



July 18, 2018

**Letter of Support for H.R.6378 - Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018**

Dear Representative Eschoo and Representative Brooks,

The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies (the Partnership) is the nation's only coalition of national, state and local stakeholder organizations working together to advocate for equal access to emergency and disaster services and programs for children and adults with disabilities before, during and after disasters. The footprint of our membership reaches every congressional district in the country, with a presence in virtually every community.

The Partnership drives disability community leadership, training, technical assistance, policy and operational initiatives that improve outcomes for disaster impacted communities through self-determination, health, safety, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of community preparedness, response and disaster resilience.

Our leaders include the nation's leading experts on disability inclusive emergency management. We have maintained a daily presence in support of disaster response, recovery and mitigation initiatives in TX, FL, USVI and PR since hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria made landfall in 2017, and our current focus includes the impact on individuals with disabilities and disaster impacted communities from the wild fires in CA and the lava flows in Hawaii.

Despite thousands of disaster related deaths and the disproportionate impact of the disasters on countless people with "chronic health conditions" (also clearly defined as disabilities under the ADA legal definition) in 2017 & 2018, the recently released FEMA After Action Report only mentions disability in a footnote and a list of acronyms defining the position of Disability Integration Advisors, never in any other context.

Further, according to FEMA, "the hurricanes and wildfires collectively affected more than 47 million people— nearly 15 percent of the Nation's population". Given these statistics, it is likely that close to 10 million of these disaster impacted individuals should have been provided with the civil rights



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protections of equal access to emergency services and programs. It is unfortunate that there is no indication of any focus in the document on FEMA's obligations, efforts or recommendations.

Clearly there is an urgent need for advice and consultation from disability inclusive emergency management experts to improve outcomes for disaster impacted children and adults with disabilities and their communities.

We are writing in support of H.R.6378 - Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018, with specific support for Section 110, the establishment of a **NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL-HAZARDS EMERGENCIES**.

The Advisory Committee will:

1. provide advice and consultation with respect to activities carried out pursuant to section 2814, as applicable and appropriate;
2. evaluate and provide input with respect to the public health, accessibility, and medical needs of individuals with disabilities as they relate to preparation for, response to, and recovery from all-hazards emergencies; and
3. provide advice and consultation with respect to State emergency preparedness and response activities, including related drills and exercises pursuant to the preparedness goals under section 2802(b).

We are especially interested in the Committee report which will include recommendations that offer specific improvements that could be made across local, State, tribal, territorial, and Federal efforts to improve outcomes in areas that include—

“(A) preparedness;

“(B) planning;

“(C) exercises and drills;

“(D) alerts, warning, and notifications;

“(E) evacuation;

“(F) sheltering;

“(G) health maintenance;

“(H) accessing emergency programs and services;

“(I) medical care (including mental health care);

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“(J) temporary housing;

“(K) mitigation; and

“(L) community resilience; and

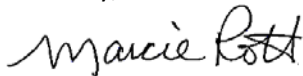
“(2) assess the strength of existing policies to incorporate such individuals as well as the efficacy of implementation.

We offer our enthusiastic support for the membership of this Committee, which will include

- at least four representatives who are individuals with disabilities that have substantive expertise in disability inclusive emergency management policy and operations;
- at least two non-Federal health care professionals with expertise in disability accessibility before, during, and after disasters, medical and mass care disaster planning, preparedness, response, or recovery; and
- at least two representatives from State, local, territorial, or tribal agencies with expertise in disability-inclusive disaster planning, preparedness, response, or recovery.

The Partnership applauds your leadership and welcomes every opportunity to work with you, and your colleagues to ensure that establishment of this vital Advisory Committee is included in final passage of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018.

Sincerely,



Marcie Roth

Chief Executive Officer

[marcie@disasterstrategies.org](mailto:marcie@disasterstrategies.org)

(301) 717-7447