



Press Release

*News from*

# ***Congressman Eliot Engel***

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## **REP. ENGEL VOTES TO ENCOURAGE AID, RELIEF FOR HAITI**

Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY) co-sponsored and supported H.R. 4462 to help earthquake victims in Haiti by allowing individuals to claim any donations to the relief effort as a deduction on their 2009 tax return, instead of waiting to claim it on their 2010 return.

“Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people have lost their lives in the Haitian tragedy and hundreds of thousands more are homeless. The American people have been deeply moved by this crisis and have responded in an outpouring of generosity. As of yesterday, the American Red Cross had already raised \$112 million for Haiti, of which \$22 million came from text messages sent by the American people,” said Rep. Engel, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. “This is a bill to inspire ‘the better angels of our nature’ and to thank those who have already given and to encourage others to still give.”

This measure will promote timely giving to Haiti, in the days and weeks when the country needs help the most, by providing Americans with an immediate income tax benefit that individuals can claim in 2009, instead of 2010. The bill would also make clear that the many taxpayers making a charitable contribution to victims of the Haiti earthquake through a text message, will be able to use their cell phone bill for documentation, when claiming a charitable donation.

In addition to passing this measure, the House of Representatives introduced a resolution expressing condolences to and solidarity with, the people of Haiti in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010.

“While we mourn the loss of life in Haiti, we must stand with the Haitian people as they recover and begin to rebuild their lives. Due to my many interactions with the Haitian people through my subcommittee hearings, visits to the island and from my many friends in the Haitian-American community in my district, I have great affection for the Haitian people and know full well the history of suffering the nation has endured. It is that resolve that gives me great confidence that they will emerge from this disaster and together we can forge a new future for Haiti,” said Rep. Engel.

The 11-term Congressman added, “I want to thank President Obama, Secretary Clinton and the many dedicated U.S. military and government personnel who have worked tirelessly to help the Haitian people. I also wish to praise the President for granting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitian nationals living in the United States. I wrote to the President encouraging him to grant TPS, and am pleased to see TPS now in place.”

In January of 2005, Congress enacted similar tax provisions for individuals that made charitable contributions to victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami that occurred in late December of 2004. That bill (H.R. 241 in the 109th Congress) passed the House of Representatives without objection and subsequently passed the Senate by unanimous consent.

To view Rep. Engel’s statement from the House floor on the Haitian tragedy, click here - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCBIOjQP-z4>

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