



## Legislation Text

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### Res. No. 175

Resolution in support of the Right of Return for all displaced residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast area and inclusion of displaced residents in the equitable rebuilding of the region.

By Council Members Barron, Dickens, Dilan, Foster, Gonzalez, James, Mark-Viverito, Palma, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Sears and White Jr.

Whereas, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast region and forced the evacuation and practical exile of over 1.1 million residents of Louisiana and parts of Mississippi, Alabama and other parts of the region; and

Whereas, The overwhelming number of persons who have been relocated out of New Orleans are poor and of African ancestry; and

Whereas, The 2000 Census revealed that 27.9% of New Orleans' nearly 500,000 residents lived in poverty, making it one of the most impoverished cities in the United States; and

Whereas, Hurricane Katrina produced nearly \$100 billion in property damage, making it the costliest natural disaster in American history; and

Whereas, Notwithstanding the outpouring of financial support from citizens from across the country for the relief of those who suffered losses, the conditions for the poorest communities in New Orleans and their residents are essentially unchanged; and

Whereas, Many persons who were relocated out of New Orleans continue to reside in communities that are distant from where their homes once stood, and they lack the means or opportunity to return; and

Whereas, Local elections for New Orleans are scheduled for April 23, 2006, and many individuals and organizations, including former residents of New Orleans who were evacuated out of the city at the time of the

hurricane, and who currently reside in New York, have expressed well-founded concerns about whether the voting rights of those relocated out of the city will be protected, and whether any election results will accurately reflect the democratic will of the city's former residents; and

Whereas, According to the Associated Press, recently revealed videotaped records suggest that the President of the United States and other high-ranking officials were aware of the imminence of catastrophic flooding conditions in New Orleans before they occurred; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York expresses its total, unqualified solidarity and support for all persons who were harmed in any way by Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York states without qualification its position that all persons forced to evacuate New Orleans because of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath have a right to return to the city, and all officials and agencies of government at all levels have an obligation to promote and facilitate the return of such persons; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York joins with the Detroit City Council, and organizations including the Institute of the Black World, the New York Solidarity Coalition with the Katrina and Rita Survivors, the Peoples Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition Members & Supporting Organizations, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People/Legal Defense Fund, the Meet the Need Network, Millions More Movement, and others in calling for the Right of Return of the displaced residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Region and election procedures that are non-discriminatory and otherwise in full compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and that also guarantee that all New Orleans residents who were forced to relocate because of the hurricane will have the full opportunity to participate in local elections currently scheduled for April 22, 2006; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York invites all persons residing in New York who were forced to relocate from the Gulf Coast because of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath to call upon the Members of this body for assistance with any difficulties that may have been encountered in the receipt of government

services; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York fully supports the self-organizing efforts of the displaced residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Region and for the displaced residents to be empowered to play a major role in the decision-making around reconstruction and rebuilding; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York is calling for displaced workers and residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region to be provided with public works jobs and union wages, and for the ending of all temporary housing deadlines until displaced residents attain affordable and decent housing; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls for the Federal government to make transparent the full process by which funds were designated to Katrina relief efforts, and to make available the database on the location of displaced residents; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports HR4197, the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act of 2005, introduced by 41 House members of the Congressional Black Caucus, which is designed to provide for the recovery of the Gulf Coast region and for the reunion of families devastated by Hurricane Katrina; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York concludes that the response of the Federal government to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath gives rise to the most serious concerns, and imposes an obligation upon the Federal government to dedicate all resources necessary to address the needs of all persons harmed by that disaster; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the Right of Return for all displaced residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast area and inclusion of displaced residents in the equitable rebuilding of the region.

LS# 428

3/16/06

Examined by JN