

By: Senator(s) Dawkins, Walls,  
Jackson (11th), Jordan,  
Williamson, Thomas, Butler,  
Simmons, Horhn, Turner, Gollott,  
Cuevas, Lee (47th), Bryan,  
Harden, Jackson (32nd)

To: Rules

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 507

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING UNITED STATES PRESIDENT BUSH  
2 TO RESCIND HIS SEPTEMBER 8, 2005, PROCLAMATION WHICH SUSPENDED THE  
3 APPLICATION OF THE DAVIS-BACON "PREVAILING WAGE" ACT IN AREAS  
4 AFFECTED BY HURRICANE KATRINA.

5 WHEREAS, the Gulf Coast of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi  
6 and Texas has experienced tragic and unprecedented damage as a  
7 result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The cleanup and rebuilding  
8 efforts will be some of the most ambitious in our nation's  
9 history; and

10 WHEREAS, a large part of the efforts to rebuild and restore  
11 the Gulf Coast will be undertaken by the federal government. To  
12 date, Congress has already authorized \$262.3 Billion and that  
13 figure is only expected to increase. It is anticipated that  
14 contracts spawned by the reconstruction efforts will provide  
15 employment for several thousand people, many of whom are trying to  
16 rebuild their own lives in the wake of this disaster; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1931, Congress enacted the Davis-Bacon Act to  
18 provide wage protection to workers who are employed by contractors  
19 using federal tax dollars. Its purpose is to insure that workers  
20 earn a fair living for their families; and

21 WHEREAS, the Davis-Bacon Act, (Chapter 31 of Title 40, United  
22 States Code), also known as the prevailing wage law, was enacted  
23 by Congress in 1931. Section 3142(b) provides that minimum wages  
24 in federal construction contracts "shall be based on the wages the  
25 Secretary of Labor determines to be prevailing for the  
26 corresponding classes of laborers and mechanics employed on  
27 project of a character similar to the contract work in the civil  
28 subdivision of the state in which the work is to be performed."

29 Section 3147 allows the President to suspend the provisions of the  
30 Davis-Bacon Act during a "national emergency;" and

31 WHEREAS, on September 8, 2005, President Bush issued a  
32 proclamation suspending the prevailing wage provision of the  
33 Davis-Bacon Act for the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast. In issuing  
34 the proclamation, President Bush stated that the prevailing wage  
35 provision would "increase the cost to the federal government of  
36 providing federal assistance to these areas," and that suspension  
37 of the act "will permit the employment of thousands of additional  
38 individuals;" and

39 WHEREAS, the problem with the President's reasoning is that  
40 it is simply not based on fact. The reason is simple. When you  
41 pay higher wages, you attract more experienced and skilled labor,  
42 thereby increasing productivity and decreasing injury and lost  
43 time on the job; and

44 WHEREAS, the more devastating effect of suspending the  
45 Davis-Bacon Act will be the driving down of wages for all  
46 construction contracts both public and private in the area for  
47 years to come. This will have a negative effect on local  
48 economies, long after the rebuilding has been completed.  
49 Prevailing wages in the effected area are already below the  
50 national average; and

51 WHEREAS, the President's action is in the wrong direction,  
52 particularly at a time when we should all be coming together to  
53 help rebuild not only the bricks and mortar, but also the lives  
54 and families of the Gulf Coast:

55 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
56 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
57 we do hereby urge United States President George W. Bush to  
58 rescind his September 8, 2005, proclamation which suspended the  
59 application of the Davis-Bacon "Prevailing Wage" Act in areas  
60 affected by Hurricane Katrina, which includes counties and  
61 communities along and adjacent to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In

62 the alternative, we urge the United States Congress to exercise  
63 its legislative prerogative to enact legislation requiring the  
64 prevailing wage in those areas affected by Hurricane Katrina,  
65 thereby superceding the President's executive proclamation.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to  
67 United States President George W. Bush, members of the Mississippi  
68 congressional delegation and be made available to the Capitol  
69 Press Corps.