

CHURCHES DESERVE SANDY RELIEF FUNDS



Bill Donohue comments as follows:

I have contacted House Speaker John Boehner asking him to support the amendment to the Hurricane Sandy recovery appropriations bill that was introduced by outgoing Senator Joseph Lieberman. The bill rightly says that houses of worship that were damaged or destroyed deserve federal assistance.

I have also contacted FEMA chief Craig Fugate about this matter. "The time has come to formalize an inclusive FEMA policy that explicitly states that no religious entity will be turned down for relief funding on the basis of religion," I said.

In both letters, I stressed the fact that no church or synagogue in the New York-New Jersey area that assisted those hit by the storm discriminated on the basis of religion. Moreover, I said that Sandy didn't discriminate in choosing its victims. Ergo, the federal government should not discriminate on the basis of an institution's mission.

Arguments against helping houses of worship don't stand up. In 2010, the U.S. State Department provided millions to restore mosques in 27 different Islamic nations. So is the Obama administration saying that Christian and Jewish houses of worship in the U.S. in need of restoration don't qualify for assistance but Islamic houses of worship overseas do?

Dana Sher of the ACLU is saying that "To rebuild houses of

worship is a form of compelled support for religion, which is exactly what the First Amendment is designed to protect against.” She doesn’t know her history. President Thomas Jefferson didn’t provide money to rebuild churches that were devastated—he approved a treaty that awarded \$300 to the Kaskaskia Indians for the purpose of building one! By the way, the church was Catholic.

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