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Thank you Chairman Frank, House Subcommittee Chair Waters, Ranking Member BISSERT, and the other members of the committee for the opportunity to appear before you.

I am Jim Kelly, from New Orleans, CEO of Catholic Charities and CEO of a new independent Catholic housing initiative, Providence Community Housing.

In the past seventeen months, Catholic Charities has reached out and served over 700,000 people. We have delivered 70 MILLION pounds of food and water, provided counseling and information to over a HALF MILLION people, and through our emergency service centers distributed MILLIONS of dollars in direct assistance to families in NEED.

Shortly after the storm, I attended the first "trailer" planning meeting with FEMA. It became very clear to me that these "FEMA trailers" were NOT going to be the answer to our housing crisis.

A group of Catholic organizations, charities and CDC's therefore came together to see how we might help bring people of all races, cultures, faiths, incomes, and backgrounds HOME. Providence Community Housing was formed with the mission of bringing home 20,000 VICTIMS of Katrina by repairing, rebuilding and/or developing 7,000 homes and apartments.

In partnership with Catholic Charities, and with assistance from 9,000 volunteers, we have since gutted over 800 homes and 800 apartments. Now we are assisting these low income seniors to navigate the Road Home Program. The system is painfully slow and filled with legalese. Providence has taken to repairing the homes – and fronting the money -- to some of our elderly friends.

Whether you are staying in an overcrowded home with family, or a trailer, or an apartment eighty miles from your job, the stress and strain cannot be imagined. My friend Connie's house flooded on Bienville in mid-city. She and her husband bounced around until they moved in with her sister – sleeping on the two couches in the living room. Finally, they got a trailer. These trailers are very small and very cramped. Three months ago Connie's husband had a heart attack. He recovered back on his sister-in-laws couches. He WON'T go back in the trailer.

In partnership with UJAMAA CDC, Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC, Tulane/Canal CDC and a new Hispanic CDC, we have recently launched a host of housing initiatives for families like Connie's in need of real housing. We are constantly exploring ANY and ALL options to rebuild our homes, our neighborhoods, and our community.

With a recent major award of Go Zone housing tax credits, we hope to begin rebuilding 902 apartments for low income seniors – who DESPERATELY want to come home. Insurance

quotes, are coming in 400 - 600% over pre-Katrina rates. We are hopeful that a special insurance reserve fund could be established. We are also hoping HUD will award supplemental income to project based section (8) contracts for properties like these, if not they will lack ample operating funds to open. Thank you Mr. Chairman for your commitment to extend the placed-in-service date. It will make the market less skittish, increasing the possibility that many of our seniors, their children, and grandchildren will soon return.

Providence, with our partner Enterprise, is working on a plan that would phase the redevelopment of the Lafitte public housing complex. We are anxious to have residents return AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Last Thursday night, I attended a public meeting on the historical value of these buildings. Miss Johnson, a member of the resident council, asked if I would call her the next day – and so I did. She asked me who all those people were at the meeting. She had never seen them before. I explained that most of them were preservationists. She said that they did not represent her. Yes, she wanted to come home as soon as possible BUT she ALSO wanted new homes and apartments for her family and friends like the ones voted on in September at our week long home planning charette with 200 of her fellow residents. She did not want old, obsolete apartment building but instead new single and shotgun doubles that were both apartments and homes. She wanted NEW apartments that were LARGER, and had MORE bedrooms and space for the CHILDREN.

I was shocked when a leading, local preservationist told me recently that a resident's views, a resident's vote, should not matter. They were ONLY renters.

I further explained to Miss Johnson that we were advocating for a phased redevelopment where a large number of apartments would be reopened IMMEDIATELY for those who wanted to come home RIGHT NOW. Redevelopment of the new homes would then begin on the other unoccupied blocks. I reminded her that when complete, there would be a ONE-TO-ONE replacement of ALL 900 subsidized units PLUS 600 new homes for first time homeowners, on the site and in the surrounding Tremé neighborhood. I asked Miss Johnson, based on her knowledge, how many families wanted to come home today. She thought "between 300 and 400, probably closer to 300." This is the same number that our resident outreach staff has estimated.

The Times Picayune, our local paper, has said it is a question of building it right or building it fast. I do not believe that it is an either/or proposition. I believe a phased redevelopment, with full replacement, is not the middle ground but rather the right ground. It allows residents to come home TODAY, while also allowing the building of HEALTHY, DIVERSE, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES where families and children are to safe to dream dreams that can come true.

Since my early days in the Superdome, we have been blessed by so many from across the country who have reached out to assist us. We are most grateful for the support and funding received from Congress. Sadly, the clear majority of these billions have not gone for the rebuilding of our homes. A Gulf Coast Housing Trust Fund, additional low income housing tax credits, increased CDBG monies, a larger supply of project based section (8) and permanent supportive housing vouchers, and MORE funds for public housing will all be needed if we are truly going to provide the opportunity, the RIGHT, for ALL of our citizens to return.

Katrina has taught us that to be successful, we will need a spirit of humility and collaboration. If we focus on the SUFFERING VICTIMS of Katrina, who we have been called to serve, then GOD, who LOVES these families infinitely more than we do, will BLESS our efforts together.

My prayers of gratitude to this committee for all you have -- and WILL do -- for the GOOD and BRAVE people of Louisiana. Thank you.