

(Washington D.C.) - Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA-03) will travel to New Orleans this week with a congressional delegation to mark the one year anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Members of the Democratic Caucus will also establish a time of National Prayer and Remembrance for the residents of the Gulf Coast, especially the city of New Orleans. The group also will use the trip to remind Americans there is still much work to do to rebuild the Gulf.

One year ago, the Gulf Coast of the United States was hit by one of the most devastating hurricanes in American history. The storm's massive storm surge caused the levies protecting the City of New Orleans to break, flooding the crescent city and leaving hundreds of thousands of Americans homeless.

Late last year, the Congressional Black Caucus introduced H.R. 4197, the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act of 2005. This is a comprehensive bill that would address the needs of survivors of Hurricane Katrina by providing access to affordable healthcare, education, housing and community rebuilding, voting rights, financial services, small business incentives, and job training. The bill also calls on the President to eradicate poverty in the United States by the year 2015.

Rep. Scott also introduced H.R. 4213, the Elimination of Barriers for Katrina Victims Act. Specifically, this bill would suspend the denial of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, public housing, and higher education benefits to victims of Hurricane Katrina because of convictions for certain drug offenses.

"Daily news reports indicate the federal government has failed to provide assistance to the people of the Gulf Coast in the immediate aftermath of Katrina. This is why we will tour the Gulf Coast region; to see firsthand, if the people of the region, especially the City of New Orleans, are still no better off than they were a year ago," said Rep. Scott.

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