

United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 220
SECOND AND CONSTITUTION AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6425

September 12, 2005

Dear Colleague:

Many of you have given generously to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The Committee on Ethics has received many questions, however, asking what you and your staff may do – as part of the Senate community – to assist the disaster relief efforts of private organizations responding to this crisis. This letter provides a brief overview.

On September 7, 2005, the Senate passed S. Res. 235, which allows Members and staff to collect from each other, within the Senate, food, clothing and other urgently needed, *non-monetary* items to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Under this Resolution Members and staff may work with a nonprofit organization with respect to the delivery of these collected items. For more information about this Resolution, see the September 8, 2005, *Dear Colleague* from Senator Lott and Senator Dodd. *Please note that under this Resolution items may not be solicited or received from non-Senate persons or entities.*

Majority Leader Frist and Democratic Leader Reid have also announced that the Senate has launched a *special Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) drive – through Friday, September 30, 2005* – to allow Senate Members and staff to donate cash and checks for organizations providing aid to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We understand that distribution of these monetary contributions to the designated relief organizations will occur at the close of the special drive. *As with the regular CFC drive – which will start November 1, 2005 – contributions may not be solicited or received from non-Senate persons or entities.* See your office keyworker or go to *Webster* for information about this special CFC drive.

The special CFC drive and S. Res. 235 provide for the only charitable solicitation and donation efforts that may occur within the Senate. Outside the Senate you may, of course, continue your private giving to relief efforts. Also outside the Senate, under the Gifts Rule, Members and staff may solicit personally for charitable organizations that provide or fund disaster relief. These efforts may be made in many ways, such as by mail, in person at a fund-raiser, through a public service announcement or by staffing a phone bank at a telethon. Such solicitations may not be aimed or directed specifically at lobbyists or foreign agents (contact the Committee for details). *Also, such solicitations may not be made using any resources of the Senate office, including official letterhead; you may, however, sign on to a charity's solicitation letter or use your "United States Senator" letterhead. Senate staff participating in solicitations for charities may not refer to their Senate titles or employment or otherwise make use of their official status in any such solicitation.*

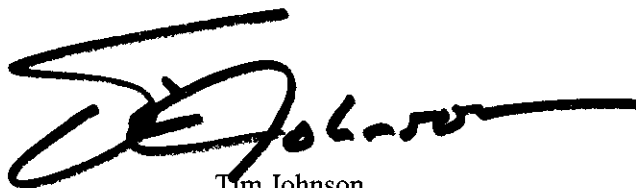
The use of the frank by charitable organizations, or for solicitation of funds for any purpose, is prohibited by the franking statute and regulations. You may, however, use the frank to direct your constituents to the Web sites of such federal government entities as FEMA, USA/Freedom Corps or OPM, which provide centralized information about ongoing relief efforts and opportunities, both public and private. Please contact the Committee on Rules and Administration with any questions about Senate Web site content.

We appreciate and support your continued efforts to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Please do not hesitate to contact the Committee on Ethics if you have specific questions or for more specific guidance about any efforts you wish to undertake.

Sincerely,



George V. Voinovich
Chairman



Tim Johnson
Vice Chairman