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STATEMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS ON FEMA'S TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE EXTENSION FOR PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK CITY

“For far too many of our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico, the Temporary Shelter Assistance Program means the difference between a roof over their heads or homelessness,” said **Congressman Joe Crowley, Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus**. “While I’m relieved FEMA approved our request to extend this critical program, there is much more that the Trump administration still must do to help the victims of Hurricane Maria and aid the island’s recovery.”

“This is an important reprieve for Puerto Rican families staying in TSA housing in New York and elsewhere,” said **Congressman José E. Serrano**. “I thank the Mayor and other elected officials for working to help Puerto Ricans still displaced by the storm. There is more work to be done, but this is a step in the right direction.”

“Our fellow citizens from Puerto Rico – those temporarily relocated to the U.S. and those still residing on the Island – need our help. It would be immoral and inhumane to allow this program to lapse and I’m pleased FEMA is extending this assistance,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**. I’ve previously worked with Mayor De Blasio and other Members of New York’s Congressional delegation to call for this extension. We will continue pushing to ensure those Puerto Ricans forced from their home due to Maria have the support and help they need.”

“Seven months after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, the island continues to struggle with efforts to recover and rebuild. As a result, many residents of Puerto Rico who were displaced by the storm continue to live in temporary housing through the Transitional Shelter Assistance Program. With conditions still not improved enough for these residents to return to their homes, it is imperative that this program be allowed to continue, and I applaud FEMA for renewing it,” said **Congresswoman Grace Meng**. “The program has been a lifeline for those whose homes were damaged or destroyed, and it must be extended until they can safely move back in, or find other longer-term housing solutions. The residents of Puerto Rico continue to need help, and we must ensure that our fellow Americans receive all the assistance they require. We cannot forget or ignore the struggles that our brothers and sisters on the island continue to endure.”

“New York City has consistently stood with our brothers and sisters from Puerto Rico and the surrounding devastated areas to ensure affected families access to FEMA resources and other emergency services dedicated to helping them rebuild their lives,” said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat**. “We must continue our efforts to ensure long term solutions for Puerto Rican families. While today’s news is a victory, much work remains in our efforts to restore critical basic services such as hospitals, schools, public facilities and infrastructure to allow residents to safely return to their homes and get their daily lives back on track.”

“Thank you to City Hall for their efforts in protecting the 83 families that sought refuge in New York City after the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria. I’m glad FEMA heard our call, and responded to meet the needs of these families,” said **Senator Marisol Alcantara**.

“As Puerto Rico struggles to recover and rebuild from the apocalyptic desolation that Hurricane María left in la Isla del Encanto, FEMA needs to ensure that it continues to support the victims of the natural disaster,” said **Senator Jose Peralta**. “It is tragic to see Puerto Rico in pieces, and to this date, many victims are still unable to return to their homes. It is positive to see FEMA has approved the requests to extend the Transitional Sheltering Assistance program for these and more families.”

“While it is encouraging that the families displaced by Hurricane Maria are able to stay at their hotels for the time being, it is not the long term solution we need. Families are getting on their feet, gaining employment and looking for housing. They are enrolling their children into our public schools and are receiving adequate medical care,” said **Senator Gustavo Rivera**. “They should not have to worry about the possibility of losing the roof over the heads while the rebuild their lives. FEMA should use this extension to formulate a plan that will help each of these families transition into permanent housing. Their responsibility to these families is not done simply because they implemented a unrealistic deadline to their transitional program.”

“This extension will at least elevate the pressure of an immediate displacement. I’m grateful for the Mayor’s leadership and commitment to Puerto Rican families,” said **Assembly Member Marcos Crespo, Chairman of the New York State Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force**. “It is my hope we can deliver what the federal government refuses to, which is the long term stability these families need and deserve.”

“Puerto Rican families suffering from Hurricane Maria’s consequences must receive our top priority,” said **Assistant Speaker Felix W. Ortiz**. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for having New York City cover the cost of housing for the 83 displaced families. These people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.”

“I am happy that FEMA decided to do the right thing and extend support for Puerto Rican migrants past April 21st,” said **Assembly Member Erik Dilan**. “I commend Mayor de Blasio for the willingness to commit the City’s resources to support this population had FEMA not stepped up, but I am glad they did.”

“I sincerely question whether FEMA would have responded as coldly as it initially did to extending emergency housing if this situation existed in any of the 50 states in this nation. Puerto

Rico is far from fully recovered, and many of its people - U.S. CITIZENS in case anyone needs to be reminded - remain homeless,” said **Assembly Member Luis Sepulveda**. “FEMA's change of heart is only a small measure of what still needs to be done while those displaced on both the island and who fled to the mainland continue trying to put their lives back together.”

“FEMA’s extension of Temporary Shelter Assistance comes as a major relief for 83 Puerto Rican families who were faced with possible homelessness on the island, but more must be done. This extension just highlights how dire the situation remains in Puerto Rico,” said **Assembly Member Victor Pichardo**. “In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, countless homes, businesses and entire communities were wiped out. Seven months later, Puerto Rico’s restorative efforts are nowhere near complete. We must ensure the federal government does more to ensure the health and safety of fellow Americans in Puerto Rico.”

“The relief and aid that FEMA provides is crucial for the citizens recovering from Hurricane Maria. Although it has already been over seven months since the storm tore the island apart, Puerto Rico remains to this day extremely vulnerable and unstable,” said **Assembly Member Maritza Davila**. “FEMA’s extension will help ease the hardship that thousands of American citizens are enduring.”

“Conditions in Puerto Rico remain unstable, as demonstrated by the recent blackout. Families affected by Hurricane Maria deserve a complete and comprehensive assessment of the island before they are forced to return to their homes, especially considering that many of these families are already studying and working in New York City. FEMA’s extension of the Transitional Sheltering Program was greatly needed and will allow these families to remain housed as crucial recovery efforts continue on the island,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala**.

“More than six months after Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico, the island continues to experience rolling blackouts, limited nutritional assistance, and a lack of many quality-of-life benefits that we take for granted here in New York City,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller**. “Today, FEMA granted an extension of the Transitional Sheltering Assistance program to approximately 1,700 survivors of Hurricane Maria, a great step in the right direction following this catastrophic storm. I join my colleagues in the New York City Council in calling on the federal government to increase its support to Puerto Rico and to the survivors of Hurricane Maria. We do not leave Americans out in the cold. Today, a roof has been extended over the heads of 1,700 brothers and sisters, and we expect that similar courtesies will continue to be afforded to this vulnerable population.”

“While the extension of the Transitional Sheltering Assistance program for Hurricane Maria survivors is welcomed news, we must continue to advocate and fight for Puerto Ricans in most need of help. We must always remember that they are American citizens even if they do not live in the 50 states and that it is the federal government’s duty to protect them,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**.

“Puerto Ricans are resilient fighters, and I’m pleased to hear that FEMA aid has been temporarily extended for these families who have already endured so much. I will continue to

fight for them and ensure our city does what it can to support them during this incredible time of need and survival,” said **Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.**

“Today's extension of TSA benefits to hurricane survivors on the brink of eviction was an important relief to these families but in the face of continued instability in Puerto Rico we must advocate strongly for all families who have left the island to receive the support they need and deserve. I thank Mayor de Blasio for his advocacy for these families during this ongoing crisis,” said **Melissa Mark-Viverito, former Speaker, New York City Council.**

“Today’s announcement from FEMA provides immediate relief for those families at risk of losing their housing this week,” said **Jose Calderón, President, Hispanic Federation.** “We thank Mayor de Blasio as well as our partners in government and the community who united to put pressure on FEMA to grant this extension. We must continue fighting for all survivors of Hurricane Maria that have found refuge stateside to continue to have access to housing benefits moving forward.”

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