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Congressman

NEWS RELEASE

Steve Rothman

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Contact: Bob Decheine

Phone: 202-225-5061

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-- Renews Call for Independent Commission to Investigate Inadequate Government Response --

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“I can't imagine that anyone who is committed to good government would feel comfortable spending hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer money on hurricane relief without knowing how and why the immediate response of the federal government failed so miserably and how exactly this new money will be spent,” said Rothman during the hearing. “We need to take care of these survivors, especially the poorest ones, and I am eager to hear how your agency plans to accomplish this.”

In addition to pressing HUD officials today, Rothman has been highly critical of the Administration's failure to adequately protect or evacuate the people of the Gulf region and for its long delay in getting aid to the areas ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. He has called for an independent, bi-partisan commission; modeled on the 9/11 Commission chaired by former New Jersey Governor Tom Kean and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, to investigate the failures of all levels of government in these matters.

“The fact that the Bush Administration and Congress have not already created an independent commission like the 9/11 Commission is inexcusable,” Rothman stressed. “Every American knows that mistakes were made – certainly not intentionally by anyone at any level of government – but they were made nonetheless. We have the right to know how and why these mistakes were made so we can learn from them and are better prepared and better able to respond the next time disaster strikes.”

Rothman is the first Member of Congress from Bergen County to secure a seat on the powerful House Appropriations Committee in the history of the United States. Since this committee makes all spending decisions for Congress, he is in an excellent position to serve as a watchdog over the billions that will be spent on disaster relief.

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