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Dear Colleagues:

America's strength and character are once again being tested. This week we have witnessed the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans, LA, Biloxi, MS and much of the Gulf Coast. Millions of people are suffering the life-threatening aftereffects of this catastrophe. Many members of the American Bar Association have also been directly affected by the storm's fury and are struggling to cope with the loss of their homes and property, and damage to their practices. The American Bar Association extends to all our deepest concern and prayers for their safety and that of their loved ones.

In the aftermath of the disaster, Americans have rallied to provide assistance to those whose lives have been shattered. The ABA joins in this effort. I am today appointing the ABA Task Force on Hurricane Katrina comprised of representatives of the many key constituencies necessary to address the massive effort which lies ahead. The Task Force will be chaired by former ABA President, N. Lee Cooper of Birmingham, AL. Its first meeting will be immediately after Labor Day. This stellar group will enable the ABA to help individual victims of the hurricane, small businesses, lawyers, law schools, students, military personnel and others as we cope with this unprecedented natural disaster in our country.

Additionally, we have established a website to assist in these efforts that will be continually updated over the coming weeks as more information and resources are made available. You may access the ABA home page at www.abanet.org, where you can volunteer to provide legal assistance, find information on making donations for disaster relief and receive guidance on how you can most effectively help the victims of the hurricane. For our members directly impacted by the disaster resources are available on rebuilding a law practice and disaster recovery plans.

In addition to providing assistance to lawyers the ABA web site also serves as a valuable resource for the general public, offering referrals, hotline numbers, assistance for military personnel, small business owners and others.

Although Katrina's damage is great, America's response will be greater. The ABA and its members will do our part to help the country recover and rebuild. Together we can, and we will, get through these trying times.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Greco