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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

[Home](#) > [News & Policies](#) > [April 2006](#)

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Office of the Press Secretary
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President Visits Damaged Home in New Orleans, Louisiana

Pauline Street
New Orleans, Louisiana

 [In Focus: Hurricane Recovery](#)

11:58 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mrs. Williams has invited myself and the Mayor and the Governor and Congressman into her home which had been wiped out by the storm. And she went to Texas for a while and she made it clear to me she was glad to be out of Texas and back home. (Laughter.)

But the amazing thing that's happened in her home is that there are people from across the country here who are helping to rebuild it. Catholic Charities, in this case, has provided the volunteers to help Ms. Williams reclaim her life. So I'd like to first start by thanking the volunteers who are here in the home. I want to thank them for setting such a good example.

The man who's running the site here said that they need 2,500 more volunteers to come down to New Orleans to help people get back on their feet. If you're interested in helping the victims of Katrina, if you're interested in helping them get back on their feet, come down here and volunteer. A good place to start is in Catholic Charities. You can get right there on the web page, they'll find work for you. They'll give you a chance to contribute something to your country.

This is National Volunteer Week, and there are people like the good folks standing behind me here who are volunteering all across the country, making a difference. And for those of you who are volunteering, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making our society a better place.

I had a good visit with the Governor and the Mayor, as well. One of the things that we're working on is to make sure that we've learned the lessons from Katrina -- we've learned lessons at the federal level and state level and the local level. And we're now working closely together in preparation of the upcoming hurricane season. Secretary Chertoff was down here working with the Governor just to make sure that communications are clear, that equipment will be pre-positioned, and that the communications system, which failed last time, will be up and running should there be another catastrophic storm.

All of us in positions of responsibility appreciate those who are working to help us understand how to do our jobs better. And we pray there is no hurricane this coming year, but we are working together to make sure that if there is one the response will be as efficient as possible.



I'm also talking to the Governor and the Mayor about the reconstruction effort going on here in Louisiana. I applaud the Governor for putting forth a housing plan that she'll be submitting to the legislature soon. I call upon the Congress to make sure that the \$4.2 billion of CDBG money in the supplemental appropriations is held intact for the people of Louisiana. This money is going to be vital to making sure that the deal -- that the Governor and the Mayor gets implemented as people are able to come back and start reclaiming their lives.

We talked about the levees and I told the Governor and the Mayor earlier on that we would work to have these levees pre-Katrina -- better than pre-Katrina by June 1st. We are. There's still money in the supplemental that needs to be passed to make sure that we're able to fulfill our promises, to make sure that the levees, by September of '07 are even better than pre-Katrina. We've got a strategy to help the good folks down here rebuild. Part of it has to do with funding; part of it has to do with housing; and a lot of it has to do with encouraging volunteers from around the United States to come down and help people like Ms. Williams.

So we're proud to be here with you, Ms. Williams, and God bless you.

MRS. WILLIAMS: I'm proud to be here, Mr. President. And I won't ever forget you.

THE PRESIDENT: You need to forget -- remember those people a lot quicker than you're remembering me, because they're the ones who are going to help. She promised to cook me a meal --

MRS. WILLIAMS: Oh, yes -- (laughter) --

THE PRESIDENT: Once you get the house up and running.

MRS. WILLIAMS: -- and all the volunteers and everybody that is helping to make everything work.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much.

END 12:02 P.M. CDT

