

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AMEND THE ROBERT T. STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT TO REAUTHORIZE THE PRE-DISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM

**HON. ANDRÉ CARSON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 10, 2013*

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce a bill to amend to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to reauthorize the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program.

First authorized in 2000, the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program has a proven history of saving taxpayer money by investing in cost effective projects that are designed to reduce injuries, loss of life, and damage and destruction of property in the event of a disaster. As the old adage goes: an ounce of prevention is worth its weight in gold.

This is true for the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program. In 2005, the Multi Hazard Mitigation Council of the National Institute of Building Sciences found that for every \$1 spent on mitigation, \$4 was saved in potential disaster costs. Other corollary benefits and indirect savings at the local level and within the business sector were also identified. Moreover, the Congressional Budget Office confirmed the cost savings of the program. Using a different analysis, the CBO found in 2007 that for every \$1 spent on mitigation, \$3 was saved in potential disaster costs.

But it is not just empirical studies that have confirmed the benefits of this program. There are numerous examples of flood control projects, voluntary acquisitions of real property located in flood zones, and the construction of safe rooms that have saved lives and prevented future damage. Areas that have experienced flood damage in the past, and have flooded again, experienced reduced or no damage thanks to effective mitigation. For instance, in Iowa, pre-disaster mitigation funds were used to purchase riverfront homes from homeowners that had suffered flood damage and then converted to green space. When the area subsequently flooded again, there was no new damage, thanks to the pre-disaster mitigation efforts.

With today's ongoing fiscal challenges, increasingly severe storms, and escalating effects of climate change, it makes sense for our country to prepare for these disasters now in order to prevent or reduce damage. Smart planning to mitigate the adverse impact of disasters not only saves lives, but saves money—especially over the long run.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy when there were initial damage estimates in the billions of dollars, many Members from both sides of the aisle streamed to the floor to express sympathy to the victims, as well as decry the extent of the damage and large costs. This program represents an opportunity to curb similar costs in the future while also saving lives and protecting property.

It is time to reauthorize the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Program at a sufficient level to make an impact. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**HON. ALAN GRAYSON**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 10, 2013*

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JOSE ALVAREZ

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Jose Alvarez, Commissioner for the City of Kissimmee, for his outstanding career and service to the community.

Mr. Alvarez was born in Cuba, and moved to the United States in 1971. He was raised in Miami, where he worked for the Bridge and Road Engineering Department of the Florida Department of Transportation, before relocating to Central Florida.

Mr. Alvarez has tirelessly served the Hispanic community in Kissimmee, Florida while also achieving success in the local real estate market. He has held many positions both in the public and private sector including the Board of Directors for League of United Latin American Citizens, the Board of Directors for National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, and the Board of Directors for Osceola Association of Realtors. He has demonstrated a thorough understanding of both the business and real estate market.

In 2012 Mr. Alvarez was elected to be Commissioner for the City of Kissimmee. He has developed a flourishing career and earned the respect of his constituents for his dedicated service to the community. Mr. Alvarez is happily married to his wife Darlene, with whom he has five daughters and two grandsons.

I am happy to recognize Mr. Alvarez, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his proven commitment to his community and leadership in Osceola County.

RECOGNIZING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF JONATHAN EVANS

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Jonathan Evans for his commitment to public service.

Jonathan possesses a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration, both from the University of Central Florida. He is currently working on another Master's Degree in Business Administration from Saint Leo University.

Jonathan has worked as a public servant for several Central Florida communities including the City of St. Cloud, the Town of Celebration, the City of Largo, and Haines City. Jonathan was hired as the Haines City Assistant City Manager on July 16, 2012, and was appointed as Acting City Manager on May 16, 2013. Prior to his work in Haines City, Jonathan worked for the City of Largo for nearly 6 years as the Assistant to the City Manager.

Jonathan is a full member of the Florida City and County Management Association, FCCMA, and has served on numerous boards for the organization. He is also a member of the International City/County Management Association, ICMA, and is taking the required steps to become an ICMA Credentialed Manager.

Jonathan has a strong grasp on municipal government, and a great work ethic that has not gone unnoticed. He has received numerous awards including the United Gold Award, the Children's Empowerment Award, and was

named the Employee of the Month by the City of St. Cloud.

I am happy to honor Jonathan Evans, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his outstanding leadership and public service.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ELLEN OCHOA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the inspiring career of Ellen Ochoa, astronaut, engineer, and Director of NASA's Johnson Space Center.

Ellen Ochoa received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from San Diego State University in 1980. She then went on to attend Stanford University, where she received a Master of Science degree and Doctorate in Electrical Engineering.

She was selected by NASA in January 1990 and became the first Hispanic female astronaut in July 1991. Her technical assignments in the Astronaut Office at the Johnson Space Center included crew representative for flight software, computer hardware and robotics, Assistant for Space Station to the Chief of the Astronaut Office, lead spacecraft communicator (CAPCOM) in Mission Control, and Acting Deputy Chief of the Astronaut Office. As a veteran of four space flights, Ellen has logged nearly 1000 hours in space.

Ellen is a pioneer of spacecraft technology. She is a co-inventor for three patents for an optical inspection system, an optical object recognition method, and a method for noise removal in images. At the NASA Ames Research Center, she led a research group working primarily on optical systems for automated space exploration. She has received numerous awards for her accomplishments including NASA's Exceptional Service Medal, Outstanding Leadership Medal, and four Space Flight Medals.

Since 2007, Ellen has served as Deputy Director of the Johnson Space Center, helping to manage and direct the Astronaut Office and Aircraft Operations. On January 1, 2013, Ochoa made history again by becoming the first Hispanic and second female director of NASA's Johnson Space Center.

I am happy to honor Ellen Ochoa, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her exceptional career, numerous accomplishments, and contributions to the Hispanic community.

HONORING THE CAREER OF JOSE FELICIANO

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize Mr. Jose Feliciano, a Puerto Rican musician whose international success is a true testament to his amazing talent.

Mr. Feliciano was born in Lares, Puerto Rico. At the age of five he immigrated with his parents and siblings to New York City. Due to congenital glaucoma, he was left permanently blind at birth. However, his disability has not hindered his passion for playing music. Mr. Feliciano's love for music began at the age of three, when he first accompanied his uncle on a tin cracker can. By the age of six, he had taught himself to play the concertina simply by listening to records and practicing. When Mr. Feliciano received his first guitar, he spent hours practicing each day and started taking classical lessons with a guitar instructor.

In 1963, Mr. Feliciano signed a contract with RCA Records. Over the course of his career he has had numerous chart-topping singles in multiple countries. His famous single, 'Feliz Navidad,' tops the charts every year during the holidays. The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers named 'Feliz