

**\*\* Fact Sheet and Statement included\*\***  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**KENNEDY AND ENZI MOVE FORWARD ON PLAN TO EDUCATE CHILDREN  
DISPLACED FROM KATRINA**

***DISCUSS BILL IN SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT***

Washington, DC; Today Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Senator Mike Enzi participated in a subcommittee hearing entitled “Katrina’s Displaced School Children” to discuss the education bill they introduced last week. Their bipartisan measure will bring much needed support and relief to students, educators, and schools affected by the disaster. Kennedy and Enzi will introduce the health and labor components of their Katrina Relief package in the coming days, having already passed two provisions on job training and community service assistance.

“We’re reminded by this disaster that schools are the heart of local communities across America. When schools open, families return, businesses returns, and lives begin to return to normal,” Senator Kennedy said. “We are determined to ensure that children don’t lose a year of school, college students continue pursuing their degrees, schools are rebuilt and restocked with resources they need, and everyone gets the support they need to cope with and overcome this tragedy.”

In the past few weeks Senator Kennedy has visited New Orleans, spent time with evacuees at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts and met with recovery experts and officials from the area to determine the best course of action to help get schools back on their feet and accommodate displaced students. At a recent HELP Committee hearing he convened Kennedy heard moving testimony from Superintendent Diane Roussel of Jefferson Parish who said: “Money isn’t always the answer to solving the ills in our public schools, but when we’re talking about equipment, supplies, rebuilding, and maintaining our teaching workforce, money is the answer.”

Kennedy also learned that 700 schools and 30 colleges and universities have been damaged and destroyed and an estimated 473,000 elementary, high school and college students have been affected by the disaster, most of whom have been displaced. Over 1000 students from the Gulf Coast have now enrolled in colleges in Massachusetts. Kennedy’s bill begins the process by strengthening support for educational institutions and addresses the needs of early education, elementary and secondary education, higher education, and students with disabilities. The provisions of the bill are outlined below and included is Senator Kennedy’s opening remarks

**Summary of S. 1715 as Amended**  
**Bill to Provide Relief for Students and Institutions**

## **Affected by Hurricane Katrina**

*Introduced by Senators Enzi and Kennedy on Thursday, September 15, 2005*

### **Early Childhood:**

- **Child Care:** Provides waiver authority under CCDBG for Secretary of HHS on: income eligibility, work requirements, use of quality set-aside, allowance to prioritize Katrina victims as recipients, and parent co-pay. Provides for technical assistance and guidance from states to help child care providers assist children displaced by Katrina. Authorizes \$112 million.
- **Head Start:** Waives income eligibility for children displaced by Katrina under Head Start and Early Head Start. Funds will be included for guidance, technical assistance, and resources through ACF regional offices to impacted Head Start centers. Authorizes \$45 million.

### **K-12 Education:**

- **NCLB Waivers:** Encourages the Secretary to use waiver authority with respect to reporting requirements, 3-8 assessments, and school improvement/corrective action under ESEA for States, local educational agencies, and schools affected by Hurricane Katrina, and requires the Secretary to report on state and district waiver requests due to the impact of Hurricane Katrina.
- **Supplemental Services and Afterschool:** The Secretary shall provide funding for supplemental educational services and afterschool services to impacted districts or districts that enroll a significant number of students, displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Authorizes \$100 million for this purpose;
- **Impacted Districts:** The Secretary may award special school reopening grants to states for local educational agencies significantly impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The grants would supplement, not supplant, FEMA funds. Funds shall be used for recovering data, initial replacement of instructional materials and equipment, establishing temporary facilities, and other related activities necessary to reopen schools. Grantees will be prohibited from using funds for construction or renovation of schools. Authorizes \$900 million for these purposes. School districts impacted by Hurricane Katrina will be held-harmless relative to Title I funds for FY06 allocations.
- **Receiving Districts:** The Secretary shall make payments to local educational agencies that enroll at least 10 students displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Each eligible district will receive a payment based on 50 percent of the number of displaced students times the State average per-pupil expenditure for the most recent fiscal year. Districts will receive a payment for students with disabilities based on 50 percent of the number of displaced students times 125% of the State average per-pupil expenditure for the most recent fiscal year. Authorized at \$2.5 billion.
- **Reciprocity for Highly-Qualified Teachers:** Grants temporary reciprocity for NCLB

purposes in recognizing highly-qualified teachers and paraprofessionals displaced by Katrina. Also authorizes an extension of one year for areas impacted by Katrina relative to the deadline in Sec. 1119 of NCLB for highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals.

- **Homeless Education:** Authorizes an additional appropriation of \$50 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program under NCLB. Funds shall be distributed to State education agencies for the purpose of supporting an estimated 200,000 newly homeless students due to Katrina.

### **Higher Education**

- **Student Aid:** Students enrolled in affected institutions who are not able to attend or whose attendance is interrupted because of Katrina shall not be required to return any grant aid awarded under Title IV of HEA.

A student who was enrolled in an affected institution but does not enroll in another institution before June 30, 2006 shall retain his in-school status. An affected borrower in a grace period or in deferment shall retain his status until June 30, 2006.

Financial aid administrators shall be allowed to use professional judgment to make adjustments with respect to the calculation of expected student or parent contribution for an affected student or a student or parent who resides or resided in, or was employed in, an affected area. Financial aid administrators must provide documentation of the need for such adjustments. Secretary is authorized to simplify required documentation for institutions that receive a significant number of affected students in relation to the size of their student body.

- **Institutional Aid:** Institutions located in affected areas shall not be required to return undisbursed Pell and other student grant assistance under Title IV.

Affected institutions shall credit students' outstanding loan balances by June 30, 2006. If an institution does not do so, the Secretary shall make a payment on behalf of the affected institution and take action the Secretary determines necessary to recover the funds from that institution. The student shall not go into default.

- **Reallocation of FY04 Work-Study Funds:** The Secretary may give preference to institutions that enroll affected students during the 2005-2006 academic year when allocating FY 2004 Federal work-study funds available for reallocation. For any new funds received by these institutions, the matching requirement is waived.

- **Forbearance:** A lender, the Secretary, or an institution of higher education is authorized to provide not more than 1 year of forbearance to an individual without documentation who has outstanding loans and who lives or lived in an affected declared disaster area or worked in such area.

- **Teachers:** The Secretary is authorized to modify Title II requirements at the request of grantees to assist States, local educational agencies and institutions of higher education to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in an affected school district and recruit and retain faculty in affected institutions of higher education.

- **TRIO and GEAR Up:** The Secretary is authorized to modify required and allowable uses of TRIO, GEAR-UP, Title III Part A and B grants, and any other discretionary grant program at the request of affected institutions and affected grantees.

- **Distance Education:** If a distance education provider exceeds either 50 percent rule limitation required under section 102(a)(3)(A) or (B) of the Higher Education Act due to the

enrollment of affected students, the Secretary may waive these requirements in order for the institution to remain eligible to participate in Title IV programs.

- **Waivers:** Secretary shall have authority to extend or waive reporting requirements. The Secretary shall have authority to waive or modify any statutory or regulatory provision applicable to Higher Education Act as determined necessary in response to Katrina in order to ensure affected students, borrowers, institutions of higher education, lenders, guaranty agencies, grantees and other entities are provided relief from the burden of administrative requirements to the extent possible without impairing the integrity of higher education programs.

The Secretary shall make publicly available any waivers, modifications, or extensions granted that are not explicitly spelled out in the Act. Prior to granting any waivers, modifications, or extensions the Secretary shall consult with the Senate HELP Committee and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, in addition to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations with respect to these waivers. Waiver authority expires September 30, 2006.

- **Loan Limits:** The Secretary shall have authority to waive annual loan limits. If a student decides to attend a different institution, they are allowed to borrow money to attend that institution. A Student may borrow an amount no greater than the applicable loan limit for that individual.

## **IDEA**

- **Early Intervention:** Requires local schools to provide early intervening services (as defined under IDEA to mean educational and mental health supports the child needs to be successful in an educational curriculum) to students relocated from a state affected by Hurricane Katrina. This will give educational and mental health supports to:

- Students who do not have special education records but have a recorded enrollment in special education by a parent (available for up to 90 days before being evaluated for true IDEA services).
- Students who have not been identified as prior special ed students, but need additional academic and mental health support to succeed in a general education environment.
- All students coming to school with IEP records will be treated in the usual way as transfer students under IDEA.

There are authorized to be appropriated \$10 million for FY2006 for these early intervening services.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation:** Allows affected states to receive reallocated funds without a state match. These funds are targeted to be used to enable people with disabilities to receive the training they need to participate in reconstruction efforts.

- **Assistive Technology:** Allows states affected by Katrina to use funding to replace lost or damaged assistive technology devices for persons with disabilities. This flexibility will be in

effect for 90 days. There is authorized to be appropriated \$2 million for FY2006.

### **Office of the Inspector General**

· Requires the Inspector General (IG) of the Department of Education to conduct an audit and investigation of each program carried out by the Department of Education related to response and recovery post-Hurricane Katrina. Requires the IG to report to Senate Health, Labor, Education, and Pensions Committee and House Committee on Education and the Workforce, not less than once weekly, a list of all audits and investigations it initiates. In addition, requires the IG to report to committees the status of these activities not less than 6 months after passage of the bill and biannually thereafter.

### **Alternative Education Program**

Establishes competitive grants to SEAs, LEAs or consortia of LEAs who may chose to partner with community based organizations to provide alternative programs for adolescents who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

These programs would offer instruction, tutoring and counseling activities designed to familiarize students with career options, mentoring, test preparation for PSAT, SAT, or ACT, financial aid information and job readiness skills

Funds may be used for staffing, curricular materials, and other programmatic costs to carry out the alternative education program.

### **National Service**

**Emergency fund language:** Establishes an emergency fund under the National and Community Service Act for emergency transport, housing, disaster and safety training, the retention of current volunteers and recruitment of additional volunteers and efforts to coordinate independent volunteers to meet the needs of areas affected by a major disaster as defined in the Stafford Act .

**Third Year of Service:** Existing and former AmeriCorps, VISTA and NCCC members are eligible for a third year of service if they agree to serve in an area impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

**Support to State Commissions:** The Director is authorized to provide additional administrative funds to any State Commission impacted by Hurricane Katrina and to waive any timelines or reporting requirement as may be necessary.

**Statement of Senator Edward M. Kennedy  
Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood**

**Katrina's Displaced School Children**  
**Thursday, September 22, 2005, 3:00 p.m.**

Thank you, Senator Alexander, for scheduling this afternoon's hearing on how we can best help the school children affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Many of us have visited the Gulf Coast in recent days and seen the desperation. So much has been destroyed. But the spirit of the people we met remains strong, and their determination to recover and rebuild their lives inspires us all to help.

In the wake of this tragedy, our committee has a special responsibility to try to help children stay on track in school. An obvious priority in the overall relief effort is to see that they don't lose a year in their education. We can help them return to as normal an environment as possible, as quickly as possible.

Fortunately, the nation as a whole is responding generously. Many of those in the storm's path left all they know to go to safe havens across the country, and without hesitation, people welcomed them into their homes and communities. Schools were often the first responders to these displaced families.

Today, more than 370,000 students at schools in Katrina's path have been relocated. Principals, teachers, and superintendents across the country have pledged to accommodate all the students they can:

- School districts in Houston have enrolled more than 18,000 students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.
- Georgia schools have enrolled nearly 9,000 students and Florida schools more than 6,000 students.
- Communities have streamlined procedures to accept students, and Dallas has a hotline for parents to enroll their children.

We owe each of these communities – and countless more – a debt of gratitude for pledging so much immediate help and attention. It's time for Congress to see that the schools serving them have the resources to deal with what may be the largest migration of schoolchildren in the nation's history.

We know that students are arriving at new schools without textbooks, school uniforms, or enrollment records. Children with disabilities have been left without their records and the individual plans they had for instruction, related services, and health care.

Schools are struggling to address the emotional needs of children arriving and struggling to cope with the loss of loved ones and homes and pets. Teachers need specialized support and training

to deal with the more serious and persistent traumas from Katrina.

We know that many school districts were already slashing budgets and had too few resources before the hurricane. They need our help now more than ever. Mobile, Alabama is taking in a thousand students, even though several of its schools were themselves damaged by the hurricane. The superintendent there needs at least \$400,000 to get the school district up and moving.

I commend Senator Enzi and our other colleagues on the Committee for their leadership in developing a bipartisan plan to respond to these challenges.

The bill we've introduced will ease the transition of students displaced by Katrina now in new classrooms. It will support basic instruction, help purchase books and materials, and cover costs of transportation. If a school district needs resources to accommodate students in temporary facilities, this bill would deliver that help. Schools will qualify for additional funds to expand supplemental services or after-school activities to include affected students.

It will also ensure that schools have the resources to analyze the services that students with disabilities need, and provide the full range of services in the meantime.

It's essential to respond swiftly to help schools elsewhere in the country taking in students displaced by the storm. But we can't forget the schools devastated in its wake.

Schools remain closed throughout the Gulf Region. In Mississippi alone, 271 schools have been damaged or destroyed. In North Gulfport, Mississippi, the walls of Harrison Central 9th Grade School collapsed.

Vastly more damage has occurred in Louisiana. Jefferson Parish, so devastated by the storm, will try to re-open 42 of its 84 schools on October 3rd. But 8 school buildings in the district will not be able to open this year. 33 other buildings need repair, even though parts of them can be opened.

Last week, the Committee heard moving testimony from Superintendent Diane Roussel of the parish. She said, "Money isn't always the answer to solving the ills in our public schools, but when we're talking about equipment, supplies, rebuilding, and maintaining our teaching workforce, money is the answer."

Our Committee heard her plea. Our bill creates a special fund to re-start school operations in affected areas, and provide the essential foundation needed for school districts to get back on their feet. The Secretary of Education is authorized to provide immediate aid to areas devastated by the storm.

Such assistance will help administrators and school personnel recover and recreate student data and information, re-establish their budgets, and renew teaching plans, curriculums, and equipment. Schools suffering lesser damage will be repaired and re-opened sooner.

We're reminded by this disaster that schools are the heart of local communities across America. When schools open, families return, businesses returns, and lives begin to return to normal.

I look forward to hearing testimony today from Senator Landrieu, Assistant Secretary Johnson, and others who have already done so much to respond.

I also look forward to continuing our bipartisan work to deliver the help as soon as possible that Gulf Coast schools and students need to recover from this desperate situation.