

HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES
8TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2014

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1339 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5936

DISTRICT OFFICES:

CENTRAL BROOKLYN OFFICE:
55 HANSON PLACE, SUITE 603
BROOKLYN, NY 11217
(718) 237-2211

SOUTH BROOKLYN OFFICE:
445 NEPTUNE AVENUE, FIRST FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NY 11224
(718) 373-0033

JEFFRIES.HOUSE.GOV

James Dimon	John Stumpf	Brian Moynihan	Michael Corbat
CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO
JPMorgan Chase	Wells Fargo	Bank of America	Citibank
270 Park Avenue	375 Park Avenue	1 Wall Street	399 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017	New York, NY 10152	New York, NY 10005	New York, NY 10043

Dear Messrs. Dimon, Stumpf, Moynihan and Corbat:

I write to urge you to develop a low-interest rate loan program to assist with rebuilding the houses of worship located in areas such as Coney Island that were devastated by Superstorm Sandy. Absent substantial engagement from the banking and financial services industry in a manner consistent with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)¹, many houses of worship in New York City badly damaged by the storm will remain uninhabitable.

Throughout the region, there are churches, synagogues, mosques and houses of worship that for decades were centers of civic life for all people regardless of religious affiliation. Many were substantially damaged or destroyed when the storm struck two years ago in impacted neighborhoods subsequently declared major disaster areas.²

The CRA is specifically designed, among other things, to encourage investment in underserved communities like Coney Island by providing benefits to banking institutions that assist in revitalizing designated disaster areas.³ When a financial institution awards CRA-compliant loans to qualifying houses of worship in a designated disaster area, the bank will then be eligible for credit in subsequent charter, merger or acquisition proceedings before federal bank regulators.⁴

¹ 12 U.S.C. §§2901-2908 (1977).

² Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Incident Report: New York Hurricane Sandy (DR-4085)*, October 2014, available at <http://www.fema.gov/news/disasters.fema>.

³ DARRYL E. GETTER, CONG. RESEARCH SERV., R43661 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT 7 (2014).

⁴ See The Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, *Correspondence: Community Reinvestment Act*, December 1996, available at http://www.ffiec.gov/cra/letters/letter_19961224.htm (“Assuming that [the loans are for premises of churches that are located in low- and moderate-income areas or having predominantly minority

Consequently, developing a low-interest rate loan program that allows houses of worship to rebuild in underserved neighborhoods impacted by Superstorm Sandy is mutually beneficial. First, it will enable badly damaged houses of worship to re-open in a manner that will benefit both displaced worshippers and the broader community. Second, it will improve bank and financial industry compliance with federal law pursuant to the Community Reinvestment Act. In this manner, everyone benefits.

The banking and financial industry in New York City collectively prosper by serving as depository institutions for government funds and as managers of pension fund investments. Two years after the devastating storm, houses of worship now need your expertise and assistance.

I look forward to working together in order to address this important problem.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hakeem Jeffries', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

HAKEEM JEFFRIES
Member of Congress

congregations and memberships] the loans will receive favorable consideration as small business loans under the CRA regulations if: (1) the amount of each loan is less than \$1 million; and (2) the churches to which [Bank] makes the loans are within [Bank] assessment area(s).”).