

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 816

Mourning the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009, in American Samoa and Samoa.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2009

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA (for himself, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. RAHALL, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. WAMP, Mr. SIRES, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. HONDA, Mr. CAO, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. HINCHEY, Mrs. CAPPs, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Ms. CHU, Mr. WU, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KIND, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Mr. COSTA, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. PAYNE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Mourning the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009, in American Samoa and Samoa.

Whereas, on September 29, 2009, at 1748 UTC, a powerful earthquake struck below the ocean about 140 miles

southwest of Pago Pago, American Samoa, and 125 miles south of Samoa, centered only 11 miles below the seabed;

Whereas the earthquake registered 8.3 on the Richter scale and is recognized as the world's largest earthquake of 2009;

Whereas a second earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 occurred at 1808 UTC in the vicinity of the first one;

Whereas the first undersea earthquake created a massive tsunami that struck in American Samoa, Samoa, and neighboring Tonga, sweeping cars and people out to sea as survivors fled to high ground;

Whereas the tsunami, with waves that reached up to 20 feet in height and penetrated one mile inland, caused death and destruction on a nearly unprecedented scale;

Whereas the death toll, as of October 7, 2009, is estimated at 32 in American Samoa and 135 in the Independent State of Samoa;

Whereas many individuals and families affected in this region are now lacking basic survival necessities and there remains the risk of numerous additional deaths due to shortages of clean water, adequate shelter, food, sanitation, and basic healthcare;

Whereas the human cost of this disaster transcends mere statistics and has resulted in deeply personal tragedies for numerous families and communities in the region and throughout the world;

Whereas children in the United States Territory of American Samoa running for home unknowingly ran in the direction of the tsunami;

Whereas the villages of Fagamalo, Poloa, Amanave, Failolo, Afao, Asili, Amaluia, Leone, Fagasa, Faga'alu, Fagatogo, Pago Pago, Afono, Vatia, Lauli'i, Faga'itua, Masefau, Alao, Tula, and Aoa in American Samoa were devastated by the disaster;

Whereas in response to this disaster and call for assistance, the people of the United States have responded with a generous and heartfelt outpouring of aid;

Whereas a team of more than 300 responders from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other Federal agencies is on the ground in American Samoa coordinating relief and recovery operations;

Whereas the United States Navy (USN), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Hawaii Air National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve American Samoa, under the leadership of Admiral Timothy J. Keating, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Iuniasolua T. Savusa, Senior Enlisted Leader, PACOM, with the support of Major General Robert G.F. Lee, the Adjutant General, State of Hawaii, provided critical transport of the life-saving and life-sustaining supplies and equipment to meet the immediate needs of the survivors, including more than 26,000 meals, 14,000 liters of water, 1,800 blankets, 800 tents, more than 800 cots, and 9 pallets of medical supplies and medical equipment in support of American Samoa's mass care operations;

Whereas foreign governments, including Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Palau, Thailand, Samoa, Fiji, Grenada, Hungary, Uzbekistan,

Republic of China (Taiwan), Indonesia, Nauru, Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Pacific Islands Forum members, and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) sent messages of support and offers of aid to the people of American Samoa;

Whereas organizations including the Li Ka Shing Foundation, Save the Children, the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Latter-day Saint Charities, Catholic Charities, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, StarKist, Bumble Bee, the National Football League (NFL), and many others are providing assistance;

Whereas the Samoan community in areas such as California, Utah, Washington, and Hawaii have been instrumental in helping their “aiga” abroad; and

Whereas President Barack Obama telephoned the Governor of American Samoa and American Samoa’s Delegate to the United States House of Representatives to personally extend his and the First Lady’s condolences to the people of American Samoa: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) mourns the loss of life caused by the earth-
3 quakes and tsunamis that occurred on September
4 29, 2009, in American Samoa and Samoa;

5 (2) offers its deepest sympathy and condolences
6 to the families of the many earthquake and tsunami
7 victims;

1 (3) pledges its full support to the people of
2 American Samoa and the villages of Fagamalo,
3 Poloa, Amanave, Failolo, Afao, Asili, Amaluia,
4 Leone, Fagasa, Faga’alu, Fagatogo, Pago Pago,
5 Afono, Vatia, Lau’i, Faga’itua, Masefau, Alao,
6 Tula, and Aoa as they begin the long and difficult
7 process of rebuilding their homes and lives;

8 (4) recognizes the humanitarian response that
9 is currently underway and commends the efforts of
10 all persons and relief organizations who continue to
11 alleviate the suffering by providing financial and ma-
12 terial support;

13 (5) urges continued attention by donors and re-
14 lief agencies to the needs of vulnerable populations
15 in the stricken areas, particularly the children and
16 elderly who have been devastatingly affected by this
17 disaster;

18 (6) expresses gratitude and appreciation to the
19 foreign governments from around the world that are
20 lending their support to the United States Territory
21 of American Samoa;

22 (7) commends the over 100,000 Samoans resid-
23 ing in the United States from American Samoa and
24 Samoa for coming to the aid of their “aiga” in the
25 affected islands; and

1 (8) pays tribute to the people of American
2 Samoa and Samoa for their strength of spirit and
3 their deep and abiding faith in God which brings
4 hope to all of us.

