



July 2, 2018

## Helping Harvey Survivors Rebuild

Dear Neighbor,

My top priority in Washington continues to be getting federal assistance to our neighbors impacted by Harvey. I work each day to ensure families and businesses affected by the storm have access to the financial help they need to rebuild and recover.

Last week, I joined fellow Houston Delegation members for a meeting with Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to discuss critical Army Corps funding for future flood mitigation. I also met with Marvin Odum, the City of Houston's Chief Recovery Officer, to discuss the needs in West Houston and the City's action plan for their allocation of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding.

I shared how our neighbors in District Seven are still rebuilding and need assistance to get back to their normal lives. These meetings were timely, since the Houston City Council passed their action plan to spend the \$1.15 billion in CDBG-DR funding they were allocated. I'm pleased that, after community meetings regarding the draft plan, the City increased the amount individuals can be reimbursed for repairs from \$65,000 to \$80,000. However, there are still current policies I am working to change so our neighbors get the help they need and deserve.

Currently, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that 70 percent of CDBG-DR funding be spent in low to moderate income (LMI) areas. Low and moderate-income persons are defined as those earning 80 percent of an area's median income (AMI) and



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below. In Houston, AMI for a typical family of four is \$71,880; 80 percent of this AMI is \$59,990. That means far too many families are ineligible for assistance under HUD's current standards.

I have pushed HUD Secretary Carson to lower the requirement so that some of the hardest hit areas of West Houston are eligible for this funding. I have also urged HUD to allow rehabilitation or reconstruction assistance to homeowners who live in a floodplain, did not have flood insurance, and have a combined household income that exceeds 120 percent of the AMI.

Hurricane Harvey impacted people of all income categories, and many homeowners in West Houston have sunk their life savings into their homes. HUD should not be imposing restrictions on who can receive assistance to rebuild. The City of Houston's action plan for CDBG-DR funding acknowledges that 49 percent of the unmet need population for owner-occupied and renter housing is in the LMI category. Hurricane Harvey's damage did not discriminate, and neither should HUD. I will continue pushing Secretary Carson to take this data into consideration to ensure all who were impacted by Harvey are eligible to receive CDBG-DR assistance.

Once the City's action plan is approved and programs are lined up, there will be opportunities for Harvey survivors to apply for various homeowner assistance programs. Even if you've completed repairs to your home, you may still be eligible for reimbursement should you have your receipts from these expenses.

I will keep you updated as I learn more, and I will continue to do everything I can at the federal level to support you as you rebuild and recover from last year's storm.

To let me know your thoughts on these or any other issues, you can email me [here](#).

It is an honor and privilege to represent you and Texas in the United States House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Culberson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

John Culberson