

**Admiral James M. Loy, National Co-Chair**  
Former Deputy Secretary, Department of Homeland Security  
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

**James Lee Witt, National Co-Chair**  
Former Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Former Chief Executive Officer, International Code Council

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**Louisiana State Sen. Nick Gautreaux Receives “American Hero” Award from  
Nation’s Largest Coalition of First Responders and Catastrophe Experts**

ProtectingAmerica.org, the largest national coalition of first responders, businesses and individuals concerned with improving preparedness in advance of massive natural events and speeding recovery in their aftermath, today awarded the organization’s “American Hero” award to Louisiana State Senator Nick Gautreaux. Gautreaux was one of only 12 individuals in the nation to receive the award this year.

“Senator Gautreaux was selected for this award because of his leadership role and tireless efforts in advancing programs to help Louisiana families and communities be better prepared and protected from catastrophic hurricanes and other events,” said James Lee Witt, co-chair of ProtectingAmerica.org and former Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Clinton administration.

“His efforts on behalf of all of the residents of Louisiana in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and Rita have been extraordinary,” Witt said.

“Sen. Gautreaux has focused the legislature’s and the public’s attention on the fact that we can no longer ignore the threat of catastrophic event,” said Admiral James M. Loy (USCG retired), also a co-chair of ProtectingAmerica.org.

“Establishing a comprehensive program that improves mitigation and, enhances the ability of first responders to act in the face of catastrophe and creates a privately funded financial backstop to ensure that families can repair, rebuild and recover in the aftermath of a truly catastrophic event, is essential to the wellbeing of our communities, and for the entire regional economy,” Loy said.

Sen. Gautreaux the principal sponsor of legislation that would establish a state catastrophe fund to help pay covered residential property damage insurance claims in the aftermath of a true catastrophe that affects Louisiana’s homeowners. The fund, which will consist primarily of premiums paid by insurers, will provide a backstop for companies to insure against covered catastrophic losses to avoid the collapse of the property insurance market in the wake of a major natural disaster or other catastrophe in the state.

Gautreaux Named  
American Hero  
By Catastrophe Experts

A portion of the investment income from insurer deposits into the catastrophe fund would be set aside to fund mitigation and first responder programs.

“This bill takes a prospective and proactive view toward catastrophe by setting aside private monies for homeowner recovery and by creating a stable and reliable funding source for first responder programs and catastrophe mitigation efforts long before the next hurricane moves across the Gulf and washes over Louisiana,” Loy said.

ProtectingAmerica.org is the largest coalition of first responders, small and large businesses, insurers and other organizations dedicated to improving the way that American families are prepared for and protected from the devastation that comes from massive natural catastrophes. The organization’s membership includes more than 20,000 individual members, the American Red Cross, the International Association of Fire Chiefs and more than 300 other organizations and businesses.

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