



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley
Press Conference on Bipartisan Agreement on Katrina Relief
September 14, 2005

I'm pleased to join Senator Baucus in announcing a bipartisan health and welfare hurricane relief package. We're all moved by the stories of those who have lost everything. Suffering the most are the most vulnerable citizens: low-income families, the infirm, the displaced, and the disabled. We need to help these individuals in crisis. This package will give desperately needed relief. It offers immediate health coverage for every individual in need. Many people fled their homes with only the shirts on their backs. We're presenting simplified enrollment for health care coverage for these individuals. We have a process for families eligible for Medicaid to become permanently enrolled in Medicaid. We're setting up continued access to care after disaster relief coverage ends for those ineligible for Medicaid. We agree that relief should follow the person. That means the federal government should reimburse states for the total amount spent on health care for hurricane victims. We're helping those with private insurance pay the premiums on their policy. Many of the affected folks have private health insurance they might otherwise struggle to keep. Finally, we're directing welfare funds and providing additional flexibility to states and families. We've built on welfare provisions that the House passed and I hope the Senate will approve soon. I hope for quick approval of today's package. We have to prevent more hardship for those who have already suffered so much.