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**STATEMENT OF EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE DECISION OF PRESIDENT
BUSH TO SUSPEND DAVIS-BACON PREVAILING WAGE PROTECTIONS IN THE
WAKE OF HURRICANE KATRINA**

I'm deeply disappointed that President Bush has decided to suspend vital wage protections in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Haven't these workers and their families suffered enough? We are providing tens of billions of dollars in relief, and we should be sure that it goes toward decent wages for workers as they rebuild the infrastructure that is so desperately needed.

Many people harmed by this disaster were already struggling to make ends meet, and now the jobs and businesses they relied on have disappeared. As many as 1 million workers may become jobless, with the unemployment rate reaching 25% or higher in the Gulf region.

Many of the good new jobs created will be in the recovery and rebuilding of the area. And these important protections simply ensure that jobs like these pay a fair wage. But the President apparently believes that workers in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama don't even deserve to earn a fair wage for a hard day's work.

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