



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Puerto Rico Needs Federal Government to Act Now: NAP to SNAP, Medicaid / Medicare Parity, Employee Tax Exemption

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I recently held a very productive meeting with members of the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce under the leadership of their chairman Cameron McCkenzie, in addition to multiple meetings I have had with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honorable Rafael Hernandez and the President of the Senate of Puerto Rico, Honorable Jose Luis Dalmau. There are three issues that have been repeatedly discussed in these meetings that are part of a specific plan that would immediately improve the lives of our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters on the island:

The change from the NAP program to SNAP

Medicaid / Medicare funding parity

Employee tax exemption

In the wake of Hurricane Fiona's impact on Puerto Rico, these issues become more urgent and reaffirm their sense of justice. Puerto Ricans cannot continue to be treated with just in case and half-measures. According to our information, an increase of \$800 per year could convert the NAP food program to SNAP for all qualified islanders, bringing food to families in desperate need.

In the case of Medicare, a similar investment per year would provide health care providers with the tools they need for better and more medical care. In these times of crisis, it is good to remember the great impact that the scourge of Hurricane Maria and the earthquakes in the southern area of the island had on Puerto Rico's healthcare system.

During Hurricane Maria, an employee tax credit was put into effect for companies and businesses. Including those small businesses that kept their employees working during difficult times. It is logical to do it again now, where many businesses are suffering losses in their operations due to a fragile and devastated electricity system.

These measures are real, practical and fair options if the federal government wants to help Puerto Rico immediately. I urge my colleagues in the federal government to wait no longer and not let the suffering of our people worsen.

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