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Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
Pentagon
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I ask you to approve 180 days of military duty in Title 32 USC 901 status for all National Guard soldiers and airmen serving in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. As you are aware, Title 32 status will allow the soldiers and airmen supporting Hurricane Katrina committed to Hurricane Katrina Relief to receive military retirement points, health insurance and disability protection. Further, this action will ensure equitable compensation across the supporting National Guard force.

As you are aware, Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, our neighbors in Mississippi and Alabama on Monday, August 29, 2005. I ordered over 3,000 Louisiana National Guard soldiers and airmen to state active duty in order to provide security, medical, engineer and communication support to relief efforts. None of these soldiers are in a federal status.

Currently, our soldiers and airmen are engaged in the protection of critical infrastructure to include medical facilities, fuel distribution, water and power distribution systems which are all vital to the recovery of the entire region.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
Governor

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