

By: Representative Ishee

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 42

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING STATE ACTION TO ATTEND THE
2 NEEDS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY NATURAL DISASTERS BY IMPLEMENTING A
3 SYSTEM OF PLANNING, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY.

4 WHEREAS, major disasters resulting in Presidential disaster
5 declarations have increased from an average of 38 per year in the
6 1980s, to 45 per year in the 1990s, to 52 per year during the
7 first half of this decade; and

8 WHEREAS, the occurrences of major disasters are expected to
9 continue to increase in the foreseeable future, thus making the
10 number of children affected by disasters such as Katrina to grow
11 exponentially; and

12 WHEREAS, schools were closed immediately after Hurricane
13 Katrina, with seven percent of Mississippi elementary and
14 secondary schools remaining closed six months after Katrina,
15 accounting for more than 400,000 children under the age of five,
16 who lived in counties or parishes declared disaster areas by the
17 Federal Emergency Management Agency; and

18 WHEREAS, the number of licensed child care facilities in
19 areas affected by Hurricane Katrina declined by four percent,
20 accounting for 54 facilities in Mississippi closing as a direct
21 result of Hurricane Katrina; and

22 WHEREAS, children are known to benefit from immediate mental
23 health programs following disasters to mitigate long-term impacts;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, the existing system of disaster management in the
26 United States is the purview of federal, state and local
27 government emergency management organizations, and such

28 organizations are not mandated, nor are they able to fully respond
29 to the unique needs of children; and

30 WHEREAS, federal, state and local government emergency
31 professionals lack the technical knowledge, support and contacts
32 to address the unique needs of children that must be incorporated
33 into such professionals' disaster management programs; and

34 WHEREAS, existing legislative constraints on federal disaster
35 response and recovery aid programs restrict disaster officials
36 from responding to the needs of children in a disaster, and there
37 is no government liaison or programs concerning children's issues
38 in disaster:

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
40 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
41 THEREIN, That the needs of children affected by major disasters
42 are unique and should be given special consideration in planning,
43 responding to and recovering from major disasters.

44 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Federal Emergency Management
45 Agency and other governmental emergency management professionals
46 should consult with appropriate child-focused nongovernmental
47 organizations and public universities with experience in
48 addressing the needs of children in major disaster preparedness,
49 response, recovery and mitigation, including:

50 (a) Incorporating suggestions from such organizations
51 on children's issues into the national, state and local response
52 plan;

53 (b) Seeking the recommendations of such organizations
54 on how to address the needs of children in emergency shelters,
55 trailer parks and transitional housing sites;

56 (c) Jointly developing child, family and school-focused
57 disaster preparedness materials to support understanding of the
58 impact of disasters on children and strategies to mitigate the
59 impact; and

60 (d) Jointly developing risk assessment tools for
61 communities to use in determining children's specific disaster
62 risks.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
64 furnished to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the
65 Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and to the members of the
66 Capitol Press Corps.