



NEWS RELEASE



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Norwood Calls for DHS to Withdraw Illegal Alien Amnesty Rule for Gulf Coast Reconstruction

(Washington, DC) “ House Workforce Protections Subcommittee Chairman Charlie Norwood (R-GA) today called on the Department of Homeland Security to follow up the President’s decision to re-impose Davis-Bacon wage regulations in the Gulf Coast reconstruction area with a similar reinstatement of illegal immigration enforcement efforts.

"If it's time to reinstate Davis-Bacon," Norwood says, "then it's time to reinstate enforcing the law against illegal aliens, and protect our federally-funded reconstruction jobs for U.S. victims of Katrina and Rita."

The Department of Homeland Security on September 6 announced a 45-day waiver of employer sanctions for using illegal immigrant labor following Hurricane Katrina, shortly after the President temporarily suspended Davis-Bacon wage rules. Both waivers were promoted as efforts to streamline federal regulations to speed recovery.

The Davis-Bacon waiver had no impact on wage rates, but was successful in reducing weekly contractor paperwork requirements. The Davis-Bacon minimum labor rate for the Greater New Orleans Area was \$9.55 an hour; contractors in the area are reported paying a minimum \$15-17 an hour.

However, waiver of DHS enforcement efforts against illegal immigrant labor has resulted in a flood of illegal immigrants into the New Orleans area, the firing of U.S. reconstruction workers who are replaced at lower wages by illegal immigrants, and hampered the return of storm victims to the area. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin told business leaders that the city was currently being "overrun by Mexican workers."

Norwood has demanded the federal government do everything possible to provide temporary jobs for

hurricane-displaced workers through the reconstruction effort. "These jobs should go to our own citizens who need work," Norwood says, "not illegal immigrants who are swamping the labor pool."

Norwood says the impact of illegal worker takeover of Katrina reconstruction affects more than just Gulf Coast storm victims. "These illegal workers are sending a large part of their earnings to their home country in the form of remittances, which means once we pay them, the money is permanently taken out of our economy, and doesn't help to stimulate any new permanent jobs here, as it would with an American workforce."

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