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### **National Women's Groups Join Women of the Storm, Urge Congress to Visit New Orleans and South Louisiana**

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- Four national women's organizations announced today that they are joining the efforts of Women of the Storm, a non-partisan, non-political citizens' group of mothers, housewives, lawyers and business owners that was created to persuade Members of Congress to visit hurricane-ravaged Louisiana.

At a press conference in Washington, DC, The Association of Junior Leagues International; The National Women's Leadership Council, United Way of America; The Links, Incorporated; and the National Council of Jewish Women each pledged their support for Women of the Storm's mission to persuade Members of Congress to visit metropolitan New Orleans and see first-hand the region's devastation.

"We are honored to be joined by these four highly-respected women's organizations," said Women of the Storm Founder Anne Milling. "We like to consider all of their members official 'Women of the Storm,' so our membership just grew dramatically – from 130 to more than 300,000."

The inclusion of the four national women's organizations greatly expands the national reach of Women of the Storm, which was originally made up of women from South Louisiana and the New Orleans metropolitan area. The group will continue urging national decision-makers to tour the area in hopes of raising awareness about the rebuilding and coastal protection needs of South Louisiana, an area also known as America's WETLAND.

"The Association of Junior Leagues is proud to partner with other women's leadership organizations in this non-partisan effort to raise awareness for the urgent need for additional initiatives to rebuild the Gulf Coast area and protect these communities from future disasters," said Pam Newby, President of the Association of Junior Leagues International, an organization of 293 Junior Leagues with over 170,000 women volunteer leaders committed to improving their communities.

Through the efforts of Women of the Storm, 13 Senators and 42 members of the House of Representatives accepted the Louisiana's invitation to visit their battered state, including key Congressional leaders like Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Senator Joe Biden (D-DE), Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

"It is imperative that our senators and representatives take the time to witness firsthand the results of this overwhelming disaster," said Stacy Kass, Executive Director of the National Council of Jewish Women. "They control our nation's purse strings and can enact the programs needed for full recovery."

"Women in the United Way Family willingly reach out to our sister organizations and the women in the Gulf Coast region. We believe in the power of rebuilding communities using *all* the talents and energy available," said Ann Stallard, chair of the National Women's Leadership Council, United Way. "By joining hands and hearts across America, together we will urge our national leaders to see for themselves what must be done to make progress real and long lasting."

"The catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina binds us all and leaves none of us unscathed. The Links, Incorporated understands the importance of working together and the necessity of collaborating with like-minded organizations to strongly urge Members of Congress to tour metropolitan New Orleans, pass legislation to rebuild the Gulf Coast Region, and protect our most vulnerable citizens. Our members took the lead in November (2005) and visited the Gulf Coast. Congress must make this journey in order to experience the needs of the people." said Gladys Gary Vaughn, Ph.D., National President of The Links, Incorporated.

***Women of the Storm*** is a non-partisan, non-political alliance of Louisiana women whose families, businesses and lives were impacted by the hurricanes. Members are culturally, socially and economically diverse and are bound by their passion for their communities and the need for the elected leadership of this country to respond to the urgent needs of the areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. *Women of the Storm* is in partnership with America's WETLAND: Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana. For more information, please visit [www.womenofthestorm.net](http://www.womenofthestorm.net).

***The Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. (AJLI)*** is an organization of women whose mission is to promote voluntarism, develop the potential of women and improve communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. Founded in 1901, AJLI now includes 293 Junior Leagues throughout Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States with more than 170,000 members. For more information, visit <http://www.ajli.org>.

***The Women's Leadership Council, United Way of America*** links the efforts of women in 110 cities (so far) to work on what matters through leadership, fundraising and advocacy. Building strong, healthy communities and stronger families yields benefits for all. We believe that women provide powerful voices and passionate solutions for the roots causes of our most pressing social problems.

***The Links, Incorporated*** is an international not-for-profit corporation of accomplished, dedicated women who contribute more than 500,000 documented hours of community service annually and has a membership of over 10,000 professional women of color in 275 chapters located in 42 states, the District of Columbia and three countries: Germany, South Africa and Bahamas. For more information, visit [www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org).

***The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)*** is a volunteer organization inspired by Jewish values, that works to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families and to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all through its network of 90,000 members, supporters, and volunteers nationwide. For more information, log on to [www.ncjw.org](http://www.ncjw.org).

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