



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007

CHRISTINE C. QUINN
SPEAKER

TELEPHONE
212-788-7210

February 12, 2013

Hon. Grace Meng
Congress Member
U.S. House of Representatives
1317 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Chris Smith
Congress Member
U.S. House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congress Members Meng and Smith:

We are writing in support of H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013. This important legislation will ensure that houses of worship affected by Hurricane Sandy will be eligible to receive assistance from FEMA to rebuild their damaged properties. At stake are the interests of New Yorkers in the many neighborhoods that were hit hard by Sandy.

Churches, synagogues and mosques serve as a bedrock for our citizens and our communities. They not only provide places for people to worship but operate after-school programs, food pantries, and other critical services. Many of the churches, synagogues and mosques that were damaged by the hurricane are now facing great difficulty reopening their doors.

Although we understand that some oppose this change due to the constitutional requirement of separation of church and state, in this case we don't agree. Recovery from a natural disaster like Hurricane Sandy isn't a matter of state sponsoring religion. It's a matter of helping those in need after one of the worst natural disasters our country has ever seen.

Under such extraordinary and painful circumstances, houses of worship should be eligible to receive aid on the same basis as all other non-profits damaged by the hurricane. We applaud you for your leadership on this matter and are happy to lend our support to your bill.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Christine C. Quinn in black ink.

Christine C. Quinn
Speaker

Handwritten signature of Peter F. Vallone, Jr. in black ink.

Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Chair, Public Safety Committee

Handwritten signature of Fernando Cabrera in blue ink.

Fernando Cabrera
Council Member