



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## SENATOR RIVERA ON FEDERAL JUDGE'S RULING TO BLOCK FEMA'S EVICTION OF PUERTO RICAN EVACUEES

GUSTAVO RIVERA July 3, 2018

| ISSUE: **PUERTO RICO CRISIS, PUERTO RICO RELIEF EFFORTS, HOUSING, EMERGENCY SERVICES OR FEMA**

(Bronx, NY) - State Senator Gustavo Rivera released the following statement after U.S. District Judge Timothy Hillman announced that FEMA needs to continue to provide Temporary Shelter Assistance (TSA) to Puerto Ricans until July 24. Roughly 1,700 Puerto Rican families, including more than 700 families in New York, were scheduled to leave their hotels on Thursday, July 5 after U.S. District Judge Leo Sorokin granted a temporary restraining order last Saturday extending the evacuees' time in hotels. This decision is the result of a lawsuit filed by LatinoJustice PRLDEF on behalf of several of these affected families over the weekend.

"I applaud Judge Hillman for his decision to force FEMA to temporarily extend the critical TSA voucher program to the 1,700 Puerto Rican families displaced by Hurricane Maria until July 24. It is outrageous, although not surprising, that the current administration and FEMA continue to demonstrate such a shameful lack of commitment and competence. It is my hope that the judge's final decision is to grant these displaced families six additional months to stay at their hotels as they look for more permanent forms of housing. Let's not forget that the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Rita were granted 26 months of temporary shelter assistance, and these families should be afforded the same kind of aid. Further, and similarly

to Judge Hillman's observations, I would like to fully understand why Governor Roselló did not ask for this critical extension. His inaction has left these families in a precarious situation while they are desperately looking to get on their feet after such a traumatic experience. I want to thank LatinoJustice PRLDEF for their courageous leadership in legally supporting these families and, like them, I am committed to continue working in New York State to ensure my fellow Puerto Ricans have access to the resources and services they deserve."