

October 13, 2005

«Title» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Address_1»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear Senator «Last_Name»:

I write to you as national president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization with more than 116,000 active, associate and contributing members in virtually every part of the United States. Our members see poverty every day as we visit families requesting assistance. Members of the Society continue to respond to the needs of Katrina victims by serving relocated victims as well as donating funds and collecting goods for those suffering from this unprecedented disaster.

We believe that access to health care and emergency assistance is vital to all whose lives have been uprooted by Katrina. We urge you to support the passage of S. 1716, The Emergency Health Care Relief Act, in order to:

- Provide health care coverage to all low-income Katrina survivors.
- Ensure full federal funding of health care services for all Katrina victims, wherever they may be.
- Streamline eligibility and enrollment procedures to facilitate access to care for many Katrina victims.
- Allow Katrina survivors to receive TANF benefits without being subject to time limits or work requirements.
- Extend emergency unemployment compensation benefits for at least 13 weeks, preferably 26 weeks.
- In addition, urge Congress to make all Katrina-related emergency benefits available to non-citizen victims of Katrina, as well as citizens.

The Catholic community consistently supports health care as a basic human right necessary for the development and maintenance of life. This need is a priority for the poor and vulnerable who should have a priority through our common efforts.

Sincerely,



Joseph Flannigan
National President
Society of St. Vincent de Paul