

**THE ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT DURING TIMES OF
NATURAL DISASTER'S: A LOOK AT HURRICANE KATRINA**

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“There was no structure, no organization, no command center, only despair...There were reports of gun-fire at medical-relief helicopters, pirates captured rescue boats, there were reports of police standing and watching looters...they even joined them...thousands of people were trapped in the Superdome.”¹ Thus, the question that America is asking is...“Who is to blame for the inadequate response...What isn’t fair is to dump on the federal officials and avoid those most responsible...local and state officials who failed to do their job as the first responders. The plain fact is lives were needlessly lost in New Orleans due to the failure of Louisiana’s governor Kathleen Blanco.”²

The Hurricane Katrina tragedy was such a devastating event that no one knew who was to blame for the preparations or the immediate response in wake and after the hurricane. Many Americans felt that because the magnitude of the event was so large and so many people were affected causing the greatest tragedy in American history, that the federal government should have been responsible for the preparations and evacuations of the New Orleans residents. Facts from many newspapers and scholarly journals demonstrate that it was not the responsibility of the federal government to prepare the residents. Many Americans also believed that the mayor of New Orleans had the ultimate responsibility for preparing New Orleans residents, which isn’t true either. Thus, the governor of Louisiana as the manager of the state had the first and ultimate responsibility of preparing and responding to the needs of New Orleans residents subjected to the wrath of Hurricane Katrina.

Hurricane Katrina bolstered the importance of state government, its’ intermediary role in government and the significance that state governors play as state leaders. Daniel Elazar argues that state governments are the “keystones of the American governmental arch”³ The state government sits between the local governments on the one hand, which are subservient to the state government, and they sit below the federal government on the other hand. Thus, state government is the important connection between the national and local branches of government. “The intergovernmental relationship between states and their inferior governments is as important to understanding governments as is the relationship between the national government and the states.”⁴ The inadequacy of the state government to respond to the Hurricane Katrina victims whom were predominately Black-Americans reverts the perceptions of state government to what they were before the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Historically state governments have been labeled as backward, incapable and undemocratic institutions of the United States.⁵ This perception of state government is associated with actions and inactions of state government not allowing Black-Americans the right to the franchise. “States began to amend their constitutions to enact a series of

¹ Thomas, E. (2005, September 12). The Lost City, Newsweek, Pp. 44.

² Williams, Bob. (2005). Blame Amid the Tragedy. Originally published September 6, 2005 in the Wall Street Journal. Pp. 1-3. Internet web site:

http://texasinder.org/Opinion_Bob_Williams_9_6BlameforKartina.htm

³ The American Assembly (1970), The States and the Urban Crisis, Prentice-Hall, Inc. New Jersey, Pp.6.

⁴ Sources for position paper, The new face of state and local governments, Chapter 21, pg 4-6;

<http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com>

⁵ *Id.*

laws intended to re-establish and entrench white political supremacy that would further reduce black voting strength and minimize the number of black elected official.”⁶

However, after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed many states began to redeem their image as being sovereign political instruments of the people. “Today, however state government and governors are viewed more positively by many.”⁷ Subsequently, Louisiana’s state government response to Hurricane Katrina may have diminished this new image of state government.

This paper is a position paper to dispel the belief that federal and local governments were ultimately responsible for the preparations of New Orleans residents. Much emphasis will be place on the states role as first responders to local emergencies. This paper will define the role of state government (in times of crises). Finally, this paper will present issues that state government will have to face in the future because of Louisiana state government’s inappropriate response to hurricane Katrina.

“The governor of a state is the leader and “like the president, is expected to wear many hats in their jobs” The governor of a state direct many different agencies and programs and has many responsibilities in regard to the state and local governments.”⁸

The role of a state governor is to be an active manage and leader of the states’ citizens. “The governor in his/her “leader of the people” capacity is presumed to be concerned with all the problems for the citizens of the state, and whether or not those problems can be addressed very effectively by state government.”⁹ It is more than likely that a responsible governor, will plan for improvements in the quality of life for its residents even though it may not be the duty of the states to act upon them – a responsible governor will still be concerned with how these problems will affect its states’ citizens.

“...A governor as an effective manger and visionary leader will have long-run positive impact on the citizens of his or her state in terms of economic well-being, faith in government, democracy and expectations.”¹⁰

For instance, even though governors do not have any leverage on determining the prices of gas it was Governor Granholm of the State of Michigan to be the first to request the prices of gas to be lowered in Michigan to more reasonable prices after Hurricane Katrina. Governor Granholm believed that it was unfair for residents of the state to suffer

⁶ United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Voting Sections; Introduction to Federal Voting Rights Laws, Retrieved (November, 2005) Pp 2, http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro_a.htm

⁷ Sources for position paper, The new face of state and local government, Chapter 21. pg 4-6: <http://ocawlonline.pearsoned.com>

⁸ Id.

⁹ National Governors Association, Center for Policy Research (1978), Governing the American States. Hall of States; Washington D.C. Pp.88.

¹⁰ Scheppach, Raymond, What Makes a Successful Governor? Source © 2005 statline.org: <http://www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/11689/>

because they were at the end of a broken gas line. Many of the gas lines had been destroyed in New Orleans causing gas prices to sky rocket. Her role in communicating to the major gas corporations through the media led the gas prices to drop by \$.30 to \$.50 in a matter of hours. This in the eyes of many, was seen as being the epitome of a responsible and pro-active governor on a micro level.

On a macro level of a crisis many governors have gone beyond the call of duty to ensure the safety of its residents. The greatest modern day example of this is the immediate response of Governor Pataki of New York during the attack on the World Trade Center that occurred on September 11, 2001. Governor Pataki worked endlessly to ensure the rescue mission would be an effective operation that would save the lives of those that were seriously injured and alive after the Twin Towers were destroyed. The governor had no forewarning of this crisis, however he presented immediate responses to the victims. "Governor Pataki in the aftermath of 9/11 continuously updated the U.S on the response methods that were taken. He pursued all resources including the deployment of more federal troops, state personnel and New York State Police troopers."¹¹ "Governor Pataki displayed tremendous leadership in managing a chaotic situation in the city."¹²

These state governors took an active leadership position for their state. They assessed the situation, used effective communication to respond and advocated for the citizenry and presented an effective solution on how state government can help to solve the dilemma. "...It is critical for a governor not only to define the challenge, but to specify how state government will provide specific solutions."¹³

These governors have been commended for their responses to the needs of their citizenry considering there are different ways that state governors can perceive and respond to their position as first leaders of the state government.

Governors can take one of two positions as they assume their role as leader of the state. They can view their role as a leader from the perspective that they are the head of a successful business firm in which the governor actively sets goals; places and develops agencies to make sure their goals are followed through.¹⁴ From this perspective the governor is a 'political entrepreneur' that is working to seek favor from its residents to support future state initiative or votes during re-election. The other position that governors can take is to "accept the role in theory, but not follow through with it in a day to day practice."¹⁵ Governors like Blanco procrastinate to intervene in certain situations and are leery about taking on too many problems and issues.

¹¹ "WTC RESPONSE UPDATE: GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES OVERNIGHT RESPONSE", Excerpted from the New York State website: <http://www.tearhervision.fen.com/current-event/war/6817.html>

¹² Tancredo, Tom. Block Aid Louisiana Politicians, Untitled Document retrieved November 14, 2005. Internet Source: <http://tancredo.house.gov/press/pressers/o907TancredoBlockAidToLouisiana.htm>

¹³ Id. What Makes a successful Governor?

¹⁴ National Governors Association, Center for Policy Research (1978), Governing the American States. Hall of States; Washington D.C. Pp.88.

¹⁵ Id.

“...Governor Blanco failed to take charge of the situation to ensure that the state emergency operation facility was in constant contact with Mayor Nagin and FEMA. It is likely that thousands of people died because of the failure of Gov. Blanco to implement the state’s plan.”¹⁶ Below is an example of a governor that reacted such as Governor Blanco during a crisis.

“...Thus in 1992, Florida’s Governor Lawton Chiles came under withering criticism for waiting three days after the destruction of Hurricane Andrew before making a written request for federal troops that were standing by with food and tents.”¹⁷

If a governor chooses to take this perspective on their role as governor, they are allowing themselves to lose control over their prescribed authorities and the state as well. “Organization both elevates and restrains a leader; disorganization provides no institutional brake on capriciousness when the will in that direction is present...in the work of state institutions and in the programs of state government.”¹⁸ Thus, Governor Blanco of Louisiana failed to take on a leadership role during Hurricane Katrina.

The Governor’s role in the time of crisis is to ensure that the agencies under the governor’s jurisdiction can respond to the threat of disasters. The threat of a disaster can occupy the administration of the governor. The governor must be the spokesperson of the event and the person in charge of the evacuation and rescue mission. The governor must avoid the appearance of inadequacy or the inept appearance of irresponsibility to an emergency. The governor should take steps before the disaster strikes to make sure that the state government functions smoothly in an emergency. The most important of these steps is a policy statement on comprehensive emergency management-not only for preparedness and response, but also for mitigation and recovery together with the appointment of a state emergency management director.¹⁹ “...If the response is ineffective or inappropriate the governor must account for the failure.”²⁰

There are mechanisms in place to ensure that the governor in every state knows their responsibility in times of crisis. By evaluating the publication **A Governor’s Guide to Emergency Management**, it is mandatory that the governor acts appropriately during times of crisis. It is required by state law that the governor carries out emergency preparedness, response and recovery actions.²¹ It also specifies that state government is

¹⁶ Williams, Bob. (2005). Blame Amid the Tragedy, Originally published September 6, 2005 in the Wall Street Journal. Pp. 1-3. Internet web site:

http://texasinder.org/Opinion_Bob_Williams_9_6_Blamefor_Katrina.htm

¹⁷ The Failure of a System, Time Life Magazine.

¹⁸ Governing the States and Localities, Lockard pg.94-95

¹⁹ National Governors Association, Center for Policy Research (1978), Governing the American States. Hall of States; Washington D.C. Pp. 116.

²⁰ Being Governor, Beyle and Muchmore eds. Pg 100

²¹ National Governors Association (2001) Powers, Roles and Responsibilities of a Governor and State Agencies, Pg. 27-29.

key for collecting information and assessing the problem, and then deciding the course of action to take. The office of emergency management is the quarterback. The state determines the emergency management needs and capabilities of its political subdivisions and then channels state and federal resources, technical assistance and operational support in an emergency to the local government.²²

Ultimately, “the authority and responsibility for emergency management at the state level rest with the governor and his or her designated representatives.”²³ The duty of a cautious state governor is to appoint an effective agency leader to carry out the procedures of the state’s emergency plan. Though there are some issues that a governor can not solve because of limited powers stated in the states constitution-emergency preparedness is not one of them.

It will always be the responsibility of the governor “to suspend a states statues, procure materials and facilities, direct evacuation, authorize the release of emergency funds and reallocate state agency budgets for emergency work, issue state or area declarations and involve appropriate state response, apply for and monitor federal disaster and emergency assistance.”²⁴

Because Governor Blanco was supposed to have known of these responsibilities it is not understood why Governor Blanco as the states leader did not take the proper precautions to lead the New Orleans victims to safety. There were plans implemented that were to prepare the city of New Orleans for such an event. There was a contingency plan drawn, but not strategies were ever considered to push this plan forward.

One year ago, Hurricane Ivan threatened, New Orleans ordered an evacuation, but the state did not provide buses to help mobilize and transport the residents, Governor Blanco knew that the majority of the would be affected residents were on the lower end of the socio-economic stratum and had no means for evacuation unless the governor provided the means of transportation. However the Louisiana State Government did not provide any city or school buses to evacuate the residents. The greatest result that occurred from this situation is that Hurricane Ivan redirected its course and missed New Orleans, Thus, Governor Blanco realized that a better evacuation plan had to be pursued...but she never pursued it.²⁵

“...The safe evacuation of threatened population is one of the principle reasons for

developing a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.”²⁶

²² Id.

²³ New Jersey State Police Office of Emergency Management (Rev-10/01) Basic Workshop in Emergency Management, Unit 4-Roles of Government, Pp. 3-4.

²⁴ Id.

²⁵ Id.

²⁶ Williams, Bob. (2005). Blame Amid the Tragedy. Originally published Seotenber6m 2005 in he Wall Street Journal. Pp. 1-3. Internet web site:

Again in 1998, the city of New Orleans was threatened by Hurricane George. There were about 15,000 people that were sent to the Superdome. In the Superdome, rapes, thefts, fights and vandalism run rampant because the facility was not secured to handle that amount of people. The governor knew of the security measures that the local government would need in the event that such a crisis would occur. However, Governor Blanco never effectively pushed forward any efforts, such as deploying the National Guard in advance to handle the security measures that would arrive at the Superdome during Hurricane Katrina. If the state governor and her emergency staff would have effectively solved the problems from this event, the situations that occurred during and after Hurricane Katrina at the Superdome would not be so severe.

Lastly, a simulated drill was planned by state officials with the help of local and federal government. The exercise simulated the evacuation of more than a million residents. In a report conducted by USA Today, an engineer stated:

“...A year ago I (Suhayda) helped with an emergency response exercise in which computer models showed that the levees and flood walls guarding the city would be overwhelmed by a category 3 hurricane they were designed to withstand...The exercise was ran by local, state and federal officials in New Orleans, it showed a fake hurricane Pam with wind up to 130 mph leaving a path of destruction similar to Katrina’s wrath-a million people needed to be evacuated and sheltered for months, thousands awaited rescue, up to 600,00 building were destroyed...but when it was time to find money and strengthen the levees, the fund for the cities defense ended up far down the federal government priority list.”²⁷

Again the precautions from this event never materialized into effective strategies. Though the findings of this simulation were not a high priority on the federal governments list, Governor Blanco should have made this a top priority on her list of immediate needs.

“...It is critical for a governor to define future challenges and provide a pathway for citizens to face them.”²⁸

If the governor knew that her administration could not have swayed the federal government to appropriate funds for the levees to be fixed she could have expressed the urgency of this need to the local citizenry and encouraged them to write their legislature to fund the initiative, considering that she had knowledge that predicted the worst for New Orleans residents.

http://texasinsider.org/Opinion_Bob_Williams_9_6_Blamefor_Kartina.htm

²⁷ Drinkard,J, Eisler. P, Watson. T, (2005, September 12), Engineers had warned of a looming disaster. USA Today, pp. 5A

²⁸ Scheppach, Raymond, What Makes a Successful Governor? Source © 2005 statline.org: <http://www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/11689/>

“...The evacuation plan warned that if an evacuation order issued without the mechanisms needed to disseminate the information to the affected persons, then we face the possibility of having large numbers of people either stranded or left to the mercy of a storm, or an area impacted by toxic materials.”²⁹

Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened due to the inability of the state government to appropriately prepare for the crisis. How was the State of Louisiana still unprepared for this crisis after all of these warnings? Furthermore, what should have the State of Louisiana done more appropriately in its preparation and response tactics? The State of Louisiana should have acted as first responders to the crisis, instead of depending on FEMA to act as the first responder.

“...The primary responsibility for dealing with emergencies does not belong to the federal government. It belongs to the local and state officials who are charged with the management of the crucial first response to disasters. First response should be carried out by the local and state emergency personnel under the supervisions of the state governor and his/her emergency operations center.”³⁰

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) is only the general coordinator of emergency management activities. FEMA only supports a states preparedness by providing national program operations. Thus, it is up to the state government to prepare an effective emergency plan. In the event that a disaster does occur, this agency should not be considered a resource as a first responder to the states needs. The publication for the Federal Emergency Agency states:

“FEMA does not respond to every disaster that occurs in the U.S, it responds only when a disaster overwhelms the states’ resources and the governor requests federal help. Once damage assessments are made, the President may issue a federal disaster declaration, opening the way for the federal government to pay for the disaster’s recovery.”³¹

Governor Blanco should not have believed that because of the severity of the event that the federal government should have taken on the responsibility of initially equipping the State of Louisiana for the hurricane. Governor Blanco admits in an interview with TIME Magazine that she did rely too much on the federal governments FEMA for her preparedness.

²⁹ Willams, Bob. (2005). Blame Amid the Tragedy. Originally published September 6, 2005 in the Wall Street Journal. Pp. 1-3. Internet web site:
http://texasinsider.org/Opinion_Bob_Williams_9_6_BlameforKartina.htm

³⁰ Id.

³¹ FEMA “A look at the federal government’s primary disaster response and recovery resources.” Retrieved November 4, 2004, from the Official Federal Emergency Management Website:
<http://www.fema.gov/txt/library/thisisfema.txt>

“...I have determined that this incident will be of such severity and magnitude that effective response will be beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments.”³²

Former FEMA director realized too late that Governor Blanco was unreliable in preparing the state for Hurricane Katrina.

“...former FEMA director defended his handling of Hurricane Katrina and laid the blame for evacuating failures on Gov. Kathleen Blanco and New Orleans Ray Nagin...he said that his biggest mistake was not recognizing that two days before the storm “that Louisiana’s state government was dysfunctional...He said that it was not the role of the federal government to evacuate citizens.”³³

Former state legislator Bob Williams states in response to Hurricane Katrina that

“...I am not attempting to excuse some of the delays in FEMA’s response. Congress and the president need to take corrective action there, also. However, if citizens expect FEMA to be a first responder to terrorist attacks or other local emergencies (earthquakes, forest fires, volcanoes), they will be disappointed. The federal government’s role is to offer aid upon request.”³⁴

It would be unfair to state that Governor Blanco did not do anything to prepare the residents for the event, because she did indeed do that.

“...Governor Blanco arranged to have traffic patterns on outgoing roadways reconfigured, mad the parishes that were not at risk resources for shelters and supplies for those that were greatly affected.”³⁵

However, the measures that were taken were not done in a timely fashion as a White House official state.

“...The White House said that the governor was slow to ask for troops and that the state...officials were unorganized and decisive.”³⁶

For instance, when Governor Blanco declared the city a as being in a state of emergency 3 days before the hurricane, this automatically forced the Louisiana National

³² Documents shed light on response to Katrina, <http://www.theeagel.com/stories/> By Connie Mabin.

³³ Stone. A, (2005, September 28) Ex-FEMA chief blames locals, USA Today, p. 1A.

³⁴ Williams, Bob. (2005). Blame Amid the Tragedy. Originally published September 6, 2005 in the Wall Street Journal. Pp. 1-3. Internet web site: http://texasinsider.org/Opinion_Bob_Williams_9_6_BlameforKartina.htm

³⁵ Tulmulty. K, (2005, September 19) Four places where the system broke down. *TIME*, pp. 38.

³⁶ Suggested resources for a position paper (n.d). Louisiana governors documents show political storm during Katrina: <http://www.wistv.com/Global/story.asp>

Guard to be on stand by for the event. Considering she knew about 1/3 of Louisiana's National Guardsman were deployed to Iraq she should have initially asked the permission to deploy other National Guardsman from other regions of the nation. Thus, just by activating the states' of Louisiana's National Guard could not provide enough security and emergency assistance to the hurricane's victims. Other evidence shows that President Bush declared an emergency prior to Katrina hitting New Orleans, "so the only action needed for federal assistance was for Gov. Blanco to request the specific type of assistance she needed"³⁷; however requested, but not adequately specific or in due time. Just two days before the hurricane occurred on August 27, 2005 Governor Blanco told the media, "...I believe we are prepared. That's one thing that I have always been able to brag about."³⁸ On this same date just 2 days before the event, Governor Blanco requested 9 million dollars of aid from President George W. Bush. She states, supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives, protect property, public health and safety...I have taken appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on August 26, 2005 in accordance with Section 501 (a) of the Stafford Act. A state of emergency has been issued for the state in order to support the evacuations of the coastal areas with our State Evacuation Plan and the remainder of the state to support the states special needs of the emergency plan.³⁹

In contrast to her statements that stated her and her administration were prepared for the events; the governor and her administration did not request any transportation efforts to mobilize the victims; she did not specifically ask for any water or food to be air lifted into the city. Governor Blanco took the minimum actions. She did not follow through on all the specifics and strategies that were stated in the States Emergency Contingency Plan? They were never initiated. Unfortunately, the state governor displayed five levels of great incompetence.

"...The Governor of Louisiana has demonstrated mind-boggling incompetence in the lack of planning to respond to the disaster."⁴⁰

The first incompetent action was taken by the state government was that the initial evacuation plan was not followed thoroughly, ignoring the looming warnings. Again, one year before the event of Hurricane Katrina occurred. The evacuation plan stated that: "New Orleans will utilize all available resources to quickly and safely evacuate threatened areas, even though the city had enough school and transit buses to evacuate

³⁷ Willams, Bob. (2005). Blame Amid the Tragedy. Originally published September 6, 2005 in the Wall Street Journal. Pp. 1-3. Internet web site:

http://texasinsider.org/Opinion_Bob_Williams_9_6_BlameforKartina.htm

³⁸ Suggested sources for position paper, (n.d.). Retrieved November 28, 2005:

<http://msnbc.com/id/9613133>

³⁹ Governor Kathleen Blanco, (2005, October 4), Wikipedia,

http://en.wikipedia.org/org/w/index.php?title=Governor_Blancho&oldid

⁴⁰ Tancredo, Tom. Block Aid to Louisiana Politicians, Untitled Documents retrieved November 14, 2005.

Internet Source: <http://tancredo.house.gov/press/pressers/o907TancredoBlockAidToLouisiana.htm>

12,000 citizens per fleet run, they were not used. And the buses that were used were not moved to high enough ground, being flooded with the people inside.”⁴¹

If the governor would have directed the mayor or the states response team to evacuated the citizens out of the city just as the evacuation plan stated or would have taken an assessment of the location which to move the buses to be adequately safe, more lives would have been saved. The second inappropriate action that the governor failed to perform was to use the Louisiana State Emergency Agency as an instrument to advise the local government of what to do. The Mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin, had to be “encouraged by the governor to contact the National Hurricane Center before he finally, belatedly issued the order for mandatory evacuation.”⁴² If she could have done this her self personally, she could have had the state emergency office carry out this duty. She never did anything in fact:

“it took a personal call from the President for Governor Blanco to issue a much needed mandatory evacuation”⁴³ after the levees broke and disaster escalated.

SEMA (State Emergency Management Agency) should have been consulted to seek out avenues and resources for the state. This task is a specific duty of this agency to coordinate the emergency management plan. This plan defines the role of state and local agencies and coordinated the linkages-vertically between federal and state agencies and horizontally within the state governments’ management office personnel. “...The state office of management determines the emergency needs and capabilities of its political subdivisions and then channels state and federal resources to local government, including training and technical assistance, as well as operational support in an emergency.”⁴⁴

The third inappropriate action that took place by Governor Blanco, was that she failed to ask for specific assistance, such as the deployment of more National Guardsmen or the use of bordering states police officers. Instead she only asked for individual and Household Program assistance, and debris removal. These requested resources were irrelevant to the help that was immediately needed for the evacuation or the helpless victims that were left after the storm and after the levee broke. On August 31, “she asked Bush for ‘everything you’ve got’. But some commentators and officials have blamed her for problems such as flawed communications.”⁴⁵

“...Governor Blanco admittedly states that she did not give the president a checklist of the items that were need...no one was in a better position than Blanco to know precisely what was needed and how soon. Not until the following day-Thursday, September 1, 2005 (3 days after Hurricane Katrina and two days after the levee broke) that she came up

⁴¹ Id.

⁴² Suggested sources for position paper, (n.d.). Retrieved November 28, 2005.

⁴³ Id.

⁴⁴ New Jersey State Police of Emergency Management (Rev-10/01) Basic Workshop in Emergency Management, Unit 4-Roles of Government, Pp. 3-4.

⁴⁵ Lawrence, Jill, (2005, September 13) Governor handles crisis in her own way. USA Today pp. 5A.

with specifics: thus she then requested 40,000 troops; urban carriers; mobile morgues; trailers of water, ice and food; base camps; staging areas, and communication systems.”⁴⁶

The fourth inappropriate response of Governor Blanco was that she did not display a concern for the angry and disillusioned victims of the hurricane. “She authorized the National Guard to shoot and kill rioters and looters”⁴⁷ Given that the victims of the hurricane should not have been rioting or looting of course- her inability to act and provide assistance caused these victims to police themselves. Furthermore, how else were these people to get food and diapers for their children? Before Governor Blanco considered this mandate she should have considered what other options were available when you have no absolute resources for food and clean drinking water. Hence, their options did not look very hopeful when many of the people in their pursuit to swim for safety had to come across five to six dead bodies floating across their path. The state government did not provide any assurance that these residents would be okay, thus leaving these victims left to die within the flooding and rising waters and inhuman conditions in the Superdome.

The last and most gross of all inadequacies was that Governor Blanco failed to accept help from the president to federalize the National Guard considering the magnitude of the event was out of the state’s jurisdiction after the levee broke.

“...Mayor Nagin suggested federalizing the National Guard to improve the command structure...President Bush and Governor Blanco had a meeting...following that meeting...Bush called Nagin in that office, and said that he offered Governor Blanco two options. (He stated) I was ready to move. The governor said she needed 24 hours to make a decision.”⁴⁸

The issues that were presented by the inadequacy of the Louisiana state government to effectively respond to an exclusive state duty will affect all of the states within America. Just as Governor Pataki set the bar on performance efforts by state government , Governor Blanco has set the bar on the amount of scrutiny and oversight that will be displayed by the citizenry, media and federal government during times of state crisis. Governor Blanco has admitted to the irresponsibility of the state government in handling the crisis:

⁴⁶ Tulmulty. K, (2005, September 19) *Four places where the system broke down*. TIME, pp. 38.

⁴⁷ Suggested sources for position paper, Retrieved November 28, 2005;
http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050902/us_nm/weather_katrina_

⁴⁸ Governor Kathleen Blanco, (2005, October 4), Wikipedia,
http://en.wikipedia.org/org/w/index.php?title=Governor_Blancho&oldid=

“At the state level, we must take a careful look at what went wrong and make sure it never happens again. The buck stops here, and as your governor, I take full responsibility.”⁴⁹

Though some may applaud the state governor for stepping up and admitting her faults, the road to recovery for Governor Blanco and the Louisiana state government will not be an endless task. Thus, after the disaster recovery efforts have been completed in New Orleans the state government’s next task will be to restore the public image of competence of the Louisiana State Government.

The problems that have arrived from Hurricane Katrina have diminished a recently held positive public view that citizens held for their state government.

“In sharp contrast to the political “hack” who commonly served as governors earlier in this century, the modern governor is likely to be bright, experienced, and capable of managing the diverse problems of the state.”⁵⁰

Hurricane Katrina allowed questions to surface about the moral fabric of the state government to care for the needs of the local city residents, the ability of state government to independently perform its job effectively and without federal government oversight; it has questioned if state governments have neglected the needs of the issue that have been spurned from the ‘urban crisis’. Lastly, Hurricane Katrina has allowed initiatives to be taken to strengthen the control that the federal government may have on state emergency crises.

If Governor Blanco plans to run for re-election as the State of Louisiana’s governor she will have to go beyond the call of duty in proving that she has the ability to lead the state to great levels of recovery, the issues that state governments will now need to address are: restoring the public image of state government; oversight from the federal government; neglect of the “urban crises”.

CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, most Americans do not trust government on any level, and if they do trust their political leaders they feel that the interests that the political leaders are addressing do not concern them, but only those that hold the wealth in this country. Many of those that were forgotten in New Orleans and living in the urban areas were poor. The affects of Hurricane Katrina have further diminished the view that the role of state government in urban communities is to help empower and advocate the needs for the impoverished citizenry regardless of their racial background. The inappropriate response of the Louisiana state government to Hurricane Katrina victims, the image of state government may currently be viewed as reverting back to the “backward, incapable, undemocratic institutions”. Thus In a report ‘Government Gets Poor Mark’ overall more

⁴⁹ Id.

⁵⁰ Sources for position paper, The new face of state and Local government, Chapter 21, pg. 4-6:
<http://occawlonlin.pearsoned.com>

New Orleans and Louisiana residents hold the state government responsible than any other branch of government.

Hurricane Katrina has shed a new light on the role of state government to effectively assess the needs of its state without oversight directly from the federal government or by an independent from the private sector. This dilemma has strengthened the values that many scholars of public administration hold for the 'New Public Service' model to be implemented, to more effectively respond to the citizens. The New Public Service model advocates that the private and the public sectors are better at serving the public than local, state and city officials.

The federal government has spent more than \$13.7 billion on Hurricane Katrina relief, the Department of Homeland Security said in a report to Congress. The spending included \$7.2 billion for Louisiana. The appropriations of such significant funds to state officials who have failed to do their specified duties have raised eyebrows of suspicious to Congress. "Congress has properly provided historic levels of assistance, Lewis said, now we must fulfill our constitutional obligations to conduct vigorous oversight of those funds. The committee has conducted a hearing to keep track on how the money is being spent."⁵¹

Deil S. Wright states that "constitutional, institutional and attitudinal, and administrative elements influence the status of states in an intergovernmental context can be traced to the origins and theoretical foundations of our system of governance. They judge criteria for judging how the states stand, individually and collectively in contemporary IGR...If the states do not possess the competence and the will to act vigorously and effectively, they may continue to lose the capacity to act."⁵² Thus in accordance to Deil S. Wright statement, Congressman Tancredo indicates that officials cannot be trusted with federal aid, and that federal hurricane relief aid should be channeled through resources other than Louisiana public official. "Given the abysmal failure of state and local officials in Louisiana to plan adequately...I hope the House will refrain from directly appropriating any funds from the public treasury to either the state of Louisiana or local government."⁵³ Because of the inadequacies of Hurricane Katrina it is a belief that all state governments will be under more scrutiny than every before, and will lose some of their capacity to act in times of devastating crises.

Hurricane Katrina unveiled the state government's history of the inadequate response to the "urban crises." The urban crisis is a result of state leaders being ill-equipped to deal with the urgencies of today's inner city. The tribulations of the urban crisis are very much perceptible to the individual. "For the Negro or youngster in the central city ghetto, it is over-crowded schools, inadequate facilities and insensitive, ill-trained teachers; for the

⁵¹ Drinkard, Jim (2005, September 9), U.S. government has doled out \$13.7 Billion on Katrina, USA Today, pp.6A.

⁵² Wright, S Deil,(1982) Understanding Intergovernmental Relations, California, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company

⁵³ Tancredo, Tom. Block Aid to Louisiana Politicians, Untitled Documents retrieved November 14, 2005. Internet Source: <http://tancredo.house.gov/press/pressers/o907TancredoBlockAidToLouisiana.htm>

welfare mother it is finding and housing a family with increasingly inadequate resources as cost continue to soar: For the aged person it is old neighborhoods breaking up and deteriorating, growing property taxes and skyrocketing prices of food-all provided from a fixed income; for the big city it may to-be-denied demands from municipal employees for higher pay combined with equally insistent demands from the general public for better quality services.”⁵⁴ However it is perceived, and whom it is perceived by, the reality is that it is a major issue in America that state government has the power to deal with. “By virtue of their position, state government possesses the power, and theoretically the responsibility, for attacking practically all those problems which in sum equal the urban crisis.

Before Hurricane Katrina, schools in New Orleans were failing, Crime ran rampant communities were deteriorating and the elderly were forgotten. But, there were no drastic measures sought on any level of the government to solve these problems. Consequently, the state government has mainly been criticized for these inadequacies. Though, many state governors leave the issues of the urban crisis to the jurisdiction of the local government, they have the responsibility to act and help local government solve these problems. The states have the resources and the ability to create innovative solutions to cure the ‘urban crisis’. “They may provide the fiscal resources, and the necessary administration”⁵⁵ and the capacity to deal with these issues. In sum the results of Hurricane Katrina should make all state governments assess how effectively they are in curing the ills of the urban crisis in their localities.

The impact of Hurricane Katrina will last in the minds of those affected forever because or the inability of the state government to perform their duty. Hundreds of people died, Even though all levels of governments have a role in the protection of the American citizens, the state government has the role of being the first responder during a state’s natural disaster crisis. The results of Louisiana State governments performance validates why Daniel Elazar testifies that state governments are the “keystones of the American governmental arch,” thus they are responsible for many problems that resulted at the local level, and they are the messenger to the national government. The tragedy of Hurricane Katrina should be a lesson to all state governments to be proactive political leaders of their localities.

⁵⁴ The American Assembly (1970), *The States and the Urban Crisis*, Prentice-Hall, Inc. New Jersey.

⁵⁵ Sources for position paper, *The new face of state and local government*, Chapter 21, pg. 4-6:
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