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ON NATIONAL SECURITY

CO-FOUNDER AND CO-CHAIR

SENIOR WHIP



**ADAM B. SCHIFF**  
29TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

September 2, 2005

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The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Mail Stop # 3250  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Michael D. Brown  
Director  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Secretary Chertoff and Director Brown:

Hurricane Katrina has ravaged the Southeast and shocked a nation. This is a tragedy of enormous proportions, and I join with millions of Americans in expressing my deepest sorrow for the loss of life suffered so dramatically and painfully.

People throughout the country are glued to their televisions – not just captivated by the scenes of utter destruction, but also stunned by the seeming impotence of the federal government to come to the rapid aid of its citizens. How can it take the wealthiest nation on earth so long to come to the rescue and liberation of the survivors?

Thousands of vulnerable Americans – the poorest of the poor – are at risk of dying on the flooded streets of New Orleans. People are scrounging in waste-infested neighborhoods for anything that will help care for their loved ones. Those left sick, hungry and destitute are losing hope that aid will come to them soon. The appalling delay in food and medicine delivery, the abysmal lack of security in devastated communities, the feeble management of transportation out of the area and the unspeakable conditions of shelters are inexplicable. Individual efforts of relief workers and ordinary Americans on the scene have been heroic. But Americans everywhere want to know why we as a nation were not better prepared, why it has taken so long to act, and how this could happen not on some far corner of the globe, but here in our backyard. So do I.

Today, Congress approved an emergency aid package to help the people of these ravaged areas. Whatever you need to complete the rescue effort as fast as possible will be provided if it hasn't already. You have only to ask. I join my constituents and millions of Americans in calling on you to move both earth and heaven to meet the pressing needs of all who have fallen victim to these horrendous circumstances. When regional security and the basic welfare of our citizens have been reestablished, I expect a full accounting for the actions of the Department of Homeland Security – and specifically the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – for their response to this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Schiff".

**ADAM B. SCHIFF**  
Member of Congress