

□ **WASHINGTON, DC – House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (MD) spoke on the House Floor this afternoon in support of a resolution expressing condolences to and solidarity with the people of Haiti after last week’s devastating earthquake.□ Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:**

“I join my colleagues in expressing my sorrow over last week’s earthquake, which shattered the lives of so many of the people of Haiti. And I do so fully knowing that no words we say here can rebuild a collapsed home, or heal the wounds of the living, or bury the dead. At times like these, we say that words fail: they fail to capture the true scope of devastation and suffering, and they fail to effect any change for the better.

“Nevertheless, it is still important to express the responsibility we feel to the three million Haitians killed, injured, or displaced by this disaster—the same responsibility we hope that others would feel toward us in our time of need. That is why America is joining with the international community, NGOs, and the United Nations to provide disaster relief and aid in rebuilding; that is why President Obama has pledged \$100 million in disaster aid, and why American personnel are on the scene saving lives and aiding in the recovery.

“The Los Angeles Daily News reported this week on the California firefighters whose backbreaking work gives us all something to be proud of: ‘They were bone weary from digging through rubble for five hours Sunday, losing faith fast, when the cheering began. It was like a shot of adrenaline. ‘U.S.A., U.S.A.,’ the large Haitian crowd standing in the street yelled as Los Angeles County Fire Capt. Bill Monahan and his search dog rescue team finally freed a young woman trapped under her collapsed hotel for five days....‘Bill said it brought his team to tears,’ said Debra Tosch, executive director of the Search Dog Foundation.’

“We know that there are stories of grief and loss to go alongside such stories of hope; we know that Haiti’s crisis goes far deeper than this earthquake. But we also know that when our words fail in the face of a tragedy of this scope, it is our responsibility and our honor to act.

“I urge the House to pass this resolution, and I urge the Obama Administration to give its utmost attention to coordinating and overseeing America’s part in the relief effort.”

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