

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2024

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
House Committee on Administration
1309 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member
House Committee on Administration
1216 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle,

As Members of Congress who have helped our constituents in times of devastating natural disasters, we write today to express concern over a House Administration rule that has inhibited our offices from effectively serving our constituents and to request a change to the rule.

Following a natural disaster, local and national non-profit entities, like shelters or food banks, are often first on the scene and have the infrastructure to help disaster victims, often before the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can even set up operations. While FEMA plays a crucial role in recovery efforts, its efforts are supported by other organizations, including non-profit entities that provide services that FEMA cannot, including addressing medication shortages and long-term food assistance. These non-profit groups fill the gap in local communities where FEMA is unable to help because of lack of resources or lack of ability. But, because of current House rules, we are unable to refer constituents to these entities for assistance, even when their work may be lifesaving.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, Congresswoman Fletcher's office received a call about a constituent's elderly, disabled parents. They had lost power, their food had spoiled, and they were unable to leave their house to receive aid. In this instance, it would have been helpful to connect the constituent to a non-profit entity, like the Houston Food Bank, to receive help. Staff were unable to provide a helpful referral because of current House Administration rules that prohibit congressional offices from referring constituents to any non-governmental groups, including non-profits. This is just one of the many examples of how this rule blocks critical aid.

During disaster events, constituents often use their limited resources to call Congressional offices for help. Subjecting these constituents to additional hurdles to access life-saving aid is unnecessary and unhelpful. We write in support of changing this rule to allow our offices to refer constituents to a list of Ethics and House Administration Committee approved non-partisan, non-profit organizations during times of a federally or state declared disaster event. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress



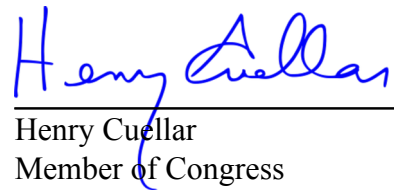
Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



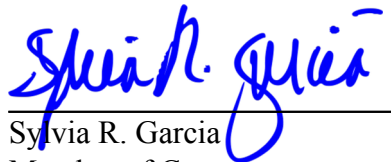
Troy Carter
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress

CC: The House Committee on Ethics