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## **LARSON REFLECTS ON VISIT TO GULF COAST FOR ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE KATRINA**

WASHINGTON, DC ♦ U.S. Representative John B. Larson (CT-1) visited the Gulf Coast Region this week to mark the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina as part of a delegation of twenty-four House Democrats.

♦I have great respect for the resiliency of the people in the Gulf Coast, ♦ stated Larson. ♦Its difficult to explain the depth of the devastation, but having been to Baghdad several times, I can tell you that the lower Ninth Ward is like a war zone. While the hurricane could not have been avoided, the catastrophe that occurred was manmade by lack of planning and lack of response.

♦Many around here feel that they have been abandoned by their government and are frustrated by the lack of progress in the year since this disaster. We came here to assure them that they have not been forgotten and that we are there to listen, learn, and help rebuild. We must renew our commitment to our fellow Americans who were impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

♦After touring all the breaches in New Orleans, the Corps of Engineers told us that they are better prepared. However, another hurricane of Katrina ♦s

intensity would still have devastating effects on the area. To make the Gulf Coast safe we need the political will and money to do it.

◆A minister we visited left us with one goal: to finish. Democrats are committed to a new direction that will rejuvenate and restore the lives, homes, and livelihoods of the people of the Gulf Coast. If we can provide the proper aid and assistance to Iraq, we certainly can provide it to our fellow Americans.◆

The delegation of Democratic lawmakers toured New Orleans and visited the lower Ninth Wards, New Orleans East, Gentilly, Lakeview, and the Charity Hospital. They also hosted a town hall meeting in Bay St. Louis, MS on August 28 to discuss insurance claims and coverage, a complicated hurdle in the rebuilding process.

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