

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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CINDY BURKETT DISTRICT 113

March 14, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

By now I am certain you have received the letter from Texas Governor Greg Abbott appealing the Administration's previous decision to deny Individual Assistance to those families affected by the storms on December 26th. As State Representative for the area hardest hit by these storms, I would implore you to not only look over the data supplied by the Governor as evidence of our need for Individual Assistance, but to also consider the families behind those numbers.

As Governor Abbott stated, approximately two thirds of the respondents whose homes were completely destroyed were uninsured. Equally as stunning was that over fifty percent of respondents had damages to other property or structures that were not covered by insurance with an average estimated damage of over \$50,000. It is also important to note that since the Governor's original request letter, a more in depth assessment has increased the total number of major and destroyed homes to a total of 1,344. If you multiply the number of these homes by an average family size of four, we are talking about a direct impact to over 5,000 people. That figure does not include homes/families that did not fall in the major/destroyed category but were seriously damaged and although still habitable, caused serious financial impact to those families.

While these numbers are staggering, to the constituents in District 113 and the surrounding communities, they are not simply numbers. They are family members, neighbors, friends, and owners and employees of businesses that we frequent. These numbers represent our community. The tornados on December 26th devastated our communities. Families were torn apart, neighbors were lost, homes were demolished in a matter of seconds, elderly Alzheimer's patients were displaced from their primary care residence, and life as we had known it ceased to exist.



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Despite the devastation experienced, I saw something truly inspiring happen that night and in the days and weeks that followed. For those of us on the ground, we witnessed the best of Texas and the best of America. In an hour when our need was greatest, neighbors came to help neighbors and strangers arrived by the hundreds (I would suggest even thousands over the following weeks) to lend a helping hand. The spirit of compassion and camaraderie displayed in this area is exactly what makes this country the greatest in the world.

Our community will recover and our community will rebuild, but the need is still great and overwhelming for many. No amount of money will bring back the lives that were lost or reclaim the many priceless treasures that were destroyed. But by reversing the administration's previous decision and releasing funds for Individual Assistance, you have the opportunity to impact lives in a real and meaningful way.

In close, I request that in light of the updated information, you reconsider your initial decision and grant the individual assistance to the many citizens of our state that are struggling to get their lives back in order.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy Burkett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C".

Cindy Burkett
State Representative House District 113

CB:jcm