

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3251

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide for an alternative block grant program for funding public assistance for response to a major disaster, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 2025

Mr. MOSKOWITZ (for himself and Mr. BURCHETT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide for an alternative block grant program for funding public assistance for response to a major disaster, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Disaster Response
5 Flexibility Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. ALTERNATIVE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.**

2 Title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and
3 Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170 et seq.) is
4 amended by adding at the end the following:

5 **“SEC. 431. ALTERNATIVE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The President, acting
7 through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency
8 Management Agency, shall establish an alternative block
9 grant program for providing funds for public assistance
10 in the event of a major disaster declared by the President
11 under this title.

12 “(b) ASSESSMENT OF COST OF PUBLIC ASSIST-
13 ANCE.—

14 “(1) ASSESSMENT REQUIRED.—In the event of
15 a major disaster described in subsection (a), the Ad-
16 ministrator shall—

17 “(A) assess the cost of public assistance of
18 each impacted State that would otherwise eligi-
19 ble for such assistance under this Act, including
20 reasonable administrative expenses incurred by
21 the State necessary to manage and distribute a
22 block grant under this section; and

23 “(B) reduced the total amount of such cost
24 by the non-Federal shares that would otherwise
25 have been applied for each activity carried out
26 with such public assistance.

1 “(2) CONSULTATION.—In making an assess-
2 ment under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall
3 consult with each applicable State to validate eligible
4 costs and ensure that the amount of the assessment
5 reflects the scope of necessary recovery efforts.

6 “(c) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the
7 program under this section, the President shall—

8 “(1) establish a process for a State to elect to
9 apply for a block under this section grant in lieu of
10 application for direct public assistance under this
11 title; and

12 “(2) ensure that a State may request a single
13 adjustment to the amount provided in such block
14 grant if the initial amount is insufficient to complete
15 the activities that would otherwise be carried out
16 under this title.

17 “(d) APPLICATION.—To be eligible for a block grant
18 under this section, a State shall submit to the President
19 an application in such manner and containing such infor-
20 mation as the President may require.

21 “(e) APPLICABILITY.—A State that receives a block
22 grant under this program shall not be eligible for direct
23 public assistance under any other provision of this Act
24 with respect to the major disaster for which the block
25 grant is provided, including financial assistance and oper-

1 ational support (such as personnel, equipment, and con-
 2 tracted services).

3 “(f) REMAINING FUNDS.—Any funds provided under
 4 this section that remain after the completion of recovery
 5 activities for which such funds are provided may be used
 6 for preparedness or mitigation activities in the State that
 7 are eligible for assistance under this Act.

8 “(g) REPORTS.—

9 “(1) STATE REPORTS.—A State that receives a
 10 block grant under this section shall submit to the
 11 Administrator—

12 “(A) not later than 120 days after the date
 13 on which such grant was received, an initial re-
 14 covery plan outlining anticipated uses of funds;

15 “(B) not later than 1 year after the sub-
 16 mission of the report under subparagraph (A),
 17 and annually thereafter until all funds provided
 18 under the grant are expended, a report con-
 19 taining—

20 “(i) a description of each activity for
 21 which funds were spent;

22 “(ii) in any case in which the State
 23 has remaining funds described under sub-
 24 section (f), the proposed use of such funds;
 25 and

1 “(iii) an assessment of the impact and
2 effectiveness of any expenditures of such
3 funds; and

4 “(C) not later than 180 days after all
5 funds provided under the grant have been ex-
6 pended, a final report containing—

7 “(i) a description of all projects car-
8 ried out with such funds; and

9 “(ii) an analysis of the overall effec-
10 tiveness of the activities carried out with
11 such funds.

12 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
13 12 months after the date of enactment of this sec-
14 tion, and annually thereafter, the Administrator
15 shall submit to Congress a report on the implemen-
16 tation and activities of the program established
17 under this section that includes—

18 “(A) a list of States that have elected to
19 participate in such program;

20 “(B) a description of how the Adminis-
21 trator has implemented the program, including
22 administrative procedures and timelines;

23 “(C) an assessment of any challenges and
24 barriers to State participation and program im-
25 plementation;

1 “(D) an evaluation of the accuracy and
2 timeliness of cost estimates used to determine
3 grant amounts;

4 “(E) the average length of time required to
5 make cost estimates and disburse grant funds
6 following a declaration of a major disaster;

7 “(F) a review of the administrative impact
8 on the Administration and participating States,
9 including staffing and oversight capacity; and

10 “(G) recommendations for statutory, regu-
11 latory, or administrative changes needed to—

12 “(i) improve delivery under such pro-
13 gram;

14 “(ii) support administration of the
15 program; or

16 “(iii) enhance effectiveness of the pro-
17 gram.

18 “(h) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DEFINED.—The term
19 ‘public assistance’—

20 “(1) means any activities eligible for assistance
21 under sections 403, 406, and 407; and

22 “(2) does not include any assistance provided to
23 individuals and households.”.

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