

it admits in its statement of opposition, it is FEMA's own regulatory interpretations that would require it to pay for prayer books or other similar items. But neither of the regulations that FEMA cites as forcing it to make the apparently unpalatable choice appear to require any such decision. And FEMA can always exercise its interpretive power to avoid a constitutional violation.

Again, no one is asking the government to buy prayer books or Torahs. Instead, synagogues, churches, and mosques are simply asking that they receive the same disaster relief as many other private nonprofits. Doing anything less would not live up to the neutrality required by the Establishment Clause—it would express a blatant hostility to religion that the Establishment Clause rejects.

In conclusion, it is our opinion that FEMA cannot rely on the Establishment Clause to categorically ban houses of worship from competing for disaster relief funds on the same terms as other eligible nonprofits. Your proposed bill will not violate the Constitution but will instead protect it.

Very truly yours,

ERIC C. RASSBACH,
DANIEL BLOMBERG,

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

Mr. BARTLETT. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I know all too well and firsthand what happens when disaster strikes at home. My constituents were affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

So I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey for his hard work for the constituents back home. It's times like this that we need to come together in a bipartisan fashion to help Americans who need that help.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, in the wake of the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy, Congress must be an active partner in the effort to rebuild, so I will vote in favor of the bill before the House today, which extends FEMA disaster relief assistance to houses of worship on an equal footing with other not-for-profit organizations affected by the storm.

I wish, however, that the House had taken the time to hold hearings on this legislation before bringing it to the House Floor so that we could have more fully explored the constitutional issues involved with this matter. Clearly, the federal government can and does provide federal resources to houses of worship for a variety of purposes, including homeland security grants and small business loans, but we must tread carefully in this area to ensure that the assistance extended passes muster with the basic provisions of the Constitution. It would have been better to thoroughly vet the language of this bill, among ourselves in the House and with constitutional scholars before bringing it up for a vote. As this legislation must pass the Senate in order to become law, I hope there will be in their proceedings a careful review of these issues before they act, including making any needed changes, which would bring the bill back to the House for final enactment.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, we often come to this floor to advocate any number of controversial issues—issues that often produce strong disagreement from the given

Speaker's opposing party. But I stand here today stating what I'm confident an overwhelming majority of Americans would deem simple common sense: if the government responds to a disaster—like Hurricane Sandy, which caused devastating damage and losses in the tens of billions of dollars—it should strive to help the entire community recover, not pick and choose some to receive help and others to go it alone.

But, stunningly, that's not the way it currently works, Madam Speaker. As it stands, many of the strongest, most necessary pillars in our society—churches and other places of worship—are being excluded from even being considered for the recovery aid provided by FEMA in the wake of Sandy.

Since the policy has come to light, some have attempted to defend it, invoking that all-too-commonly abused notion of the separation of church and state. But, Madam Speaker, even if we accept the most radical definition of this phrase, there would still be no reasonably legal explanation for this inexcusable oversight.

The Supreme Court responded to a similar issue when it decided *Everson v. Board of Education*. In that decision, the court criticized the “imposition of taxes to pay ministers’ salaries and to build and maintain churches and church property.” But in the very same decision, the court makes clear the obvious exception to this policy, stating that the state has the duty to maintain neutral relations with places of worship, and that they should be granted access to the same basic government services as the rest of the community—“such general government services as ordinary police and fire protection, connections for sewage disposal, public highways and sidewalks.”

Who can, with any modicum of intellectual honesty, suggest that disaster relief does not fit the definition of a basic government service? The government is not maintaining neutral relations with houses of worship in this sphere. It is actively and specifically excluding them from a basic government service enjoyed by every other member of the community.

Of course, perhaps the cruelest irony of this entire situation is the fact that it is so often the churches who step in to help in the immediate aftermath of such disasters. They are the ones sending their congregations to feed, clothe, and house a desperate community. They are the ones taking up donations en masse to help the most afflicted. And they are the ones selflessly emptying their food closets to sustain, for just a little while longer, families anxiously awaiting government aid—the same government aid for which they will inexplicably not even be considered.

Madam Speaker, this unconstitutional, un-American, unreasonable discrimination against these essential, compassionate members of our society simply must not continue. Churches

and other places of worship must be held to the same criteria as other members of the community in these decisions. I urge my colleagues to strongly support H.R. 592.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 592.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 592, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 267, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE NONPROFIT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion 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, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 354, nays 72, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 39]

YEAS—354

Aderholt	Bishop (UT)	Bucshon
Alexander	Black	Burgess
Amodei	Blackburn	Bustos
Bachmann	Blumenauer	Butterfield
Bachus	Bonner	Calvert
Barletta	Boustany	Camp
Barr	Brady (PA)	Campbell
Barrow (GA)	Brady (TX)	Cantor
Barton	Braley (IA)	Capito
Beatty	Bridenstine	Capps
Benishek	Brooks (AL)	Cárdenas
Bentivolio	Brooks (IN)	Carney
Bera (CA)	Broun (GA)	Carter
Bilirakis	Brown (FL)	Cartwright
Bishop (GA)	Brownley (CA)	Cassidy
Bishop (NY)	Buchanan	Castor (FL)

Castro (TX)	Huelskamp	Perry	Westmoreland	Wittman	Yoho
Chabot	Huizenga (MI)	Peters (CA)	Whitfield	Wolf	Young (AK)
Chaffetz	Hultgren	Peters (MI)	Williams	Womack	Young (FL)
Clarke	Hunter	Peterson	Wilson (FL)	Yarmuth	Young (IN)
Clay	Hurt	Petri	Wilson (SC)	Yoder	
Cleaver	Israel	Pingree (ME)			
Clyburn	Issa	Pittenger			
Coble	Jackson Lee	Pitts	Amash	Hastings (FL)	Pastor (AZ)
Coffman	Jeffries	Poe (TX)	Andrews	Himes	Payne
Cole	Jenkins	Pompeo	Barber	Holt	Pelosi
Collins (GA)	Johnson (GA)	Posey	Bass	Honda	Pocan
Collins (NY)	Johnson (OH)	Price (GA)	Becerra	Horsford	Polis
Conaway	Johnson, E. B.	Price (NC)	Bonamici	Huffman	Ryan (OH)
Connolly	Johnson, Sam	Quigley	Capuano	Keating	Sanchez, Linda
Cook	Jones	Radel	Carson (IN)	Kennedy	T.
Cooper	Jordan	Rahall	Chu	Labrador	Schakowsky
Costa	Joyce	Rangel	Cicilline	Lee (CA)	Schneider
Cotton	Kaptur	Reed	Cohen	Lofgren	Scott (VA)
Courtney	Kelly	Reichert	Conyers	Lowenthal	Sinema
Cramer	Kildee	Renacci	Davis (CA)	Lynch	Slaughter
Crawford	Kilmer	Ribble	DeGette	Markay	Smith (WA)
Crenshaw	Kind	Rice (SC)	DeLauro	Matsui	Speier
Crowley	King (IA)	Richmond	Duckworth	McCollum	Stutzman
Cuellar	King (NY)	Rigell	Duncan (SC)	McDermott	Takano
Culberson	Kingston	Roby	Edwards	McGovern	Tierney
Cummings	Kinzinger (IL)	Roe (TN)	Ellison	Michaud	Tsongas
Daines	Kirkpatrick	Rogers (AL)	Enyart	Miller, George	Visclosky
Davis, Danny	Kline	Rogers (KY)	Esty	Moran	Walz
Davis, Rodney	Kuster	Rogers (MI)	Foster	Nader	Welch
DeFazio	LaMalfa	Rohrabacher	Garamendi	Neal	Woodall
Delaney	Lamborn	Rokita	Gosar	Nolan	
DelBene	Lance	Rooney	Grijalva	O'Rourke	
Denham	Langevin	Ros-Lehtinen			
Dent	Lankford	Roskam			
DeSantis	Larsen (WA)	Ross	Dingell	Pearce	Watt
DesJarlais	Larson (CT)	Rothfus	Farr	Shea-Porter	
Deutch	Latham	Roybal-Allard			
Diaz-Balart	Latta	Royce			
Doggett	Levin	Ruiz			
Doyle	Lewis	Runyan			
Duffy	Lipinski	Ruppersberger			
Duncan (TN)	LoBiondo	Rush			
Ellmers	Loebach	Ryan (WI)			
Engel	Long	Salmon			
Eshoo	Lowey	Sanchez, Loretta			
Farenthold	Lucas	Sarbanes			
Fattah	Luetkemeyer	Scalise			
Fincher	Lujan Grisham	Schiff			
Fitzpatrick	(NM)	Schock			
Fleischmann	Lujan, Ben Ray	Schrader			
Fleming	(NM)	Schwartz			
Flores	Lummis	Schweikert			
Forbes	Maffei	Scott, Austin			
Fortenberry	Maloney,	Scott, David			
Fox	Carolyn	Sensenbrenner			
Frankel (FL)	Maloney, Sean	Serrano			
Franks (AZ)	Marchant	Sessions			
Frelinghuysen	Marino	Sewell (AL)			
Fudge	Massie	Sherman			
Gabbard	Matheson	Shimkus			
Galleo	McCarthy (CA)	Shuster			
Garcia	McCarthy (NY)	Simpson			
Gardner	McCaul	Sires			
Garrett	McClintock	Smith (NE)			
Gerlach	McHenry	Smith (NJ)			
Gibbs	McIntyre	Smith (TX)			
Gibson	McKeon	Southerland			
Gingrey (GA)	McKinley	Stewart			
Gohmert	McMorris	Stivers			
Goodlatte	Rodgers	Stockman			
Gowdy	McNerney	Swalwell (CA)			
Granger	Meadows	Terry			
Graves (GA)	Meehan	Thompson (CA)			
Graves (MO)	Meeks	Thompson (MS)			
Grayson	Meng	Thompson (PA)			
Green, Al	Messer	Thornberry			
Green, Gene	Mica	Tiberi			
Griffin (AR)	Miller (FL)	Tipton			
Griffith (VA)	Miller (MI)	Titus			
Grimm	Miller, Gary	Tonko			
Guthrie	Moore	Turner			
Gutierrez	Mullin	Upton			
Hahn	Mulvaney	Valadao			
Hall	Murphy (FL)	Van Hollen			
Hanabusa	Murphy (PA)	Vargas			
Hanna	Napolitano	Veasey			
Harper	Negrete McLeod	Vela			
Harris	Neugebauer	Velázquez			
Hartler	Noem	Wagner			
Hastings (WA)	Nugent	Walberg			
Heck (NV)	Nunes	Walden			
Heck (WA)	Nunnelee	Walorski			
Hensarling	Olson	Wasserman			
Herrera Beutler	Owens	Schultz			
Higgins	Palazzo	Waters			
Hinojosa	Pallone	Waxman			
Holding	Pascrell	Weber (TX)			
Hoyer	Paulsen	Webster (FL)			
Hudson	Perlmutter	Wenstrup			

NAYS—72

NOT VOTING—5

□ 1334

Messrs. CARSON of Indiana, POLIS, Ms. BASS, Messrs. HIMES, RYAN of Ohio, NOLAN, GOSAR, MARKEY, LABRADOR, DUNCAN of South Carolina, and WOODALL changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Messrs. THOMPSON of Mississippi, WITTMAN, DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, FRANKS of Arizona, GARDNER, BAR-TON, SALMON, and Mrs. CAPPS changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1340

HONORING JOHN LAWRENCE

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I rise with great pride to pay tribute to a very distinguished American and a longtime member of the congressional staff, John Lawrence. In fact, he has served the Congress for 38 years as a member of the staff—30 years of it for GEORGE MILLER and 8 years as my assistant in the leadership office. I'm happy to pay tribute to him.

I'm sad because John will be—and I don't know if the word is retiring—but he will be leaving service in the Capitol. He has always been a great proponent of science, technology, and innovation. As he concludes his service to the House, it is only fitting to cite the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson as inscribed on the walls of the House Science and Technology Committee:

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye can see, saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

Over his nearly four decades serving the Congress, John has always kept his sights and his vision firmly on the future. He believed and he knew that the future is about investing in our children, supporting working families, and strengthening the middle class. He knew that the future is about protecting our environment and preserving our planet for generations to come.

John knew that the future of the House is strengthened by fellow staff members working in a bipartisan way. John has always respected the role played by our staffs on the Education Committee, the Natural Resources Committee, the offices of the Democratic leader, and as my role of Speaker of the House and as our distinguished Speaker's role as Speaker today. Indeed, the staff looked to him for leadership, just as Members looked to him for guidance.

In that spirit, this afternoon, my colleagues, the Speaker will honor John Lawrence with the John W. McCormick Award of Excellence on which, as declared by former majority leader, then-Majority Leader Carl Albert in 1970:

The name of the House employee, who performs the most valuable service for the House, will be inscribed.

What a fitting tribute to John Lawrence's 38 years of valuable service, extraordinary leadership, and dedication to the future. We've had the privilege of honoring in a bipartisan way other members of the staff in the Congress, and John's name will bring luster to that list.

Colleagues, please join me in thanking a dear friend, my former chief of staff, John Lawrence.

I yield to the Speaker of the House, Mr. BOEHNER.

Mr. BOEHNER. This is a day of mixed emotions for the House. John Lawrence's retirement means that we're losing a faithful public servant, one of our own. But we can all agree that John deserves some time off after 38 years of working here in the House. And for those of you who may not know John, he is currently the longest-serving staffer in the House.

John and I have known each other for a long time, going back to my days as chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee. I can safely say that it really didn't matter whether we were on the same side of the page or whether we had opposing views—he always handled it in the same way, with class and integrity. He's a real stand-up guy. That didn't just make John an asset to GEORGE MILLER or Leader PELOSI. It made him a great asset, I think, for the House as a whole and to the American people.

So I know all of my colleagues and I want to say to John, thank you for all of your service to this House. We're sorry to see you go, but we want to wish you and your family the best in the future.

Congratulations.