

**Testimony of
The Honorable Jeb Bush
Governor of Florida**

October 29, 2001



**United States House of Representatives
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security
New York City, New York**

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Thank you Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Harman, and Members of the Committee. I especially want to acknowledge Mr. Goss and Mr. Hastings, Members of our Florida Delegation.

I also salute Governor Pataki, Mayor Giuliani and the people of New York for together being such an inspiration to their fellow countrymen. The firefighters, policemen and medical professionals who were first on the scene September 11 are America's new patriots and we are proud of all of them.

Florida was also proud to send some of our own professionals to this city to work side by side with these heroes in the days after the attacks, including two disaster medical assistance teams; two urban search and rescue teams from Miami; six search and rescue robots from the University of South Florida; and over 100 volunteers from Florida's American Red Cross Chapters.

It's an honor to join with my fellow governors in testifying before you today.

Mr. Chairman, in the coming months your Committee and the Congress will be addressing the various issues related to disasters. This morning, I'd like to offer Florida's experience on two of them: security and consequence management.

Security Enhancements

On the security front, Florida has been proactive in protecting our citizens.

On that terrible day, I directed the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to immediately complete an update of our comprehensive assessment of Florida's ability to prevent, mitigate, and respond to a terrorist attack. These agencies consulted with all involved parties and recommended improvements for strengthening the state's anti-terrorism strategy, including training programs, equipment, and execution protocols focusing particularly upon preventing and mitigating a terrorist attack.

Four primary workgroups were formed around the state's existing emergency support functions -- emergency services, human services, critical infrastructure, and public

information and awareness. Over one thousand subject matter experts were consulted to help these four workgroups make recommendations.

On October 11, I signed a second Executive Order that implemented many of these recommendations.

We created a Domestic Security Advisory Panel to assist the Governor and Legislature by providing and evaluating recommendations to combat terrorism in Florida. On that panel are former House Members, Tillie Fowler, Bill McCollum, Pete Peterson, Mayor Glenda Hood and others.

Law enforcement initiatives included the creation of seven regional domestic security task forces, based upon our pre-existing emergency management regional framework, to coordinate responses to terrorist incidents, ensure proper training for state and local personnel, and collect and disseminate terrorist intelligence. Other initiatives included: additional training for local law enforcement, fire, emergency and other "first responders;" prioritizing funding and distribution of equipment for emergency personnel to safely perform anti-terrorism duties; the creation of a statewide anti-terrorism database; and emphasis on the importance of aggressively combating hate crimes against ethnic groups in coordination with Florida's Attorney General.

Chemical and biological attack initiatives under Florida's Department of Health (DOH) included: direction for the Department to ensure quick dissemination of medical information about chemical and biological attacks; direction to stockpile necessary pharmaceutical treatments for potential attacks; the creation of a fully-staffed statewide epidemic intelligence service, similar to the CDC; and direction for implementation of a training program for health officials across the state.

It is worth noting that when the index case of anthrax was discovered in Palm Beach County, our health officials on the county, state and federal levels all worked together and addressed the issue professionally and appropriately.

Driver's license initiatives under Florida's Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles included: a provision for electronic sharing of driver's license information with criminal justice agencies; the authority to issue 30-day temporary permits when time is needed to verify an applicant's identity; the limitation of the duration of a driver's license to the duration of INS documents; and the authority to retain electronic copies of any foreign document used to establish identity.

Public awareness initiatives include using the public information offices of FDLE and the DEM to inform citizens about preventing and responding to terrorist acts through regular public service announcements. The announcements will equip Floridians with a better understanding of identifying and responding to potential threats and acts of terrorism.

Lessons Learned: Consequent Management

On the consequence management side, Florida learned a lot about what works and what doesn't following the devastation of Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

Consider the following: Andrew damaged 1100 square miles; over 1,250,000 Floridians were evacuated; nearly 30,000 homes were destroyed; 180,000 persons were left homeless; 82,000 businesses were destroyed or damaged; and over 30 schools and nearly 60 hospitals and health facilities were destroyed or damaged. Virtually all economic activity in the devastated South Dade area ceased.

The weight of that tragedy—that devastation—brought home the realities that we were not prepared. Federal agencies were unsure of their role, authority and responsibilities because the newly initiated federal response plan had yet to be tested.

Consequently, overall federal response—and our own Florida response—were uncoordinated, confusing and often inadequate.

Following that disaster, we completely rewrote the book on consequence management and we began our strong partnership with FEMA. We are confident that our current system can serve as a model for other states. Details of our reforms in the past decade are included in my written testimony. But I'd like to make three points.

Local Ownership

First, a disaster – whether natural or man-made – must be managed at the local level and “owned” by local government. State and federal officials should be ready to provide support and resources, offering one-stop-shopping essential to avoid bureaucratic overlap, conflicting priorities and delay.

Coordination

Second, local, state and federal governments can work together most effectively when they are all using the same plan. After Hurricane Andrew, Florida made sure its emergency plan dovetailed with the federal plan, and ensured that local plans fell into line with the state plan. We created seven emergency management regions. This put us all on the same page using the same terminology and protocols. It greatly facilitates both communication and implementation. Those same regions were used to model our seven domestic security task forces created after 9/11.

The bottom line remains, however, that state or federal officials can't be the primary decision-makers in consequence management. Local officials will always be first on the scene, know the area best, and be able to direct resources most efficiently.

This model was validated on September 11 by Mayor Giuliani, Governor Pataki, and emergency managers here in New York City. Strong local leadership was the key in getting all the resources of the City, the State of New York and the federal government marshaled most effectively.

Public/Private Partnerships

Consequence management, however, is not simply about governments and how our various agencies and institutions can best work together. It's about how our people can help, how ordinary Americans can play a key role. My third point relates to a question I keep hearing from my constituents—and which I'm sure you hear from yours—"what can I do to help?" Our people overwhelmingly want to assist the victims of September 11, but after giving blood and continued prayer they don't know what else they can do.

America is not content to be merely a Nation of victims. We are not content to watch other people solve problems on television. We want to be active. We want to do our part. We want to serve our communities, our state and our Nation when we're needed.

Florida leads the Nation in this regard: by training individuals to be emergency responders in their neighborhoods and places of business.

I don't mean professional training as firemen, police or paramedics, but basic training in first aid and search and rescue. It means training people to turn off utilities in their buildings, to know what to do and where to go to be most helpful to the professionals managing the response, and in fact to be "force multipliers" for them.

The federal government supports this concept through FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team—or "C.E.R.T." Program, which emphasizes readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. It recognizes that in a disaster our best untapped resource is you and I.

Florida has embraced this idea wholeheartedly, and we've developed public/private partnerships to train our people. For example, Universal Studios theme park in Orlando works with Community Emergency Response Teams and sponsoring agencies to host an annual drill where teams practice their skills while Universal provides actors to play victims.

Over 50,000 people have received C.E.R.T. training in Florida since 1994—including 200 this year at Universal—and now 28 of our 67 counties have at least one C.E.R.T. Program.

This is a record that we're proud of, that we're committed to building upon, and which we commend to every state and every community in the Nation.

Utilizing public/private partnerships allows the state and federal government to prioritize resources—including the additional resources we're all dedicating to security and preparedness. But I submit that we must also allow our people—individual Americans—to be part of the solution and part of the response to any disaster.

Our people have felt not only helpless but also unable to help, and we must do all we can to address that in a visionary way.

In closing, the key to domestic preparedness is to fortify our local resources, build upon our existing structures and enhance our capacity.

Thank you.