

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

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GOVERNOR



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February 8, 2018

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable John Kennedy
U.S. Senate
SR383, Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

Today, the United States Senate is set to consider a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the federal government. It combines language from a disaster supplemental that overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives that includes a provision regarding Duplication of Benefits (DOB) for Louisiana homeowners impacted by the 2016 floods. I am writing to urge you to use your position on the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee to include the House's language in the upcoming CR, rather than the language currently in the bill.

As you are aware, the federal government is imposing a DOB penalty on homeowners who applied for, but may not have even drawn, Small Business Administration (SBA) loans following the floods of 2016. By simply being made eligible for these loans, regardless of if they were used or not, the homeowner becomes unable to access grant funding from the RESTORE Homeowners Assistance Program for the amount of the loan. It is an unfair penalty that has saddled many homeowners who lost everything with the expense of a loan, rather than the possibility of a grant to rebuild their lives. When a homeowner has lost everything, grant funding helps give them a fresh start. A loan only adds to the anguish they face, and unfortunately, immediately following the floods, most homeowners were encouraged to apply for a SBA loan without being notified that it would impact future recovery assistance they could receive.

In December 2017, Congressmen Steve Scalise, Garret Graves and Cedric Richmond fought to ensure this burdensome regulation could be waived by the President. It opened the door for more than 12,000 homeowners to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. The United States Senate bill threatens that assistance. It has replaced the Graves' language with a bill you cosponsored with Sen. Marco Rubio, S. 2226¹. Unfortunately, you lent your support to a bill that only helps approximately one-third of the Louisianans the House language helps. The language crafted by Congressmen Graves and Richmond would

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2226/text>

The Honorable John Kennedy

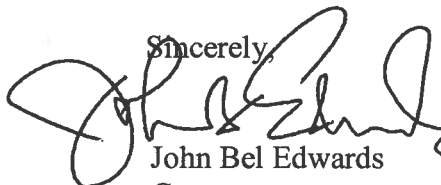
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provide critical assistance to not only Louisiana, but also Texas, Florida Puerto Rico and other states that have experienced natural disasters.

Please support the bipartisan proposal that is on the table that does more good for the people of Louisiana. The Senate should adopt the Graves-Richmond legislation immediately so that flood victims can be free from this burdensome federal penalty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards", written over the word "Sincerely,".

John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Louisiana Congressional Delegation