recovery resources, primarily through community block grant funding.

Louisiana's Governor issued a formal request to the Biden administration in January of this year. My office has supported our Governor's request in every way through every channel. We worked for months to build support in Congress for long-term recovery resources, and our efforts to build that coalition has been successful.

While that support exists broadly, the Biden administration must first respond to our Governor's official request for supplemental disaster funding. President Biden must formally request specific supplemental disaster relief from Congress. Only then can our brotherhood of support take action here in the House of Representatives. That is the way it works. We have communicated these extreme needs directly to the Biden administration and House leadership.

Additionally, the State must do more to ensure private insurance companies are treating Louisiana citizens fairly. This has been a significant issue that has frustrated Louisiana citizens and hindered our recovery efforts.

I will not stop fighting for the citizens of south Louisiana, and I ask that my colleagues here in this body stand with us. I ask that our President stand with the people of Louisiana. We are one Nation. As a Republic of sovereign States, we have never failed to come to each other's rescue in the wake of natural disaster. Now is one of those moments.

This is a time when Americans must stand together as one. Every day, we are working to help Louisiana stand back up.

VIRGIN ISLANDS ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, the Virgin Islands of the United States sits at the most southern, most easterly point of the United States. Because of this geographic position and its proximity to South America and its almost sentry lighthouse position to the rest of the Caribbean, it has been fought over; exploited by many nations; owned by seven; and used as a base by pirates, privateers, rum and drug runners, and even great corporations.

Despite so much potential, the benefits of our location, climate, our deep ports—one of the deepest in the Caribbean, our fertile soil—the people of the Virgin Islands have not received equitable return on investment and have instead been the spoils of others.

Our people continue to work to create economic benefits for our homes, jobs, skills, revenue, financial independence. Our journey in oil refining is one such chapter in that search.

In the 1960s, the Virgin Islands began refining oil. Our island of St. Croix became the second-largest petroleum refinery in America. In 2012, the refinery closed, exacerbating the shocks of the Great Recession, leading to unemployment rates of 18 percent. Our government made the decision to work to bring the refinery back and, after several years, the terminal and refinery reopened.

In the last few weeks, my office has been in contact with the EPA regarding air emissions incidents, odors, and emissions around the vicinity of the refinery, which threaten the health of residents and our environment.

On May 14, the EPA ordered Limetree Bay, the owners of the terminal and refinery, to pause all operations on the St. Croix refinery due to multiple improperly conducted operations that present an imminent risk to public health. Limetree Bay is in a community that is disproportionately affected by environmental burdens, and recent incidents have raised significant environmental justice concerns.

My office has continued to discuss with the EPA regarding the shutdown of the refinery, which, when fully operational, contributes tremendously to the Virgin Islands' economy. I have also been in contact with the owners of the refinery, as well as the Virgin Islands local government, and I will share with you all, with this Congress, what we can do to rectify the issue.

But part of my concern and one of the reasons I came to Congress was to create mechanisms and funding, incentives so that communities like the Virgin Islands, places long-neglected, can have the tools, funding, incentives, stable schools, healthcare, to create diverse sustainable industry.

As I have said in the past, and continue to reiterate, the current problems in my community further demonstrate the need for so many communities like it to have a diversified economy. This would provide flexibility. A diversified economy creates an economic health in a community, not tied to a single industry or market sector. It also creates and supports innovation.

Not only do companies support one another financially, but they engender an ecosystem of new ideas and product generation. I recognize that funding from the American Rescue Plan should not only be used by the Virgin Island's government to undergird our most vulnerable citizens, our children, mentally ill, our seniors; it should be used to support creation of clean resilient jobs.

I and other Democrats recognize that we must rebuild our communities and our economy better than before through the American Jobs Plan. Now is the time to think boldly with a once-in-a-century investment to create millions of good-paying jobs to ensure America can outcompete any other country in the world.

The President has promised to deliver clean drinking water, a renewed electric grid, high-speed broadband; build, preserve, retrofit more than 2 million homes and commercial buildings; modernize our Nation's schools and childcare facilities; upgrade veterans' hospitals and Federal buildings.

The President's plan includes $20 billion for new programs that will reconnect neighborhoods like the Virgin Islands, cut off by historic investments, and ensure new projects increase opportunity, advance racial equity and environmental justice, promote affordable access, safeguard critical infrastructure and services, and defend vulnerable communities.

President Biden will call upon Congress, our body, to ensure that new jobs create clean energy, and manufacturing and infrastructure are open and accessible to women and people of color. The House is working on this. We have a historic package to build back better, creating jobs and justice.

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank our men and women in uniform and remember those who gave their life for this country.

The month of May is recognized as Military Appreciation Month, and we have several days dedicated to honoring our servicemen and -women, as well as their families.

May 7 is Military Spouse Appreciation Day. May 8 is Victory in Europe Day, marking the end of World War II in Europe. May 15 is Armed Services Day, where we thank Active Duty members from all branches of the military.

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But on the last day of May, we have our most solemn occasion, Memorial Day, where we mourn those whom we lost in defense of this Nation.

The tradition of Memorial Day dates back to 1864 in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. Three ladies decorated the graves of fallen Civil War soldiers, and the custom has continued every year since then. Boalsburg still puts on a traditional Memorial Day celebration, complete with a parade, a community walk to the cemetery, speeches, military reenactments, and much more.

In the days leading up to Memorial Day, many place flags or lay wreaths at the graves of our soldiers. We gather with friends and family to attend parades and special services to remember those lost.

As we take the time to thank our Active Duty members and remember the fallen, we must also never forget the soldiers who have not returned home.

As the father of a wounded warrior, I thank God every day he returned home safely. Not every family has been as lucky, and we owe our greatest efforts to recovering the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.