



February 12, 2013

U.S. Representative
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Family Research Council (FRC) and the families we represent, I am writing today in strong support of H.R. 592, the “Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013” by Reps. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Grace Meng (D-NY). H.R. 592 would ensure that houses of worship would not be denied the same relief offered to other entities following a major storm or disaster.

Following every disaster, natural and man made that has hit the United States, our houses of worship have been there to help. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, churches, relief organizations and Christian organizations went into emergency response mode sending help in the form of money, food, supplies and volunteers. When Katrina struck Louisiana, it was religious entities that helped the victims and refugees despite being affected by the storm as well. This is just as true with the recent Hurricane Sandy that struck our Eastern seaboard.

Houses of worship across the Northeast including many faiths and denominations were among the private nonprofit facilities that sustained damage. However, it was the churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship throughout communities in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and elsewhere that provided relief to many individuals while the federal government seemingly did little.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) own policies allow for grants to nonprofit organizations where citizens are known to gather and engage in a variety of educational, enrichment, and social activities. However, it is internal FEMA policy that does not believe houses of worship are worthy of the same type of relief.

H.R. 592 is consistent with recent precedents of the Supreme Court of the United States and legal opinions issued by the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice. We strongly urge your vote for this necessary legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom McClintock". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sr. Vice President

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

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