



Opening Statement of Chairman Joe Walsh
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access
“Examining the Role of Government Assistance for Disaster Victims: A Review of H.R. 3042”
February 16, 2012

Good morning, I call this hearing to order.

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses for being here today. We look forward to your testimony.

How to help our fellow citizens in their time of need is one of the most important questions we deal with in government. In the aftermath of a disaster, when a storm takes everything you have, the true test of resiliency is revealed. After a storm, homeowners and businesses grab a broom, a power-washer, a chainsaw and get to work trying to rebuild their lives. To do this, disaster victims need money to rent a generator and purchase construction supplies.

One thing they do not need is endless paperwork delays and confusing directions on how to obtain assistance.

Under the current system, both state and federal resources are mobilized to respond to a disaster, where they work hand-in-hand to conduct search and rescue operations, offer immediate food and shelter needs and long-term rebuilding assistance. To help rebuild, the government offers both subsidized and unsubsidized financial assistance. This allows our neighbors access to funds when they need it most.

Today we are here to try and answer an important question, *Is this assistance enough?* While our country was built on the principles of self reliance, should we, as taxpayers, be footing the bill so extra resources are available for those trying to rebuild.

To help us answer this question, we have a distinguished panel of witnesses here today. These witnesses will inform us about their experience in the aftermath of a disaster and provide their thoughts about the proper role of government.

I look forward to this discussion today and I now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.