

9/10/05

Katrina and Other Things

by

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So much of importance happening at once... the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with New Orleans flooding, the obvious gouging of America at the gas pump and this week's announcement of Chief Justice Rehnquist's death.

1 Hurricane Katrina ran the gamut of not being a big worry to the biggest natural disaster this country has ever experienced. Many areas of the Gulf Coast were hit hard but it is obvious that New Orleans and the alleged tragedy of errors there will occupy number one on the list of talked about events for weeks to come.

Without being in their shoes none of us can be expected, nor should we be so presumptive as to know how those in the city of New Orleans should respond physically or verbally to the horrific pressures put upon them over this past week. One thing for certain, however, those that choose to steal, rape and/or endanger the lives of anyone else need to be taken out forcefully, if necessary, and as soon as possible. As to the post-hurricane response time and the seeming ineptness of those in charge, as difficult as it may be, we should not be pointing fingers of blame at anyone until all the responsibilities of *all* levels of government, i.e., local, state, and federal have been determined. One thinking point... I've been told that federal intervention can not take place until an official request by states or communities is received. Another area of great concern... all parties concerned, especially those in political leadership positions, should refrain from playing the "race" card as our friends in the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington are so blatantly doing. They accused FEMA and Coast Guard rescue helicopters of being slow in their response because those being rescued are black and poor. Their comments are self serving, ill advised, ridiculous and inflammatory at best, and can only create additional turmoil in the entire situation.

Now is the time to reach as deeply into our pockets and bank accounts as we can to help restore dignity and order to the lives and communities of all those affected and, those of us who are able should also find a way to volunteer ourselves to help anyway we can in the cleanup and stabilization process. For those who still believe in its power, prayer for all concerned would be very apropos at this moment as well.

2 The meteoric rise of gas prices is said to be a direct result of Hurricane Katrina and the immediate cessation of refined oil flowing from that area. It has been said that once the refineries are back on line it will take quite awhile before we will see a drop in gas prices. My response is WHY? It only took a few hours for prices to shoot up, why should the reverse be true in prices coming down. Obviously, it shouldn't!

If all governors of these United States would do what the governor of Georgia did this past week, we would be better off as well. Georgia's Governor Sonny Perdue issued an executive order removing GA's gasoline tax for the next two months which immediately made everyone's gas 15 cents cheaper. Several states have announced a budget surplus in their fiscal year's end, so why can't those same states utilize the windfall of extra cash to give it back to the people in the form of cheaper gas? The act of temporarily removing the gas tax statewide is an answer so logical I'm surprised most states haven't done it. In the interim, and for future effectiveness, there should be severe and immediate criminal punishment for those who choose to take advantage of the public's vulnerability at the gas pump or any other area in time of a disaster?

3 Just weeks after he said he wouldn't retire from the United States Supreme Court until his health demanded it, Chief Justice William Rehnquist has died 27 days shy of his 81st birthday. Justice Rehnquist served his 33 years and 7+ months in the United States Supreme Court with distinction and he was a man of many passions, two of which were the American people and the United States Constitution. He had argued, many times unsuccessfully, with liberally activist Associate Justices about maintaining the Constitution's strict interpretation on certain issues with which we deal daily... one of which was the right of life for everyone including the unborn,

Rehnquist's sudden death, following Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement, leaves two critical vacancies on the nation's highest court. President Bush upgraded Judge John Roberts' nomination from Associate Justice to Chief Justice and the pundits are already determining in their inimitable wisdom who the President should nominate for the second vacancy. Of course, we could see a smooth transition and filling of both of these vacancies now existing on the court, but recent history of the President's detractors dictates that we can expect harsh, over the top criticism and continued obstructionist tactics in the approval process. Would that I was wrong on this count, but don't put any money on it.

I would urge all you readers to help the process by contacting your United States Senators and demand that they give any of the President's nominees a swift and fair up and down, full floor Senate vote for confirmation.

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