

So instead of doing targeted cuts and getting rid of programs that we don't need anymore, that don't work anymore, and looking at reasonable revenues, we're going to cut everything 10 percent. It's going to have a real impact.

I was told yesterday by the Office of Management and Budget the first measurable impact is in my district, a 10 percent sequestration of payments to counties in my State from the Interior Department, which means in Douglas County, Oregon, the last 10 road deputies are gone. In another county, which is down to one road deputy, the last road deputy is gone. We're talking about counties the size of States here with no rural law enforcement. That's because of the stupid sequestration.

□ 1220

SEQUESTER IS NOT THE ANSWER

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I join with my colleagues to say that sequester is not the answer. When I begin to look at my district and I see high school students and middle school students and elementary school students, I say sequester is not the answer.

Yes, we can look reasonably at how we improve reducing the debt, but not on the backs of seniors, not eliminating the social network.

And then, with respect to our children, do we tell them we close the doors on summer jobs, we close the doors on the best teachers, innovative teaching, science labs? Absolutely not.

So I join with the President to say that it's an inflicted wound we gave. Let's be better. Let's be adults.

And, finally, Madam Speaker, let's do our job on gun safety. Let's ensure universal background checks. Let's have registration of those guns that are owned by gun owners like we register a car. And let's make sure that, as my legislation introduced, that we secure the guns in our homes so that children or those who are disturbed cannot access your guns because you left them around.

I am not interested in coming into your home and taking your guns, but you have a responsibility to be able to secure them. That law was passed in the State of Texas, a State that prizes its guns.

Let's be a group, a Congress that can work together. We can do this.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the

yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE NONPROFIT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 592) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify that houses of worship are eligible for certain disaster relief and emergency assistance on terms equal to other eligible private nonprofit facilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 592

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Hurricane Sandy inflicted catastrophic damage in the Northeastern United States.

(2) Houses of worship across the Northeast's many faiths and denominations were among the private nonprofit facilities that sustained damage.

(3) Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship throughout communities in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and elsewhere play an essential role in the daily lives of the communities.

(4) The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) public assistance program provides financial grants for the repair of various types of private nonprofit facilities.

(5) Among the types of nonprofits to which FEMA provides such grants are those in which citizens gather and engage in a variety of educational, enrichment, and social activities. These activities are essential to community building and occur in houses of worship.

(6) Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), FEMA's disaster relief program is a general government program under which assistance is provided in the wake of a natural disaster using criteria that are neutral with regard to religion.

(7) Congress has previously enacted legislation providing financial assistance to religious nonprofit institutions, including houses of worship, on terms equal to other eligible nonprofit institutions.

(8) Such legislation 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.

SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP AS PRIVATE NONPROFIT FACILITIES ELIGIBLE FOR DISASTER RELIEF.

(a) DEFINITION OF PRIVATE NONPROFIT FACILITY.—Section 102(10)(B) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(10)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

"(B) ADDITIONAL FACILITIES.—In addition to the facilities described in subparagraph (A), the term 'private nonprofit facility' includes any private nonprofit facility that provides essential services of a governmental nature to the general public (including mu-

seums, zoos, performing arts facilities, community arts centers, community centers, including houses of worship exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, libraries, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers, rehabilitation facilities, shelter workshops, and facilities that provide health and safety services of a governmental nature), as defined by the President."

(b) REPAIR, RESTORATION, AND REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED FACILITIES.—Section 406(a)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(C) HOUSES OF WORSHIP.—A church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other house of worship, and a private nonprofit facility operated by a religious organization, shall be eligible for contributions under paragraph (1)(B), without regard to the religious character of the facility or the primary religious use of the facility."

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall apply to the provision of assistance in response to a major disaster or emergency declared on or after October 28, 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 592.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First, I want to acknowledge the work of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his leadership on this bipartisan legislation.

Currently, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, also known as the Stafford Act, provides for assistance to nonprofit organizations to rebuild damaged facilities following a declared disaster.

Like other nonprofit organizations, religious-based organizations have seen significant damage to their facilities from disasters. Just last year, for example, we saw facilities owned by both religious and nonreligious organizations alike damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy.

The administration is interpreting current law to allow some religious nonprofits to receive reconstruction assistance, while others do not. For example, parochial schools and religious hospitals receive funds, while a soup kitchen or a shelter may not, depending on how often it is used for purely religious purposes.

H.R. 592 clarifies that facilities owned by religious-based organizations qualify for certain types of disaster assistance.