



## Speechwriting Case Study

### ETHICS AND LEADERSHIP

*The School for Ethics and Global Leadership*

*n.b. This is a hypothetical exercise. Some facts, events, and characters are real. Others are not.*

It is early October 2017, and millions of Americans in the Caribbean and Southeast United States are reeling from three major hurricane strikes. Countless homes and critical infrastructure are damaged beyond repair. Damage estimates for Irma, Maria, and Harvey, which run into the hundreds of billions, are unprecedented in U.S. history. Many scientists warn that the coming years will bring even more destruction due to climate change.

Initial hurricane relief funding has run out and Congress is debating a new \$100 billion aid package that will provide federal funding for the affected areas.

Three political camps have emerged, and each group is gearing up for a major fight on the House and Senate floors. (Please read the description of all three groups in order to understand the scenario fully.)

**GROUPS 1 & 2:** Republicans from the affected states are among the most vocal arguing for the full relief package, and more. But they're on shaky ground, as most of them voted against emergency funding after Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy. Offering support for them, however, is a small band of moderate Republicans and Democrats who believe the government has a moral responsibility to provide whatever amount of aid is needed, to whichever constituency is in need. They do not believe that budgetary pressures should be a determining factor; they also don't believe that there should be climate change regulations offered as conditions for the funding. To these members of Congress, it is simply the necessary and right thing to do, and is an investment in strengthening the nation after an unwelcome disaster.

**GROUPS 3 & 4:** The second group consists of Republicans who want to limit federal hurricane recovery dollars. While empathizing with victims, they argue that federal waste and mismanagement has hampered past recovery efforts (for example, the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy). They want to cut the \$100 billion in half and turn to corporate America and charitable citizens (who have already raised nearly half a billion dollars for relief efforts) to fill in the gaps. These Republicans believe that growing the American economy through deregulation and lower taxes is a better way to help hurricane victims.

**GROUPS 5 & 6:** The final group consists of Democrats who support the full aid package, but with federal strings attached. They argue that climate change is real, and therefore it would be foolish and wasteful to rebuild things the way they were before the storm. Instead, these Democrats (most of whom do not represent hurricane-affected areas) believe federal funds should not support rebuilding in areas of cities that scientists say are most likely to be damaged by future hurricanes. They are also drafting amendments to the relief bill that would force government agencies to reinstate several key Obama-era regulations that the Trump administration has rescinded.

**YOUR CHALLENGE:** Write a speech for a Member of the House or Senate of your choice (or make one up) who shares the basic views we have assigned you. Draft a speech of no more than three minutes that your Member of Congress will read on the House or Senate floor during debate that all three cable news networks will televise live. Use ethos, logos, and pathos and remember your audience!