

BUSH SUSPENDS LABOR RULES

Acting on a petition from U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., and 33 other lawmakers, President Bush suspended labor rules Thursday that would have required all new construction in the Gulf Coast that receives federal funding to pay labor at "prevailing wages."

"As our nation looks to rebuild the ... area of devastation left by Katrina and the federal government spends over \$60 billion, it is imperative that regulations that needlessly hinder construction are rescinded," Musgrave said.

The mandates "are excessive and add considerable costs and delay to projects critical to the backbone of the region. I commend him for today's proclamation," she said, referring to Bush.

She said the rules added a two-week delay to construction starts.

However, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney called it exploitative, saying the president was "taking advantage of a national tragedy to get rid of a protection for workers the corporate backers of the White House have long wanted to remove."

The Denver Post

Sept. 11, 2005

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