



H.Res. 1376– Commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee Hurricane of September 1928 and its associated tragic loss of life

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1376 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL) on July 24, 2008. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and was ordered to be reported from Committee by voice vote on July 31, 2008.

H.Res. 1376 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 24, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1376 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Memorializes the tragic loss of approximately 3,000 lives in the United States and its territories due to the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928;
- Recognizes the enduring importance of hurricane preparedness measures, enhanced evacuation, emergency plans, and disaster response training especially in economically disadvantaged communities to prevent a disproportionate impact of natural disasters and disparities in disaster response;
- Recognizes the role of relevant Federal agencies, research institutes, universities, and disaster response organizations in providing intensity forecasting, long-range projections of hurricane activity, emergency management, and hurricane and storm damage reduction to better prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the extensive loss of life and devastating impacts of hurricanes and storms;
- Fully supports initiatives to enhance our understanding of storm impacts on physical structures, including water management systems and other infrastructure that may be vulnerable to the most intense of storms;
- Urges the State of Florida and local governments to commemorate and memorialize the 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee Hurricane and the loss of approximately 3,000 people lost in the natural disaster; and
- Commends the Army Corps of Engineers for its ongoing rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike and encourages continued collaboration among Federal, State, and local governments toward expeditious completion of the rehabilitation effort.

BACKGROUND

The Okeechobee Hurricane was classified as a level 5 hurricane and made landfall in Florida on September 16, 1928. The hurricane killed approximately 3,000 and is recognized by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as the second deadliest hurricane on record in the United States, the first being Hurricane Katrina. The total damages, adjusted for inflation were valued at over \$16 billion.

Migrant workers, many of whom were African American, represented a large number of those killed in the wake of the Okeechobee Hurricane. Their story was later told by Zora Neale Hurston in her book, "Their



Eyes Were Watching God.” Many of those killed by the Okeechobee Hurricane in southern Florida were buried in segregated mass graves.

In the aftermath of the Okeechobee Hurricane the state of Florida began putting in greater safe measures in order to ensure future hurricanes would not inflict the damage of the Okeechobee.

STAFF CONTACT

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