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Congress of the United States
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May 23, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer:

Like many of my colleagues from Congressional Districts ravaged by the 2018 natural disasters, I was encouraged earlier this week by what finally seemed a good faith attempt to pass much needed supplemental appropriations legislation before the Memorial Day recess. As you are aware, my constituents, along with others throughout the Southeast, Mid-West, West, and Pacific Islands have been denied routine federal disaster assistance for the past eight months amid your demands for greater support for the island of Puerto Rico.

Ultimately, when these demands were met, you abandoned those same individuals in Puerto Rico for whom you claimed to have been fighting. Instead, you now target the Administration's request for humanitarian aid at our Southern border. Aid that you both previously recognized as necessary. To "move the goal post" at the final hour is simply unconscionable.

Our nation faces numerous humanitarian crises – from the southern border, to Puerto Rico/USVI, to the people in my home district of North Florida. There is real suffering in our communities that Congress has callously failed to address – and the suffering continues. I implore you to do the right thing. Please don't let your hatred for the President cloud your judgement to the point that you fail the people of the United States who are calling on you for help.

Please come to my home in Panama City to see what our community looks like nearly eight months after Hurricane Michael destroyed our area. Please go with me to Mexico Beach to see that, despite the Herculean efforts of our people, repairs have only started to be done. Please come with me to Tyndall Air Force Base to witness that the necessary recovery work has stopped for lack of federal funding. I invite you to come down and talk to my constituents, talk to the farmers and foresters who suffered billions of dollars in losses and still have no assistance from their federal government. Please talk to the homeowners who withdrew money from their retirement accounts to finance the rebuilding of their homes and have yet to receive routine tax relief from Congress. Visit the business owners who remain on the sidelines waiting to be convinced that Tyndall will rebuild before they reinvest in the surrounding areas. Listen to their stories and explain to them why fighting President Trump is prioritized over helping them rebuild their lives.

Due to the failed outcome of this week's negotiations, it is clear to me that the suffering of millions of Americans in disaster affected communities is less important to you than political gain. Please, accept "yes" for an answer and help your fellow Americans.

Congress has a duty to the American people to ensure the federal government can function properly. I hope that you will see that this week, you failed them in that duty. It is time to correct course and do the right thing for the people of the United States that have waited far too long for our help.

Sincerely,



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