

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2006

Richard Skinner
Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security
Office of Inspector General
Washington, DC 20528

We are writing to demand a full investigation into Project HOPE (Helping Our People in Emergencies), a crisis counseling program that is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

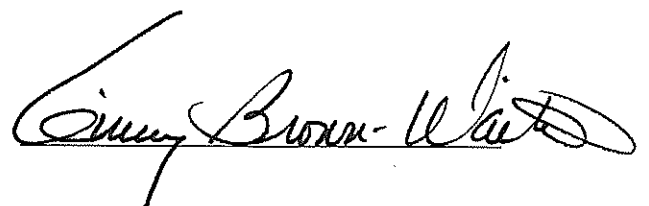
According to FEMA's own description, Project HOPE was created to provide emotional and psychological support for people undergoing the recovery process. However, an investigation by the South Florida Sun-Sentinel found that "the program consisted largely of bingo, puppet shows and yoga sessions for individuals who showed no signs of being devastated by a storm. In fact, the only ones seemingly getting anything close to counseling are the Project HOPE counselors attending stress management sessions that include collecting shells and playing 'the toilet paper game.'"

The American taxpayers are a charitable group that want to help victims of hurricanes, floods and natural disasters by providing emergency shelter, food, and water. That does not mean paying for "Hurricane Bingo at senior centers, gardening workshops and children's shows such as "Windy Biggie," which includes a song about how the wind is our friend, even in a hurricane."

Ronald Reagan once defined the American taxpayer as someone who works for the federal government, but doesn't have to take the civil service exam. Americans should work to support their families -- not wasteful government spending.

This year Congress enacted some very important responsible spending reforms that highlight the renewed need to limit the size of government and curtail excessive spending. However, we must continue to demand accountability from our government agencies. We expect a full investigation into the effectiveness of Project HOPE and the \$47 million in crisis counseling grants that have so far been awarded to the State of Florida under FEMA. A report of the findings from this investigation should be submitted to the undersigned by November 30, 2006. Thank you in advance for looking into this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Bob Inglis

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Tom

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Melissa A. Hart

Phil Burt

Pete Sessions

Jim

Jo Ann Davis

Tim

Walter B. Jones

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Steve King

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