



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
The House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), I respectfully request that the House of Representatives pass H.R. 5687, the \$4.67 billion emergency supplemental spending bill for Puerto Rico in its entirety. As introduced, \$3.26 billion is allocated to the Community Development Block Grant Program, which would allow Puerto Rico to spend money on long-term recovery, housing and economic revitalization and mitigation. Another \$1.26 billion would go to the island's areas still recovering from 2018 and 2019 disasters. We urge you to provide emergency assistance to those facing homelessness, malnutrition, and a lack of access to transportation and energy resources.

CCUSA is a national membership organization representing more than 167 diocesan Catholic Charities member agencies serving more than 12.5 million individuals in need each year. In 2018, 62 agencies responded to 26 disasters in 28 states and five territories, including Puerto Rico. While our agencies provided essential supplies including food, water, and mattresses and CCUSA distributed \$19.4 million in aid, including \$7 million to Puerto Rico, clearly our best efforts cannot begin to meet the needs in Puerto Rico.

Catholic Charities continues to devise more effective and efficient ways to serve the health, social welfare and educational needs of individuals and families living in poverty. This is especially needed during times of disaster recovery. Committed to respecting human dignity, Catholic Charities agencies serve all people in need. We ask that any emergency supplemental assistance bill include robust support for low-income individuals and families.

Thank you for your consideration. CCUSA looks forward to working with Congress to ensure the people of Puerto Rico are provided the help they need.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD  
President & CEO  
Catholic Charities USA

Chair of the Board  
Charles Cornelio

Vice Chair  
Robert McCann

Secretary  
Martina O'Sullivan

Treasurer  
Michael Erne

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