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# Second Responder Bill to Provide Disaster Response Training for Construction Workers

Feb 26, 2008 12:00 AM, By Katherine Torres

Presidential hopeful and New York Sen. Hillary Clinton introduced legislation to establish a comprehensive national system for construction workers to assist first responders in responding to natural and man-made disasters and terrorist attacks.

The Skilled Trades Second Responders Act of 2007 (S. 2515) would provide \$35 million to train, certify, register and integrate skilled construction workers into disaster preparedness and response activities. The act also would establish a database that federal, state and local governments can use to identify and mobilize this workforce for disaster response activities.

Clinton noted that construction craft workers were able to provide assistance at Ground Zero after Sept. 11 and during the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These workers' tools and expertise helped assist first responders in demolition efforts, electrical and pipe maintenance, hazardous waste cleanup and other important functions.

A lack of coordination and training, however, impedes efforts to integrate workers into disaster response efforts, Clinton said. In addition, there currently is no existing system to mobilize this workforce or to ensure safe and effective integration of construction workers with first responder operations. There also is no system to ensure that these workers have the health and safety training and equipment they need to work at disaster relief sites.

"Construction workers were some of the unsung heroes after the September 11 attacks," said Sen. Clinton. "We have learned that we can do a better job of training, mobilizing, and integrating this workforce into response activities. This legislation will create a national system of trained construction workers who stand ready to serve their country as 'second responders' in the event of a disaster or terrorist attack."

Mark Ayers, president of the Building & Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO, commended Clinton for introducing the legislation, saying it "would provide increased training assistance to 'second responders.'"

The bill was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee for approval.