



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2007

## *House of Representatives*

# HONORING THE FIRST RESPONDERS AND SUPPORTING THE VICTIMS OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I represent the southern part of the City of San Diego where we had thousands of evacuees, hundreds of homes lost, a really terrifying situation for many people. Of course, getting back on their feet will be a major, major challenge. But what we saw, as we have heard from my colleagues, is cooperation, cooperation from all levels of government, from the cities, the fire districts, county, State, Federal, and also international, which no one has mentioned up to this point. I watched as 60 firefighters, bomberos as we call them, from Tijuana, in Mexico, came to help and were a part of the team as we fought the Harris fire in southern San Diego. I think that was a very important contribution.

I had the opportunity to talk to the President as we flew to the fires. He understood that he needed to be visible very early, which was

very hopeful, and that FEMA had to be proactive and not just reactive. The blue shirts of FEMA were on the job and visible everywhere, and their local assistance centers were set up very much earlier than in any previous disaster, I think. And that gave hope to many people. Those assistance centers, again, before even many of the evacuees had been allowed to return home were there and helping people.

We saw the hope on people's faces as they saw this cooperation in getting help from everywhere. And although they face a very difficult time, they do have hope. It was the volunteers, of course, our firefighters and our officers, police officers and other first responders, but the volunteers came from all over. Some of them had evacuated their own homes. Some of them lost their own homes.

Teachers and others were there to help the children while away the time and even learn while they were there, people who brought food, people who brought clothing and psychological help, massages and medical help. So all of these people were involved. It was an incredible sight to behold as we went to Qualcomm Stadium or any of the evacuation centers around the county. You saw everybody pitching in. It was that coming together in San Diego that will give hope to the people who face challenges in the future and that got us through this very terrifying time.

I thank the House for this resolution in support of the people of California.