personnel. Through Fire Corps, this could all be accomplished with minimal additional demands placed on first responders, precluding any interruption in emergency service.

Question 2: Can you detail some of the other unique programs that have come out of the Fire Corps program?

How departments choose to utilize Fire Corps is limited only by the imagination and is based primarily upon the needs of the department and the community it serves. With a large Spanish-speaking population in Mesa, AZ, the use of Fire Corps volunteers for translation services meets a vital community need and greatly enhances the level of service the Mesa Fire Department is able to provide to those that it serves.

There are numerous other examples of innovative Fire Corps programs that meet the unique needs of the local community. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection started a Fire Corps program known as Volunteers in Prevention (VIP) in an effort to combat the more than 6,100 wildfires that plague California each year, leaving millions of dollars of damage in their wake. VIP volunteers participate in several programs designed to reduce the incidence of wildfires in the state. For example, volunteers participate in a Wildland Occupant Firesafe Program where they are trained to make preliminary wildland homeowner property inspections and discuss with homeowners ways to make their home fire safe. Additionally, a specialized group of volunteers (HAM radio operators and CB radio groups) provide additional communication networks for the California Department of Forestry during emergencies including wildland fires, earthquakes, and floods.

The Johnson County Rural Fire District #1 in Clarksville, AR utilizes volunteers in its extensive Fire Corps program to install smoke alarms for high-risk populations, including those with special needs. In order to get the word out that they will provide this free installation, the department and its Fire Corps team places notices in local newspapers, advertises on a sign located in front of the station, places information on the department website and airs public service announcements on local radio stations. After smoke alarms are installed, Fire Corps members send out follow-up information reminding residents to check the battery.

The Los Bomberos Fire Corps program in San Jose, California also offers similar services by acting as the conduit of communication between its local fire and emergency service departments and Spanish-speaking residents in the Bay area. Los Bomberos Fire Corps members offer translation services for the departments' fire safety messaging along with other educational materials, such as pool safety codes. Not only do members strive to reach the San Jose population with these important messages, but they also work with various organizations to offer translation services at the national level. For example, Los Bomberos members assisted the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to translate the NFPA's *Learn Not to Burn* program, bringing messages of how to make responsible choices regarding health and safety to children in Hispanic communities.

