

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 6, 2005

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley:


As the nation responds to the many tragedies surrounding Hurricane Katrina, we request that you indefinitely delay consideration of the portion of reconciliation that addresses entitlement cuts. At a time when millions are displaced and seeking federal and state assistance, we believe it is inappropriate to move forward on the portion of a legislative package that would cut funding for Medicaid, Food Stamps, WIC, housing and education.

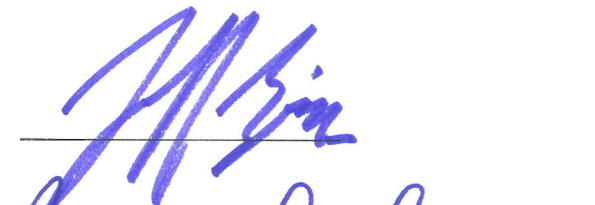
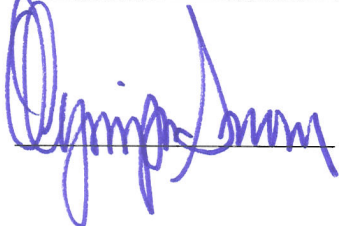
With a path of destruction spreading over four states and 90,000 square miles, the need for help is immense. Fortunately, the federal government already has numerous programs available to help meet basic needs, including Medicaid, Food Stamps, housing and education. Unfortunately, the reconciliation process as it stands would cut these programs. Therefore, we believe it is prudent and necessary to delay action that would ultimately reduce available funding and possibly divert the focus of program staff away from relief efforts toward implementation of legislative changes.

Most Americans will never know the true impact Hurricane Katrina has had on the lives of people living in the Gulf States. Fortunately, all understand the importance of the federal government's ability and willingness to respond by providing care and aid. As Congress moves forward with its fall agenda, we must remain focused on the relief efforts and ways to deliver both short and long term aid. We believe this is best accomplished by preserving entitlement programs at this time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,





Blanch L. Lincoln