

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN *FULTON*: DISASTER RELIEF

When disaster strikes—whether a wildfire, a hurricane, a flood, or a pandemic—communities come together to help those in need. Federal funds, state and local funds, and private agencies all work in close collaboration to provide food, shelter, transportation, and relief to people in crisis and to help rebuild communities. If the U.S. Supreme Court rules in an upcoming case, *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, that taxpayer-funded agencies can ignore nondiscrimination provisions and pick and choose whom to serve, millions of people could find themselves without assistance during a time of crisis.

THERE WERE MORE THAN 50 MAJOR OR CATASTROPHIC FEDERAL DISASTERS DECLARED IN 2019

Millions of people in the United States are affected by disasters each year. In FY2019, there were **53 major federal disaster declarations and four catastrophic federal disaster declarations** in the United States, amounting to a total of **\$12.0 billion in federal spending**. Assistance that supports people during and after a disaster include emergency shelter, housing assistance including rental assistance, transitional shelter, and home repairs.

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES IN NEED DURING A DISASTER AND IN THE RECOVERY COULD BE TURNED AWAY

Religiously affiliated organizations that receive federal, state, and local contracts to provide disaster relief may be able to claim objections to serving certain kind of families, such as LGBTQ people and their families, unmarried couples, single parents or people who don't meet their religious litmus test because they are of a different faith. For example:

- A same-sex couple may be turned away from a religiously affiliated emergency shelter during a disaster.
- A Muslim family may be forced to participate in a Christian prayer before meals at a shelter.
- Religiously affiliated agencies responsible for administering taxpayer-funded disaster services like legal services or crisis counseling could refuse to work with a transgender person or an unmarried couple and their children.

Particularly during a disaster, like in the aftermath of a tornado, a wildfire, or a flood, those in need shouldn't have to worry about being turned away from a taxpayer-funded emergency shelter or being denied food assistance because of who they are.

