



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

Joseph P. Flynn
National Secretary-Treasurer

J. David Cox, Sr.
National President

Augusta Y. Thomas
NVP for Women & Fair Practices

Oct. 3, 2017

President Trump and Members of Congress,

The 3.5 million American citizens living on the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands desperately need our help. Hurricane Maria made landfall two weeks ago, but most residents still lack even the most basic of essentials – running water, food, access to medicine, gasoline, and electricity.

Residents there are American citizens like anyone else. More than 5,000 are federal government workers represented by our union. On any day, they deliver health care to veterans, provide benefits to our seniors, support U.S. military bases, screen passengers at the airports, and so much more.

These days, our members are working around the clock to serve the American public, often living out of their government offices so they can serve their duty to this country. They're treating veterans at VA hospitals, restoring flights at airports, and ensuring the protection of the public by maintaining order in federal prisons. Most of our members were the first on the ground, saving the lives of their neighbors and stabilizing their own communities – all while dealing with their own personal tragedies and losses.

The isolation of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from the rest of the U.S. is not an excuse for the glacial pace of our government's response to this humanitarian crisis. Failing to treat this disaster with the same sense of urgency you displayed when Hurricanes Harvey and Irma battered the mainland just weeks earlier is indefensible.

We demand Presidential and Congressional action to immediately provide the resources necessary to stabilize our country's most devastated territories.

Sincerely,

J. David Cox Sr.
National President, American Federation of Government Employees

Everett Kelley
National Vice President,
5th District, American Federation of Government Employees

