

## **Dr. Tim Westley**

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*To: President – Senator – Congressman (Headings were specific for individuals)*

I am writing to request your consideration in sponsoring a bill to provide additional protection for workers that choose to evacuate during natural disasters.

### Employment Evacuation Protection (EEP) Bill

When a disaster appears to be imminent and evacuations\*(mandatory or voluntary) have been made or suggested by the local or state government, local or state authorities, and/or the national weather service, then the following applies:

- Employees may evacuate 24-48 hours from impact without question from employers and have their jobs protected upon return.
- Employees must return to work within 24-48 hours after evacuation has been lifted or a notice of ability to return (with caution and discretion) has been provided by the proper authority.

The employer cannot demote, fire, layoff or otherwise impede the employment of the worker due to choice of evacuation due to the natural disaster or the proposed threat thereof.

Exceptions to this law will be mission essential personnel:

- Health services personnel (doctors, nurses, etc.).
- Public safety (police, emergency management).
- Environmental health and safety Workers.
- Utility Workers
- Nursing Home Workers, Etc.

**Benefits** of EEP:

- It would encourage many to leave sooner and ease logistical concerns due to last minute mass evacuations.
- It would help to limit the number of necessary rescue by Emergency Workers and prevent those lives from being placed in danger.
- It would serve to save lives of many that may otherwise perish due to such disasters.
- It would preserve resources that can be redirected for other relief and rebuilding efforts.

**Cost:** Ultimately, cities and states are going to lose money when disasters strike, that is inevitable. Nevertheless, businesses have the option of getting Business interruption insurance, to cover loss of income as well as other options from the local, state and federal government.

Workers however, don't always or necessarily have those options. EEP would provide a piece of mind for workers that desire to leave but are fearful due to the possible loss of employment and chose to stay in disaster prone areas, thus putting their lives in danger and the lives of those that may need to rescue them.

Overall, if the loss of lives or endangerment thereof can be minimized, then such efforts should be taken. Protection of employment during disaster-related absences should not be optional but standard. Please consider this option as another layer of protection for our citizens in order to serve better and more importantly, to save lives.

Best Regards,

Tim Westley

CC:

Senator Ted Cruz | Senator John Cornyn

U.S. Rep. Ted Poe

U.S. Rep. John Culberson

U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith

State Sen. Donna Campbell