

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB NEWSMAKER WITH MARK SHRIVER AND CRAIG FUGATE

SUBJECT: STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN IN DISASTERS

MODERATOR: DONNA LEINWAND, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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DONNA LEINWAND: (gavel sounds) Good afternoon. Welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Donna Leinwand. I'm a reporter for *USA Today* and I'm President of the National Press Club and. We are the world's leading professional organization for journalists and we're committed to a future of journalism by providing informative programming and journalism education, and fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org.

On behalf of our 3,500 members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speakers and our guests in the audience today. I'd like to also welcome those of you who are watching on C-SPAN. We're looking forward to today's speech, and afterwards I will ask as many questions from the audience as time permits. Please hold your applause during the speech so that we have time for as many questions as possible. For our broadcast audience, I'd like to explain that if you hear applause, it may be from the guests and members of the general public who attend our luncheon, and not necessarily from the working press.

I'd now like to introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. From your right, Diana Marrero, Washington correspondent for the *Milwaukee Sentinel Journal*; Tracy Wareing, counselor to Department of Homeland Security Secretary, Janet Napolitano and a guest of Mr. Fugate; Mark Seibel, managing editor, McClatchy Washington Bureau; Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana; Rick Dunham, bureau chief, *Houston Chronicle*, and a past president of the National Press Club.

Skipping over our speaker for just a moment, Melissa Charbonneau, Newshook Media and Vice Chair of the National Press Club Speaker Committee; skipping over our other speaker, Shawn Riley, Washington correspondent for the *Mobile Press Register* and the *Mississippi Press*; Mrs. Sherree Fugate, wife of Craig Fugate; Sandra Abrams, Produce, Thomson Reuters; Donna Fowler, Director of Public Policy, Maryland State Family Childcare Association Region III representative, National Association for Family Childcare and a guest of Mr. Shriver; and finally, Patrick Mairs, online producer for the Associated Press. (Applause)

Six days ago, an 8.3 magnitude earthquake struck in the South Pacific, rattling American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga and generating devastating tidal waves. Nearly 200 people died, and thousands are homeless. Among them are children; some now housed in shelters, some now separated from their families. Many witnessed terrible scenes of destruction and death. “These are some kids who have seen some pretty horrible things,” says Josh Madfis, a child protection specialist from Save the Children who is now in Pago Pago. Madfis is visiting the shelter schools and childcare centers to assess the needs of the tsunami’s littlest victims.

Disasters of this magnitude are tough on everyone, of course, but they can be particularly devastating for children. Following Hurricane Katrina and Rita, 5,192 children were reported missing or displaced. It took more than six months to reunite all the children and their parents. Many of the children displaced by Katrina moved three times before their families could find permanent housing, disrupting their schooling and routines.

In 2007, Congress recognized the unique experience of children, chartering the National Commission on Children in Disasters, in response to widespread neglect of children’s needs following Hurricane Katrina. We are pleased to have here today at the National Press Club the Chairman of that commission, Mr. Mark Shriver, who also heads up U.S. programs for Save the Children, an organization that advocates for and provides vital services to children after major U.S. disasters. Mr. Shriver, the father of three children, has been a passionate advocate for young people for several decades. He focused on children’s issues during eight years in the Maryland State Assembly, and early in his career founded an innovative anti-delinquency program for Baltimore teens.

Joining him at the podium today is Craig Fugate, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security responsible for responding to disasters. His FEMA folks were on the ground in American Samoa last week less than 36 hours after the tsunami struck. Mr. Fugate comes to Washington hurricane-prone Florida, where he served as the state’s director of the Division of Emergency Management since 2001. During his tenure, Mr. Fugate served as state coordinating officer for 11 presidentially designated disasters, including the devastating summer of 2004 when hurricanes Charlie, Francis, Ivan and Jean hit in quick succession. He also managed \$4.5 billion in federal assistance.

Mr. Fugate began his emergency career as a volunteer firefighter and paramedic in Alachua County, Florida. Today, our guests will present a progress report from the National Commission on Children and Disasters. Please help me welcome to the National Press Club Director Fugate and Mr. Mark Shriver. (Applause)

MR. SHRIVER: Thank you very much, Donna, for that very kind introduction. And thank you to the Board of Governors of the National Press Club for inviting us all here today. I appreciate the opportunity, Donna, to share some thoughts about the state of America's disaster preparedness for children, an issue that touches us once again, as Donna just said, after the earthquake and tsunami in the Samoan Islands, which have tragically taken 176 lives, including at least 34 in American Samoa. Our prayers and thoughts are with everyone affected by this catastrophe.

Wikipedia lists a number of different names for the decade that will end in just these months. They're the 00s, the oughts and even the nils. While none of these names have caught on, there's one defining quality that all Americans will remember about the last ten years. The relentless onslaught of natural and manmade disasters and the constant threat that a new one could strike at any moment. For too many of us, this will be remembered as the disaster decade. And for our children, who are the most vulnerable victims during a crisis like 9/11, Katrina or the California wildfires, the disaster decade has been particularly frightful.

For ten years, our nation's children have watched on TV, or even from their windows, skyscrapers collapsing, cities being engulfed by water, entire neighborhoods on fire and even bedrock economic institutions collapsing, forcing families from their homes. And during so many of these events, children had been left vulnerable because of a disaster relief system that does not account for their unique needs. Following Katrina, as Donna mentioned, it took up to six months to reunify some children with their families. Children are only sometimes counted separately from adults in shelters, making it difficult to provide services that meet their specific needs.

Following hurricanes Ike and Gustav, we discovered that shelters didn't have nearly enough baby supplies like diapers, formulas and cribs. And in American Samoa, we have seen that same lack of supplies just in the last few days.

And finally, government disaster plans have been written largely to meet the needs of able-bodied adults. Anyone who has helped a child ride a bike, navigate an obstacle course or play sports, knows that children have very different abilities, both physical and emotional, than adults. And research conducted just a few months ago by the firm Brown, Buckley and Tucker, found that only seven states have met four out of four minimum child protection standards for schools and childcare facilities, such as providing evacuation and family reunification planning.

Consider this: on any given day in this country, there are 67 million children in school or in childcare facilities separated from their adults. This means that during a disaster, the most vulnerable Americans in the most vulnerable settings are made even

more vulnerable because of government inaction. Put this in perspective. Stop and imagine what would happen if a dirty bomb hit Washington, D.C. Would first responders have the right equipment to help kids? What would a childcare facility do with your kids to keep them safe? How would they connect your kids with you so you can be together as soon as possible? And if you had to go to a shelter, would that shelter be able to address the needs for everyone in your family?

For Donna Fowler, who Donna introduced just a minute ago, these kinds of questions became a reality on the morning of 9/11. Donna is a childcare giver, had eight toddlers and infants, two of whom were her own, at her house when a friend called and told her to flip on the television. At first, she was in shock, then in tears as she watched the second plane fly into the south tower of the World Trade Center. Not only was she a witness to one of the most horrific disasters in American history, she experienced firsthand our failure to adequately prepare for catastrophe. She scrambled to help connect the children with their parents, but due to a lack of basic emergency planning was unsure of what to do and where to go. Some very tense hours passed, and fortunately everything worked out. Donna has told me, and I quote, “The children and I were lucky to make it through that day. However, emotionally I will be scarred for life to be in a situation of being in charge of other people's children and being powerless to help them during a horrible emergency.”

Donna knows that a different kind of emergency could have much more tragic results. That's why she's a tireless and passionate advocate for better child protection standards. Earlier this year, she testified on behalf of a bill in the Maryland legislature that will require childcare facilities to develop written emergency plans that include evacuation and relocation for children, as well as notification for parents during an emergency. And in part, thanks to Donna's hard work, Governor O'Malley signed that bill into law this past spring. Donna, would you stand and just take a bow for that great work? I really appreciate it. (Applause) Thank you.

Now, this problem has the potential to affect more than just children living in big cities or on the gulf coast. In fact, 90 percent of the children and teens live someplace at risk of being struck by natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, or tornadoes. And, of course, terrorist strikes can happen at any time. Eight years after 9/11 and four years after Katrina, many of our national and state leaders have claimed credit for improving disaster preparedness or protecting us from terrorism. Strangely and tragically, we've done little to make sure that the youngest and most vulnerable of us are at the top of that list, not the bottom. Now is the time to change that.

In ten days, the National Commission on Children and Disasters will send its first report to President Obama and to Congress. The Commissioner's interim report makes a series of recommendations including national standards for emergency shelters that better meet the needs of children, requiring childcare facilities to plan for disasters, insuring that health services that meet the physical and emotional needs of children are in place. And procurement of child-friendly emergency equipment used by first responders are also in place.

Now, I've always believed in serendipity so I'm thrilled to say the timing of this report perfectly aligns with fresh, new leadership at the Obama Administration and at the Red Cross and our stalwart allies in Congress. In fact, he's only been on the job for five months, but we're extremely heartened by the work so far by FEMA administrator, Craig Fugate, who I'm delighted to be with here today. To put it simply, Craig gets it. While we know it will take some time to get many of these measures implemented, Craig is working aggressively to make changes within the FEMA bureaucracy. He's on the beat and working 24 hours, 7 days a week so that when the next disaster strikes America, FEMA is ready to protect every man and woman, and child.

In fact, he's already empowered a senior level staffer at FEMA to insure that the needs of children are addressed at every stage of a disaster; from planning to respond, to recovery. And I'm truly honored that Senator Mary Landrieu is here today as well. I've worked closely with her over the years since Katrina and no one on Capitol Hill has been more aggressive at trying to make changes for our children. Just recently, she held a crucial hearing on children and disasters. When we emailed to invite her here today, I don't think she even checked with her scheduler. She just hit reply and said, "Tell me where and when." Thank you, Senator Landrieu for your leadership on behalf of America's kids.

I'm also honored that Gail McGovern, the CEO of the American Red Cross has joined us this afternoon. Under Gail's leadership, the Red Cross has taken strong steps to make emergency evacuation shelters more child friendly. From the training that Red Cross volunteers receive to the shelters to the design, to the supplies provided. Thank you, Gail, for joining us as well.

All of us are working to make sure that government does its part; but protecting children is a shared responsibility. All Americans should develop a personal disaster plan that includes being aware of plans for school and childcare facilities and knowing how to communicate with children during and after a disaster.

Finally, we need corporate America to do its part. Toys 'R' Us and Chevron have been incredibly generous in providing dollars and supplies to disaster stricken communities across America. Other companies should follow their leadership. While there is little doubt that another large scale disaster will strike an American city or community in the months or years to come, there remains, unfortunately, too much doubt as to whether we are truly ready to protect America's children.

Now is the time to recapture post-9/11 and post-Katrina sense of urgency and once and for all make sure that a disaster's effects on children don't become a disaster in its own right. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MS. LEINWAND: Thank you very much. Next, we will turn the podium over to Director Fugate.

MR. FUGATE: Good afternoon, everybody. I asked my wife to join me up here because when we start talking about disasters, we tend to look at the bureaucracy and we forget there's actually skin in the game. We're grandparents, we have children. We look at these issues not so much in my role as the administrator, but people have families. So when Mark within, I think, the first couple of days of me being on the job, came to me with his team to present the initial findings, and the concern they had, and they started talking about it from the standpoint of FEMA policy, FEMA programs and I said, "Children are not small adults." And they blinked and said, "What?" I said, "I was a paramedic a long time ago, and one of the things I learned very quickly was in dealing with pediatric emergencies, you cannot build a system designed for the average and expect it to meet the needs of the community you serve. Children are very different. They require very specific treatment and protocols to insure a successful outcome. You cannot just train for the average size adult and expect it to be successful."

And so as Mark was presenting his concerns and the challenges and the failures that we've had as a nation in taking care of children, I said, "Well, I wouldn't be surprised. We've had to do the same thing as we look at with people with disabilities. That when we look at our planning, we didn't address people with disabilities, we'd only addressed people that don't speak English very well." We tend to have a tendency, as we always speak in rhetoric, to plan for easy. We plan for a standard person and a standard disaster that fits all of our plans equally, and then we hope that if that doesn't work, the rest of it will naturally flow.

And then when it doesn't and we have a report that says in an area, that Senator Landrieu calls a hearing on and we have a report, what we'll generally do is we'll go out and go, "You're right. We'll write an addendum to our plan to say we need to plan for that." All right, now I have two plans. I have the plan I have to write for everybody, that's the easy. Now, I got to write a plan for that targeted audience that our basic plan did not address, children.

All right, that makes sense. We're Washington, we got plenty of time and resources, we can write that plan. Unfortunately, FEMA is not the team, we're part of a team. Where does that plan get implemented? At the local level of government. And if you have local people who are writing plans for their community and they've written this plan based upon the average response, average person, and now you come back and say, "That doesn't get it done. We need to add to that. We want you to write an additional plan," what happens? We may not get to it.

Wouldn't it make more sense, instead of trying to write plans for an average, we actually wrote our plans upon our communities and what makes up a community? When you look at the types of disaster we're dealing with, children range from anywhere from a third or more of the most vulnerable parts of that community, right? That's what Mark's report says. Yet, when you look at our plans, where do we mention specifically the things we need to do for children holistically across the plan? And if you read the report, you start seeing some themes and some trends of we're not meeting the needs in the most

critical time frames of days to weeks. And then it kind of gets exasperated further out because we don't reestablish institutions and infrastructures.

My experiences in Florida taught me that if I could do a couple of things early in a disaster, I could start addressing issues involving children. We knew to get schools open quickly. It may not be the most pressing thing, and most people say, "Well, getting school back open after four hurricanes, why is that critical?" It's critical because it provides an environment that we can get children into, that we can bring resources to and we can start getting some sense of normalcy back into their lives through the institution of getting schools.

But as Mark points out, that's only part of it. You also have to look at daycare, and daycare is a little bit of a different challenge for us because most daycare is operated as nonprofits or small businesses. They're not backed up with the institutions you would normally have in schools. But it's equally important because if I'm a parent and I'm in a disaster area and everything I have is destroyed and we're in a shelter and I'm trying to make my next steps and I no ability to get time between trying to take care of my children and trying to do something else because I have no daycare, I can't get back to work because I have nowhere for my children. Schools aren't open.

Now think about that. We talk about how we want to provide the resources and get a community stabilized and be able to move forward. Yet, we tend to forget that parents need help, too, with children just to be able to get back to work, to get back in the community, but also looking at if we can get these facilities up, we can get these institutions up, we can start bringing in a lot more resources.

You know, we found this out with H1N1. Closing schools down seemed like a reasonable strategy in trying to prevent the spread of flu. Did anybody really sit back and think about how many kids were going to go hungry that they didn't get lunch? And so we took a different approach. And approach is, when Mark brought us this, I said, "I'm not creating a new plan to go with the original plan." I want to step back, I don't want to take the commission reports-- And we haven't even waited for the final report. We said, "Give us what you got." You got some folks back here from FEMA, they've been working, and we asked Tracy, in her role, assigned to us from Secretary Napolitano, and her past experiences in the State of Arizona, to take all of our programs and look at the issues that are being raised in this report and not wait until the report's finished, or not look at how you add something onto something you already have. But go, "What do we need to change?" And whether Tim Manning who's over at preparedness, is we design and we build plans for communities. How do we make sure we take these issues that Mark's raised and build it into planning and training. And then how do we take our exercises and incorporate in these issues that oftentimes we may not have a focus on, but we need to make sure that that part of a plan is tested?

So Tracy's job is to reach out across all of FEMA and ultimately through all of Homeland Security and look at how we plan for the communities we live in. And as Mark says, the most valuable resource in that community, children. Not after we wrote a

plan, not after we issued a grants, not after we've gone out and bought all this equipment. But go back and look at from, as Mark points out, are we equipping our teams and training them to deal with pediatric emergencies, any weapon of mass destruction? Do we have the right partnerships? Again, our great partners at Red Cross. You know, they've been looking at this. They were already building a supply list to go in for the shelters. Well, knowing that Red Cross may be doing a lot of great things, we said, "Can we get your supply list of what you're doing," Mark, "what they're doing in the shelters?" And let's take that supply list and let's build that into our FEMA logistics, so we already have those contracts ready to back up Red Cross.

So again, FEMA is not the team, we're part of a team. My team is my wife, the great folks I work with, and a lot of folks at the local and state level that actually deliver the programs. Tracy's job is to help us take these reports and make them living parts of our planning process, our exercise process. And hopefully, if we have to execute, our response process.

And again, it's a team effort. Normally, when somebody comes at you with a report that says you're not doing your job, you tend to come back and say, "Oh yes, we are." And you'll give them a couple of bullet points and go, "Yeah, here's what we're doing, here's what we're doing, here's what we're doing," and we move on. We don't take that approach in this administration. Our approach is, "What do we need to do to make it right?" Thank you. (Applause)

MS. LEINWAND: We have lots of questions here, so I'm going to ask you both to come up and field them, trade off and answer whatever you want to answer. First question is what will it cost to put these standards in place, and who should pay, the federal or the state government?

MR. FUGATE: I think if we do it right, we're already spending the money. We already provide funds for exercise and training. We already provide funds for planning. We buy a lot of equipment. We provide funding to buy equipment. I think it's merely taking what we were already doing in this country and the funds we already have allocated from Congress and making sure that on the front end, we've identified in this report how to expend funds in such a way to accomplish this. So there's this fear, "Well this is going to cost a lot more money." I think no, we just need to make sure we're spending things that take care of these issues on the front end, and then look at what it's going to require us in our planning guidance, our training, and then look at if we need additional resources.

But I think right now, we spend a lot of money, let's make sure we're taking care of these issues on the front end and addressing that with the funds we have in making this a priority when we look at how we provide our plan guidance. Mark?

MR. SHRIVER: I would only add that if you look at the specific example of childcare facilities across this country, now they are regulated by state governments. They have federal dollars. And to put in basic, minimum requirements, safety

requirements that they have as part of their plan, the fact that there is a relocation center set up, there are evacuation, the needs of children with special needs are addressed. Those are, as Craig just said, low cost to no cost alternatives. In Maryland, where Donna worked, the bill had no fiscal note associated with it. It was not going to cost the state any more money and providers no new dollars if they just took into account children's needs when it came to disaster planning. And to make sure that those plans were coordinated with local emergency planners is a critical piece of that as well.

So these are common sense ideas that are low cost to no cost. And too often, we've heard this term "benign neglect." Children have just been the result of benign neglect. But as Craig said, kids make up 25 percent of the population. And in a lot of poorer communities that are impacted by disasters, it's north of a third. So what we need to do is bring attention to kids' needs. The federal government passed dollars and requirements to take care of dogs and cats in disasters, but they didn't do it for kids. So it's time now that we focus on children's needs and that we put resources and requirements that are low cost or no cost to make sure that kids are taken care of. If we can do it for dogs and cats, we can surely do it for kids.

MS. LEINWAND: Once the commission delivers its report next week, what are your next immediate steps?

MR. SHRIVER: I was just asking Craig if he wanted to answer that one, but he's not on the commission. The answer is we have an interim report that is going to be released in ten days. The statute for the legislation gave the commission two years to look at this in a comprehensive manner. I guess I could turn the question over, if this is allowed, Donna, and see if Senator Landrieu might have some thoughts about-- Is that legal, or am I going to get yelled at?

MS. LEINWAND: Sure, go ahead.

MR. SHRIVER: But the issue of some of the steps is honestly a Congressional issue. Senator?

SENATOR LANDRIEU: And let me just thank Mark for his extraordinary leadership. As you can see, he is passionate and knowledgeable and I think will make and bring the great energy necessary to move this through. And for Craig Fugate who has warmed my heart and has been very encouraging as he acknowledges that FEMA did make a lot mistakes. And instead of protecting or covering things up, he's looking more squarely and clearly at what needs to be done.

I would think that once this report comes out, our committee, which I chair, the subcommittee, has already had one hearing, we could potentially have another to be broader in terms of looking at some of the issues that this report will show, and trying to move this legislation as quickly through as possible.

It would help if there doesn't have to be a big financial number attached to this bill, although I believe in putting resources where they're necessary. But I agree with Mark Shriver, that perhaps it's not really an issue of money, it's just an issue of organization and political will and I'm hoping that we can provide that.

MS. LEINWAND: While you're here, what steps would you like to see FEMA take to better prepare Louisiana and other states for hurricanes?

SENATOR LANDRIEU: Well, that's a big question and there are many things, but I would just stay on the subject that we're on here and want to reiterate a couple of points that the administrator made. First of all, I'm so happy to hear that he's stressed the importance of getting schools up and open right after a disaster. We had 300,000 children, approximately, that had evacuated on Thursday or Friday who thought they were going back to school on Monday or Tuesday. And when that Monday or Tuesday rolled around, instead of going back to school, it was becoming sort of clear to their parents that they may not be able to get back into the school that they left on Thursday or Friday, for six months or a year or longer.

There was no plan at the federal level to provide for tuition payments or reciprocal agreements where those children would go to school. It was because of Mark Shriver's uncle, Ted Kennedy and Mike Enzie and a few of us that got together and within six weeks wrote a brand new bill, basically sort of a tuition payment plan, for 600,000 children to go to wherever they could get into a school, regardless of whether they came from a public school going to a Catholic school or a Catholic school going to a public school. Senator Kennedy in his great spirit said, "We just got to get them in school." Why? For two reasons. One, it does bring stability to their life and they're back into a fairly familiar setting, even though it might be a different school or a different classroom.

But more importantly, or as importantly as that, it helps their parents get about the business of rebuilding their homes and their communities. So I know I didn't answer the whole question, because there are literally a hundred things we need to do. But I wanted to take this time to reiterate the importance of schools and then also daycare because it's not just school aged children, which we did pretty well with the school situation. But the daycare situation is as challenging, if not more so.

The Small Business Administration does not lend money to nonprofits, it was very difficult to get money back into the community, to the nonprofit community for daycare. And until parents can get their kids stabilized, it's very difficult for them to start doing all the necessary rebuilding of their communities, particularly after a catastrophic disaster.

MS. LEINWAND: Thank you very much, Senator. Can FEMA move forward to address the findings in the report now on the agency's authority before legislative action?

MR. FUGATE: As the Senator knows, when she asked me in my confirmation hearing and dealing with a lot of other issues, “Do we need to change the Stafford Act?” And I said, “Well, before we do that, let’s just make sure that we have not internally put in some prohibition that we can change ourselves.” And that’s part of the reason why we asked Tracy to take a look at and sit down with all of our programs, is many of these recommendations to me, they’re just common sense. Why aren’t we doing this? I think part of it is just putting greater emphasis on making sure we apply resource and response to getting schools open and working these kinds of issues.

But it’s to go back and look at are there specific things that the report recommends that we can address right now? And as I told Mark, we’re a bureaucracy, we’re not moving as fast as anybody would like to. But the fact is, we did not wait for the final report. We started taking the initial report, we began looking at some of the findings. We’re looking at some of those things we can do now. And what we’re trying to do is put it into this context. Are there things that we can do under our own authority, and all we got to do is independent it? We’re going to do that.

Are there things we need to do to change the rules? We have that authority to do that, we need to do that and we’ll do it. Now, what are the things that require legislative remedy? And we will identify those and share those with our oversight committees and let them know as we go through these issues, “Here’s a challenge in the report. We agree with the report. But we may not have the tools, or we may not be the appropriate agency and we need to make sure we have the linkage in our programs and those agencies to make sure we go forward.” Because again, FEMA is not the team, we’re part of a team. And oftentimes, we talk about disaster, we always look at FEMA. We forget there’s a lot of federal agencies with a lot of resources and authorities, great partnerships with Red Cross and others. And so sometimes, it’s going to be well maybe FEMA is not the best lead for that, but we need to advocate and make sure that lead has that responsibility so we can go forward as a team.

MS. LEINWAND: What changes to the law would FEMA like to see as a result of this report?

MR. FUGATE: Well, I think I answered that. And again, we’re working right now to go--

MS. LEINWAND: Specific changes?

MR. FUGATE: Specific changes? You know what? You’d be surprised when you actually get down and read the Stafford Act how much flexibility was built into that law that oftentimes what we find is over a lot of reasons and a lot of disasters, we have built so much process into it, we’ve gotten away from some of the actual intended law. So before we come back and say, “We got to change the law,” let’s make sure we haven’t precluded us from doing things the law already gave us the authority to do.

MS. LEINWAND: If a hurricane or disaster struck tomorrow, what would be the immediate issues and the weaknesses for children?

MR. SHRIVER: I guess to jump into, and maybe answer specific things that the commission would like to see passed, I think the issue of childcare facilities across this country, Senator Landrieu mentioned, is a big deal. If you have little kids, my wife and I, we have a four year old, if that child is not able to go to childcare, is not able to get that support, we couldn't go back to work. It's that simple, if your community's devastated. So it's a social justice issue, but it's also an economic development issue. And I've been down into New Orleans, was there right after Katrina hit and have been multiple times there since. And the fact that so many families have not gone back to that part of the country has to do in some small part with the fact that there isn't adequate childcare across that region. So it's an economic development issue. Should we be providing resources to childcare facilities before a disaster hits in order to mitigate a disaster? Should the Stafford Act or the federal government provide resources after a disaster hits?

I think those are very important questions that need to be addressed. As Craig mentioned, the training that emergency management responders has in this country does not adequately take into account the needs of kids. So, is the right equipment in those entities? Are the people that are manning those entities appropriately trained? Do they know how to deal with kids' issues? And I think the answer to that is no, we don't have the right resources for medical equipment to medicine. And the people are not trained in order to take care of kids. They're trained, in many cases as Craig has already said, to take care of adults. They're not trained, nor are our emergency facilities trained, to take care of pediatric cases.

So we really have to look at the training, the dollars that are granted out by the federal government for training, for purchasing of equipment, and also the childcare issue, I think, is a very important one for long-term recovery. Because there are three phases of a disaster. There's the planning, there's the response, and then there is the long-term recovery and I think we have not looked comprehensively at that still in this country.

SENATOR LANDRIEU: Just one thing that I would add, which not be done today which needs to, is the mental health component of counseling a community after a catastrophic disaster. Try to explain to people the difference between sort of your garden variety disaster where a neighborhood and a community is destroyed, or a tornado moves through. As difficult as that is and as tough as it is for the dozens of homes, or even hundreds of homes that are destroyed, nothing quite prepares you for the destruction of an entire metropolitan area, or a large portion of it. It's just shocking to your fiber, it's shocking to adults.

And for children, we've been cutting back on school nurses and school psychologists. I mean, there was a time in this country where most schools had a school nurse. Those days are long gone. We need to bring them back. After a catastrophic disaster, if we can't provide the mental health counseling for all the adults, which I think

that we should, it's very costly in some ways, but it could be done in a much better and more cost effective manner if we as the administrators said, "As children are clustered in schools, you could have some attention brought." There are significant issues in just regular life that people have to deal with. But as children watch their parents go through such anxiety and stress, think about it. They've lost their home, their job, their school, their church, their place of worship, their neighbors are gone, their family structure is gone. Everything that gives you a sense of who you are and what you are and what you're about after a catastrophic disaster.

So these parents are pretty heroic, some single parents, trying to put those pieces back together. At least the schools and the daycare could provide some group counseling for children who need to not only understand what happened around them, but what's happening inside of their own families during those very difficult times. I want to thank the Mental Health Coalition for trying to shine a little bit better light on this particular aspect.

MS. LEINWAND: We need bleachers up here, or something. How important is community involvement in emergency preparedness and why has it taken so long to develop a strategic plan for that aspect of preparedness?

MR. FUGATE: My favorite topic. Because we have a government-centric approach to solving problems, we look at disasters and we look at government's role and we forget there's actually people there. We call them victims, they're really survivors. We tend to build our plans around what we are going to do, what government's going to do and we forget that communities are not just government. There's faith based and volunteering community organizations, some of which are active in disasters and some at the time of need will step in and help.

We forget entirely about our private sector. Shoot me in 2005, I'm handing out water and ice and food in the parking lots of open grocery stores. We had a total disconnect between what our private sector was doing and what we were doing. It's a natural tendency to do what you're comfortable doing every day. So government plans and works in a government world. And so when you try to look at disasters and how they impact communities, you get what I call the government-centric approach to problem solving. And it will work and be self-reinforcing as the Senator will say, in smaller disasters. But in major disasters, in catastrophic disasters, we'll leave too much of the resources off the table, and oftentimes in our government-centric approach, we're trying to make our programs run smooth and that's not the reason we're there. We're there to serve the citizens that are impacted. And so it's taking an approach that recognizes that people aren't liabilities or resources. You have to look at the community as a whole, not the pieces that you administer. And to that into words and to practice is really having us at FEMA reorient how we've approached these problems.

And so we've been very fortunate. I've got some great partners that join me that come from state and local experience. And we're taking the approach of the public is not

the liability, they're the resource. And we have to build our disasters around not what are the things that we administer, but what are the needs of the community? As Mark says, children. And not just say, "Well, our programs are there and if we can make them fit, then great." Start out with what are the needs of a community in a disaster? Now, who's got the best resources to meet those needs? It may not always be government. Now, how do we work as a team so that we're not relying upon policy to drive outcomes, but we have doctrine that says we open schools for this reason, and then we drive everything to support getting schools open. We support, and how we go about getting daycare reestablished.

And start talking about things from a standpoint of an outcome, not a process. And so that's changing how we're going to approach this process. So, when you start talking about community based, first thing is we have to get past a government-centric focus. And again, that's why I talk about FEMA is not the team, we're part of a team. That's a different approach of how we build that team. And that team cannot be limited to just state and local government partners. It has to recognize that it takes a lot of resource, a lot of capabilities that are not inherently governmental to successfully recovery from catastrophic disaster.

MR. SHRIVER: I would just like to add a little color to what Craig is saying. I worked for Save the Children four years ago after Katrina hit. We could not literally get phone calls returned from FEMA, we were not allowed to have conversations with FEMA. We responded with the Red Cross and working with FEMA in American Samoa, and that partnership is substantially different; more open, more cooperative than it ever has been in the past. And that makes a big difference when nonprofits, the greater community is invited him and is participating on part of that team, which is a substantially different feeling than it was 4 ½ years ago.

MS. LEINWAND: Director Fugate, can you tell me a little bit about how you changed the culture at FEMA to incorporate the NGOs?

MR. FUGATE: It's easy, they're better at it than we are. You know, I got up and coming from Florida, I always base everything about where I came and my experiences because I got taught the hard way. When you look at volunteer and faith-based groups, there's always been-- To me, it's like there's this extra step, or we have to include them in because, "Oh well, we have to be politically correct and incorporate them in. But they're not really going to do much because we don't trust them. We're going to make sure government can do it all."

I've been in disasters big enough, and this was really a lesson of Hurricane Andrew, we built a very good government-centric approach to disasters, and guess what? We couldn't handle the '04 hurricane season without the volunteers and the faith based. And so instead of looking at them as a liability or something you got to add on, I said, "You guys are on the team. That means you got ownership. That means you are accountable." I don't believe you can't fire volunteers. I fire them all the time. It's about you got to give people ownership of the team. You can't just sit there and say, "Well,

we're going to have a national response framework and tell everybody how to do their jobs." But it also means you got to show up and play. And so yeah, we want to expand the seats at the table. We want to build that team, but there's responsible to be part of that team. But you got to give people ownership of that part of the process. And I think my experiences at Florida is when we try to tell people how to do their jobs, we'll fail. When we tell people what the need is and what that outcome should look like when we're successful and then support them, we have been successful in many disasters far beyond what I thought we could even do. But it was based upon a teamwork of faith based volunteer organizations working with government as a team, not as separate entities all operating autonomously trying to achieve the same outcomes. Because in the big ones, that fails.

MS. LEINWAND: Speaking of folks who don't like being told what to do, how can FEMA and the commission influence states to act more aggressively for children?

MR. FUGATE: Well, I think it comes back to we have great partners. Again, as much as we talk about this, I think we have areas where there has been success and there has been emphasis on things like schools and other parts of the program. Part of it comes back to is we set through a lot of the FEMA funds grants and training. We tend to emphasize-- It's not that I think states have neglected this intentionally, but I think it's never been emphasis in the funding that we provide the states. Oftentimes, they were getting so many taskings (sic) come down from us, it clouded and competed with other interests and other concerns they had in their communities. I think that's how we work with our state partners.

And again, we are here to support our governors. Our constitutional base of response to disasters is not a top-down system. And so we work with our states as partners. We've been talking about this issue, and part of this is, as Tracy works through our programs and works through our guidance, is let's identify on the front end how we give states the tools and tie our funding to it that says, "These are things you should be doing. Oh by the way, the funding agrees." Instead of having this listed as an activity with no tie in on what part of federal grants you can use to do these activities, we need to basically tell people, "It's okay, and it is a priority and you can use your funds for this. And oh by the way, we want to see it in plans, we want to see it in our exercises, and we want to lead by example."

MR. SHRIVER: I would just add that the feedback we've gotten at the National Commission on Children in Disasters, when we've talked to state leadership, is "Wow, we didn't think of that and we want to address it." So, it has been, as I mentioned earlier, this sense of benign neglect. I think there are so many different competing priorities. Unfortunately, children have just not risen to the top. And I'm hoping that with the administrator's leadership, with Senator Landrieu's leadership, we can get that message out, that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. We spoke with leadership in Maryland. Senator Frosh introduced a bill immediately and got Maryland to up the basic minimum requirements for K-12 schools and childcare facilities. Same thing happened in Mississippi. The state rep who introduced the bill had built a number of childcare

facilities on the gulf coast, on the gulf of the Mississippi, never thought of implementing it, never thought about what would happen if a disaster came into Mississippi, where those children would be relocated, how to get in touch with the parents. They knew about the evacuation route, and they didn't take into account the needs of kids with special needs.

When we laid it out, he introduced the bill, said, "This is amazing. We never even thought about it." It's happening right here on Capitol Hill as well. A number of facilities where staffers' children go on Capitol Hill hadn't thought about the needs on children if a dirty bomb were to hit. So, it is real. It is happening, not only here in Washington, D.C., but across this country, whether it's in Mississippi or Maryland or D.C. or California. If you make people aware of this issue, I think they're open to it. And I think the grant dollars, as Craig just mentioned, will make a big difference in motivating people to address this need. I think leadership from Capitol Hill, and I think all of us taking responsibility in our own ways to get that message out makes a big deal.

The animal advocates did a great job in making sure animal issues were put at the forefront. We need to do that same push to make sure that kids are taken care of in planning, responding and recovery after a disaster.

MS. LEINWAND: This comes from across the nation from some folks at UCLA. They want to know similar to the medical corps of the United States, as approved by the U.S. Surgeon General, would it not be helpful for the FEMA staff to be trained on the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, National Center for PTSD Psychological first aid field operation guide in order to better assist children and families affected by disasters?

MR. FUGATE: I don't know, we'll take that under advisement. The other question I would ask is this for us to, in our planning, or is this in to actual response? Because I think part of what we want to do is identify other people already out there that have that, have those skills and do that delivery versus just training our staff. So I guess it's a two part question. Is that for us to understand these issues as we go forward planning, or is this in delivering services? And my experience has always been I'd rather have people that are the experts and subject matter folks and bring them in versus to train lay people, particularly with children.

I mean, it works a little bit better when we're doing peer to peer like with firefighters and stuff like that. When you're dealing with children, you got to be very careful, you got to be very diligent in your screening and you want to make sure that the people there are actually capable of doing that. So my question would be is this for us so we can understand these issues as we develop these plans, or is this for folks we're sending in? And if it's for folks we're sending in, I would defer it. I'd much rather partner with people who do this and have those skill sets and work with Red Cross and others who bring in mental health counselors that are focused on how to provide the support to children.

MS. LEINWAND: This is for you. Other than acceptance by the general public and positive press covering FEMA's job performance, what are the metrics and standards that dictate or measure success or define gaps in the agency's emergency management performance?

MR. FUGATE: Speed. If there's anything else my guys are getting used to in FEMA is I want it done yesterday. I look at outcomes. We said in the tsunami that affected American Samoa and the impacts there, that I wanted to reach a point where we had enough resources going to the governor on the ground, not en route, not ordered, but on the ground in American Samoa, to stabilize the life safety operations. That was his highest priority initially, was life safety rescue operations. So that was our matrix, that was a measured outcome. And the governor reported back to us about 48 hours into this event that mainly through the resources that they already had, and the things we sent to augment it, that he had reached that point. He actually now wanted us to shift into what we call life sustaining. We had a lot of critical infrastructure out. He had plenty of medical supplies. He now wanted to prioritize. Instead of bringing in more teams to do search and rescue, he felt they had that, he wanted generators. So we adjusted to that.

And it's that ability as a team, as we support our partners, and again we work in these disasters on behalf of the President and Secretary of Homeland Security, but we're really working to support that governor, are we able to come up with that matrix that says, "This is the outcome we're shooting for that everybody on the team is working towards that?" And my experience in disasters is you got a very short window to get to the point of stabilization. And so it's critical that you put resources and move and work as a team early. President Obama agreed. Normally, when you hear about disasters, we go out and we do these assessments and you get the declaration several days into it. We weren't going to be able to wait. The initial report was it was bad; it was not only bad, it could have been far worse. We lost lives, infrastructure was destroyed, communication was sporadic. We couldn't wait for an assessment. So I spoke to the governor, he relayed his request, I made the request to the White House and within about eight hours, the President agreed and had declared it a major disaster, it was issued.

Now, that didn't slow down our response. One of the great things that Senator Landrieu did as part of the Senate Homeland Security Committee was make sure that we were not stopped by lack of a declaration in responding. So in the post Katrina emergency management reform act, we got a lot of tools we used to not have. So we were responding. But the fact that we quickly were able to get a declaration, that we were able to move resources and get there quickly, was not something like we're sitting out there sending out press releases going, "Hey, look at us." That had nothing to do with it. Our job was to get there quickly, provide the resources the governor asked, stabilize the priorities the governor laid out. Life saving, moving into life sustaining, and now moving into recovery. And that's how you measure things. You don't measure it by your press clippings or how well you think you did. You measure on did we change the outcome for the governor that we're supporting and meet the needs of those survivors?

MS. LEINWAND: And a question for Mr. Shriver. What recommendations does your report include to care for children with diabetes to prevent a repeat of the shortage of insulin that occurred during Katrina?

MR. SHRIVER: Well, we looked at a number of medical issues from both mental health, as well as physical health issues. And they're in the report. We talked about the fact that there is not the right equipment, there is not the right medicine in a lot of emergency management across the country. And that the training, as the administrator talked about, that the training itself is not adequate for first responders, as well as for hospitals across this country. So we need to direct grant dollars to encourage the training of both responders as well as in hospitals and emergency centers across the country to make sure that they understand the needs of the pediatric population.

We need to put grant dollars and federal dollars out there to make sure the right equipment, the right medicine is available so that the issues that were just brought up don't happen again. And it happens on a number of different areas. It's not just that one specific issue, it is across the board. Children's needs have not been written into our plans across this country. Children's needs are not a priority in the planning, responding, and long-term recovery. I know I've said that a couple of times this afternoon, but it bears repeating. The fact that 30 percent of our population, and so many people in this country talk about the fact that kids are our most important resource. And they have suffered benign neglect, which ultimately is neglect. So you can call it whatever you want, but the fact is we have not done a good enough job in this country taking care of kids, taking care of their medical issues, taking care of their family reunification issues, taking care of their mental health issues after a disaster, whether it is a Katrina, whether it is what has happened in American Samoa.

There are going to be kids down there, there are kids down there, that have lost their siblings, that have lost their homes, that have lost their jobs. Are we providing any services as a country to make sure that those kids mental health services are addressed? Are we doing it in the greater gulf area? And the answer is no. We talk about kids being our most important resource, and we talk about low cost or no cost alternatives. But the bottom line is these things take money. The professionals need to be paid, and we've got to, as a country, make a commitment to putting those resources in there, or else we should just stop saying the kids are our most important resource. We should just admit that they're not, because we're not putting the money where our mouth is. So I hope that answers that question.

MS. LEINWAND: For Mr. Fugate, why has it taken so long to find permanent housing for people living in group sites in Louisiana and Mississippi?

MR. FUGATE: Short answer? We didn't build them. I mean, it's no mystery, when you have that many homes destroyed and you bring in that many temporary housing units, that if you didn't have a game plan to have housing stock at the other end, there's nowhere for them to move to. It's one of the things and lessons we've learned is we cannot go into these large disasters where you lose large numbers of homes and

expect what FEMA essentially does, is a sheltering program, to be the end of the story. We have to do a better job working across the federal family, that if you have this many people going into temporary housing units, that we have to have a game plan of how many long-term housing units, whether it's through HUD programs or through financing programs or through small business or through the USDA programs, to get houses built at the end of 18 months to two years so people can transition out.

It's no mystery. You don't have anywhere else to move and you're in a temporary housing unit, the reason you can't get out is you only have two options. Stay in the temporary housing unit, or leave your community. And many people do not want to leave their community, rightfully so. So, we've learned this lesson. It's taken a long time, and it won't be quick to deal with the current people that are looking, but we have been working with the Senator's help and other members of the House and Senate committees.

But this is again something. We have to make sure that when we have a big housing loss, and we do a lot of temporary housing, we know we have a plan and we have houses and homes that people can move into. Or we don't have that option, and then the option becomes binary. You stay in that temporary housing unit, or you leave your community. And then you're putting people where that choice, they'll even make the decision to stay versus leave their communities.

MS. LEINWAND: All right, don't go away. It can take years to obtain records from FEMA's Freedom of Information Office. Do you have any plans to address these backlogs?

MR. FUGATE: The standard answer is our attorneys will respond to you promptly. I actually come from the state that's well known for being in the sunshine. In fact, in Florida, most anything you ever asked you got, including every one of my emails I ever sent, which have been published in federal registries, I understand, as part of testimony. So I tend to be a lot more open, but I do have to operate under the current rules and regulations of the agency. But my approach to this is pretty much if you've got a reasonable request and there's no prohibition against it, and I'm not violating anybody's privacy, here, have at it. So, my approach is more-- I'm very much a person that grew up in the sunshine. Literally, from the standpoint of public records. I do operate now under the federal system. I do understand. My most pressing concern is always to protect and respect the privacy of individuals who has for assistance and not disclose information because, again, that was not part of the covenant that Congress set up when people ask for help. They should not have to expose their personal information. But information about the assistance in general, I think sure, I don't have a problem. We just have to figure out how to do it in such a way that we can continue to operate in a manner which is more responsive, but also we follow our current laws that we are regulated by.

MS. LEINWAND: We are almost out of time, but before I ask the last question, we have a couple of important matters to take care of. First of all, let me remind our members of future speakers. Tomorrow, October 6th, Bertha Lewis, the CEO and organizer of ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform, will be

here. On October 8th, John Potter, the Postmaster General of the U.S. Postal Service, will tell us about the future of the post office. And October 13th, Jeff Dunham, the creator of such infamous characters as Achmed, the Dead Terrorist, will appear at the National Press Club to preview his new series on Comedy Central. That's an evening event, for those of you who are interested. It's for adults.

Second, I'd like to present our guests with the traditional and much-coveted NPC coffee mug. (Applause)

And for our last question, what's the single best thing parents can do to connect with their children who are at school or daycare during a disaster that knocks out communicates and cell phones?

MR. FUGATE: Sit down with them before it happens and make sure you've talked about what your family plan is, where the rally points are. Do you understand your daycare or school's plan where children will go if they're evacuated? Do they know what your plan is at work or when you're away? If they can't get through on the phones and stuff where they're supposed to go, who's the backup. We find that a lot of times just having that out of the area contact, where it's family or friends, oftentimes can serve that hub.

But here's that important step. You cannot wait until a disaster strikes. Sit down tonight with your children and go over your family communication plan; what you'll do when you're together and what you'll do when you're at work, they're in school, they're in daycare. And learn about your school and daycare plans. And if you have questions, ask now. Sometimes, people think we have to elevate these things to these catastrophic disasters. How many people here remember when the Red Line crash occurred? How frantic it was trying to find out if people were okay? How overloaded the cell system was and how much could have been done if people had talked about that ahead of time? Not wait until it happens and go, "I can't get hold of somebody. I don't know if my child was on that train. They come home from school. My wife or my husband or my girlfriend, my boyfriend, my significant other. That's their stop, and I couldn't get through because the phones were busy."

Take the time tonight, get together, talk about what your plan is and make sure you have a good communication plan with backups, where to go, who to call. And if I can't get hold of my mom or dad or aunt or uncle or grandma or grandpa, who's the backups? And make sure you know those school plans or the daycare center plans and do it tonight.

MR. SHRIVER: I think the administrator said it incredibly eloquently. The only thing I would just reemphasize is to have the backup plan someone out of state to make sure that you can be in contact with them and the cell phone and those issues are local and they're in this area.

Donna, I know I'm probably overstepping my boundaries here. I want to thank the Press Club for bringing this issue forward. I want to ask folks not only in this room, but across this country, to put pressure on all of us. I've had multiple meetings with Craig and at the end of him, he has said, "Keep the pressure on us." To get engaged, to see what the National Commission on Children in Disasters is doing, to visit our website and to keep pressure on the commission on the elected officials in this country, both at the federal, state and local level, and the folks that are in the administrative executive branches of this government. Kids issues will not be addressed if the leadership in this country doesn't feel the pressure on us. And I hope that you will do that, you'll visit the website and you'll keep pressure on us and make sure that we really do address kids' needs in this country or else it will just go off the radar screen.

We've got great leadership now at the Red Cross under Gail McGovern's leadership, at FEMA under Craig Fugate, and obviously on the Hill, Senator Landrieu and a number of other folks have been terrific. But you got to make sure that kids issues, who don't vote, and most of the time disasters are impacting poor kids and poor families disproportionately, so they need your voice in this process. So thank you, Donna. I appreciate it.

MS. LEINWAND: Okay. I'd like to thank you both for coming today. I'd also like to thank the National Press Club staff members, Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Joann Booz, for organizing today's lunch. Also, thanks to the NPC Library for its research. The video archives of today's luncheon are provided by the National Press Club's Broadcast Operation Center. And our events are available for free download on iTunes, as well as on our website. Nonmembers may purchase transcripts, audio and video tapes by calling 202-662-7598, or emailing us at archives@press.org. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org and I thank you all. We are adjourned.

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