

REALTIME FILE

Pacific ADA Center
ADA NATIONAL NETWORK LEARNING SESSION
INCLUSIVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND
RECOVERY GETTING IT RIGHT
NOVEMBER 8, 2018

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>> Lewis Kraus: Welcome to the Emergency Management and Preparedness Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Webinar Series. I'm Lewis Kraus from the Pacific ADA Center, your moderator for this series. This series of webinars is brought you by the Pacific ADA Center on behalf of the ADA National Network. The ADA National Network is made up of regional centers federally funded to provide training, technical assistance, and other information as needed on the Americans with Disabilities Act. You can reach your ADA Center by dialing 1-800-949-4232.

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I do want to remind you that the webinar is recorded and it will be able to be accessed on Pacific ADA Center next week in the archive section.

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This is the fifth year of this webinar series which shares issues and promising practices in emergency management inclusive of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The webinars provide an opportunity for emergency managers, people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, first responders, planners, community organizations and other community partners to exchange knowledge and information on promising practices in inclusive emergency preparedness and management for the whole community.

The series topics cover emergency preparedness and disaster response, recovery, and mitigation, as well as accessibility and reasonable accommodation issues under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADA, and other relevant laws. Upcoming sessions are available at www.adapresentations.org/schedule.php.

These monthly webinars occur on the second Thursday of the month at 2:30 eastern, 1:30 central, 12:30 mountain and 11:30 a.m. pacific time. By being here you are on the list to receive notices for future webinars in this series. And those notices go out two to three weeks before the webinar and open that webinar to registration.

You can follow along with the webinar -- with the slides on the webinar. If you are not using the webinar platform, you can download a copy of today's PowerPoint presentation at www.adapresentations.org/schedule.php.

At the conclusion of today's presentation there will be an opportunity to ask -- for everyone to ask questions. You may submit your questions using the chat area within the webinar platform and the speakers and I will address them at the end of the session. So feel free to submit them as they come to your mind during the presentation. To submit those questions, type in the chat area text box or press control m and enter text in the chat area. If you are listening by phone and not logged into the webinar, you may ask your questions by e-mailing them to adatech@adapacific.org.

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Before we get to today's session, I want to take a moment to let emergency management offices -- representatives who are listening on the session here today know that the Pacific ADA Center is sponsoring a research project on emergency management with New York University. If you are with an emergency management office in Region 9, that's California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific basin, and you would like to take this survey, use the link that is going to go up there in the chat window right now or use that link -- I don't know about right now [Laughter] . Or you can write to us at support@adapacific.org and ask for the link. We would appreciate it if you would participate in that survey. It will give us a lot of good results that we can then use to move forward in helping include people with disabilities in emergency management processes.

Ok. Today's ADA National Network learning session is entitled "Inclusive Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery - Getting It Right." We are very honored to have this special presentation today. This webinar will review new legislation crafted by inclusive disability disaster advocates with U.S. Senate leaders led by Senator Bob Casey from Pennsylvania. This legislation focuses on analyzing the responses to disasters of the past five years in determining how best to include individuals with disabilities and those who are aging in the preparation, response, and recovery process from the start. Protection of civil rights and ensuring the voices of on-the-ground stakeholders are key components of the legislation.

When we set up the webinar, we went with the title you all saw in the announcement because the legislation did not yet have a name but it does now. And we all are going to have a unique opportunity today to learn about this legislation pretty much as it is being introduced to the Senate.

Today's speaker, who is going to tell us about this, is Michael Gamel-McCormick, the Disability Policy Director, United States Senate Special Committee on Aging with Senator Bob Casey as the ranking member.

So Michael, I am going to turn it over to you now.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Thanks, Lewis. Appreciate it. And thank you, everybody, who is here today. I'm going to pretty much walk through the proposed legislation and certainly welcome questions about it which we can do at the end.

But before getting started into the specifics of the legislation, I want to thank a couple of people up front. First off, Irman Perotti and [Indiscernible] who helped enormously with the feedback in coordinating all of the information that came from a very wide swath of the disability and emergency response communities. So thank you to them. And likewise to Marcie Roth and Paul as well. We could not have pulled any of this together without you all. It was an enormous community effort and we really, really appreciate it. And we're actually not done yet but we're at the point where we actually have a product that will be introduced shortly.

>> Lewis Kraus: And Michael, this is Lewis. Can I interrupt you for a second? People are saying that they can't quite hear you. Any chance you can speak up or get closer to your microphone?

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: I will do that. Let me see if that helps any.

>> Lewis Kraus: That sounds a little better. Thank you.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Ok. And just let me know if that continues to happen.

I also want to thank Josh Dubensky and Rachel Feldman here in our office who did some wonderful work on this as well.

As Lewis said, this bill has a name now. It's called the READI for Disasters Act. It's specifically targets those who are older Americans and those who have disabilities and those who have access and other functional needs as well. It is in preparation. We don't quite have the legislative language yet but I expect we will have it sometime today or tomorrow. We've been going back and forth with our legislative counsel and they've been wonderfully helpful in terms of getting to the final point of being ready for introduction for this.

What I'd like to do is just give you some background as to the reasons for the bill and what we've found really from the research that's occurred over the last 20 years or so related to older Americans and people with disabilities when it comes to response to disasters.

As many of you know, last year, 2017, was an enormous year for disasters that occurred both in terms of hurricanes, wildfires, and many other disasters. When you look at only those two categories, the hurricane and wildfires, there were 48 million people who were

effected by those disasters. And a conservative estimate indicates about 12 million of them had disabilities. That estimate is really a CDC estimate that probably is at the low end of what actually had occurred in terms of the number of people with disabilities.

We know, too, from the research since Katrina that during and following disasters that people with disabilities are injured and they die in a much higher rate than the general population. If you look at just the impact of Maria in Puerto Rico, you will see that there were so many more individuals who were older and so many more individuals who had disabilities who lost their lives during that particular disaster than of the general population. And there are many reasons for that. Much of it is that we're not prepared to support and transport and address the needs of those individuals. That's one of the reasons why we need this particular piece of legislation.

We also know that households of people with disabilities are more likely to need assistance and less likely to evacuate. The exact reason why individuals with disabilities, those who are older, are less likely to evacuate, we don't have hard research but we know that in many cases what people are saying to us is that they're fearful that the supports and the needs that they have will not be available where they're going to evacuate from. And then there are the complications that it is expensive to evacuate, both in terms of having vehicles and transportation, having the money to actually evacuate, and supporting oneself during that evacuation period particularly if there are ongoing needs. And that cost actually includes things like losing one's natural supports that make it possible to be independent and to live independently. So it is very difficult for older people and those with disabilities to evacuate.

Other reasons, too, why this bill is needed is that the accessibility of good evacuation information is not always universally available to people. We still see that even when we've tried to prepare, that there is not the availability of instructions in plain language, that often there is not closed captioning when videos are released, that there is not American Sign Language universally available to people, that media sometimes is posted that is in scannable versions of pdf's and not readable versions of pdf's. There are all sorts of ways that information is not accessible and we need to actually do much better at what is available there.

We know, too, that during disasters public shelters don't often have the necessary accommodations for people with disabilities. And sometimes that forces them to be segregated either into specialized shelters or into separate sections of shelters. That's somewhat ironic in that we know that generalized facilities tend to have the better information and be in the better know about what's actually happening. And when people are forced to be segregated, they are often cut off from the most current information. So it's a double whammy, unfortunately, for individuals.

Other reasons is that historically when we've done planning for people with disabilities and those who are older, it's not been the individual themselves asked about how to do preparation. It's often been family members or caregivers, service providers. And that means that sometimes we get it wrong because we're not hearing directly from the individuals themselves. And that component is critical. We need to make sure that the people who are involved are actually the people who will be receiving services.

And then finally, during and following disasters we find that those who are older and people with disabilities are more at risk in general, particularly for things like loss of independence and violation of civil rights than the general community. We saw during Harvey in Houston in particular that there were instances, and also in Florida, where people were forced to enter places where they did not want to be. And sometimes that includes nursing

home facilities or other institutional care and then made very difficult for them to leave those places as well. We should not be relinquishing civil rights and civil liberties during times of emergency response and recovery. And better planning and inclusion of individuals from the disability population and from the older adult population is going to help that process moving forward.

So when we look at the reasons for this bill, there are many. When you get a chance to look at the final bill itself, you'll see a set of findings associated with it and those findings will actually go on through numerous pages. Partly because the research shows where we come up short unfortunately, when we're responding -- preparing and responding to emergency situations.

So goals overall, when we look at this piece of legislation, are up front absolutely first to make sure that people with disabilities and older adults and those with access and other functional needs are included in the preparation process. Right up front, much like we talk about Universal Design needing to occur at the very beginning, when everybody is beginning to talk about response, we need to make sure that those individuals are included in that process as well; and not just in terms of preparation, throughout the whole cycle which includes response, recovery, and mitigation efforts as well. The bill really emphasizes the fact that we need to make sure individuals are included from the get-go, from the very beginning.

The second goal is to protect civil rights. As I alluded to earlier, we see the violation of civil liberties and civil rights during times of disaster. We want to reduce those as much as possible and hopefully eliminate those. So we actually have to understand when and how they happen and make sure that we have procedures in place for them not to happen.

We also see, unfortunately, that during times of recovery and mitigation, that often funds that are spent are not in adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act and adherence to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act and to other disability-related statutes as well. So the goals of the bill also include making sure that throughout the disaster cycle, that those laws are actually followed. And, of course, that means better communication, accessible communication, but also services and supports that are accessible as well.

And then finally, two other items for the goals for this bill is to improve coordination among all the entities that duly do activities during the cycle. Not just government agencies at the federal, state, and local level, but also for all of the volunteer organizations, whether they be massive like the Red Cross or they are local VOADs in place and organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Feed the Children and local Unit Ways, all of those secondary responders, making sure that there's good coordination among them as well and those in the disability community and those in the older adult communities as well.

And then finally, to make sure that we improve the outcomes for people with disabilities and older Americans who are disaster-affected. That's the bottom line goal of this bill, to make sure that we're seeing and eliminating injuries and deaths that occur to the greatest extent possible when there are disasters that are taking place. And that means any type of disaster, whether it's a hurricane, an earthquake, a wildfire that we're absolutely making sure that we're thinking about people with disabilities and we're making sure that they are included from the very beginning when we're preparing, responding, recovering and mitigating disasters.

So that's quickly what we found in terms of research. Again, I thank the many organizations that helped us with that and the help that the organization -- to establish the goals for the bill.

Let me walk through with you a little bit right now what is included in the actual piece of legislation itself.

So there are four sections right up front. There's a title, and I've shared that with you. The findings I've described a little bit for you. And the purposes are consistent with the goals that I have outlined as well. And then there are a set of definitions that come into place, things like individuals with access and other functional needs, what it means to be included in the process, and a whole set of definitions that talks about disasters and recovery and mitigation in general.

The meat of the bill itself is in the next five sections. Section 5 specifically talks about the use of disaster funds. This particular section gets at making sure that when funds are expended and they're given to a local governmental agency or to a VOAD or to some other non-governmental agency, that those funds are used in the way that is consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and with the Rehabilitation Act and with other appropriate disability laws as well.

Section 5 specifically amends the Stafford Act which is the large disaster bill that was passed after Katrina requiring explicitly schedule funds used by states and localities are overseen by an Advisory Committee composed of people with disabilities to ensure that the use of those funds follow the accessibility laws that we have in place. We shouldn't actually need that but we find over and over instances when those funds are used in ways that create new structures or create temporary structures or purchased equipment or other materials that are not accessible.

So when local governments or nonprofit organizations are spending these funds, they need to take into account accessibility and use by people with disabilities and older Americans and those with functional needs. So this particular section of the bill makes an explicit requirement of that and creates advisory groups that will oversee that and remind those localities, those government organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations, that they must use funds in such a way that are consistent with our established laws.

The sixth section of this particular piece of legislation creates a set of disaster centers. These disaster centers have a goal of doing research and establishing what recommended practices would be in terms of disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation and providing training and technical assistance to states and local governments as well as VOADs and non-governmental entities on inclusive disaster strategies.

There are 20 of these to be established. There would be two of them in each of the 10 Health and Human Services regions. So they would be distributed across the country. And the research component would include collecting data over time to see how entities are actually responding to the inclusion of people with disabilities and preparation and also what types of injuries and death that are occurring for people who are older and people with disabilities.

We have ok information about that. We really need good, longitudinal, robust information so we can track how we are actually responding and make sure that we get better outcomes. And as we implement, better recommended practices that we're actually seeing reduction in the injuries and deaths and also that we're seeing an increase in the accessibility of shelters and other types of services as well and new construction in buildings that occur during the mitigation phases as well.

The centers would be set up through a funding process that would offer a five-year grant. And the grants would be between half a million and \$2 million per year. So they could be

as large as \$10 million awards over -- \$2.5 million awards being the smallest over that period of time.

Eligible entities or Non-Governmental Organizations, that would include universities and colleges but also other types of Non-Governmental Organizations -- an ADA Center would be an eligible entity. In general, we expect that those would be partnerships of consortia because much of what needs to be done, whether it's training and technical assistance and research. It often can't be done by just one entity. But those organizations need to have a mission that focuses specifically on those who are older and those who have disabilities. And they need to ensure that they have expertise there and that they include individuals with disabilities in those who are older and their governing boards and their Advisory Councils. The group that advised us on this really said they should be of individuals and with individuals of the target organizations. And we couldn't agree more about that. An organization can, at the end of a five-year cycle, reapply for those funds. It would still be under a competitive grant process. But if someone were successful, did great work, could be certainly re-awarded a grant if that's the case.

This section also creates Projects of National Significance Program and that Project of National Significance Program would allow the federal government, with advice from disability groups and older Americans groups, specialized projects that would look at specific questions that might be important to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities, older Americans, in preparation for and response to disasters as well.

So while the centers are set up to do ongoing work, these Projects of National Significance could drill down into one very specific question related to preparation, response, recovery and mitigation which could then be used by the centers to distribute to localities and states and non-governmental and VOADs organizations so that they could use that information as well. This would be a separate grant process that would be applied for as well. So you would essentially have two different grant processes within this particular piece -- this section of the legislation.

The seventh section of the bill creates a National Commission on Disability Rights and Disasters. It would be a three-year commission. The commission would specifically look at the inclusion of individuals with disabilities and older adults and people with access and other functional needs to make sure that they are included in the process of responding to disasters. There would be at least 11 people with disabilities on this commission who have disabilities.

One of the things that we have learned in the past is that often commissions like this have one or two representatives of people with disabilities, which means that they are often the minority, they don't have a colleague on these commissions, and they often are seen as the lone voice of disability speaking and have to carry the weight not just of the whole disability community but really in some cases need to break through more official organizations points of view. We felt it was extraordinary important it make sure there was a robust number of people with disabilities on this commission. So in addition to the state and local emergency response personnel as well as federal agency personnel there would be this contingent of people with disabilities on the commission as well. The chair and the -- the chair or the vice chair of the commission must be a person with a disability as well. The members of the commission would make that decision that one of those leadership positions would have to be a person with a disability.

The commission would also be charged with creating recommendations looking at how do we protect civil rights during and after times of disasters, ensuring that civil liberties are

in place and that they are respected; and that when we are creating preparation strategies, that civil rights are recognized and not violated. It would also be charged with developing recommendations about evidence-based practices to include people with disabilities in the disaster cycle process and making sure that they are -- that they include -- they are included from the very beginning. And also technology notification, evaluation, and health maintenance and many other activities that would ensure independence both in preparation, during, and following disasters.

And then the structure of the commission overall is such that it would be three years in length and that the commission would issue three different reports. At the end of the first year and at the end of the second year there would be interim reports, certainly with recommendations but also with a set of findings of what is being discovered. And then finally at the end of the third year there would be a major report that would make recommendations on all of the issues being addressed that would be reported back to Congress and the authorizing committees. And I think we've also included that it would go to the administration and the White House as well.

There is an option that right now, the way it is written, the commission would sunset after the end of that three years. There is an option to extend the commission if Congress decides to do so. There is a direction in the legislation that 90 days before the end of the commission if Congress makes a recommendation to continue the commission, it would be extended and then Congress would need to indicate how long it would be extended for.

One of the reasons we tend to do this with commissions is that with time-limited commissions, there tend to be, in general, tend to be stronger reports and stronger recommendations. We often go back to commissions that have time limits, look at what their final report is, and try to use the information that was developed and the recommendation that have come out to address legislation around the specific topic area.

And I'll point to one that has been especially useful for us. It's been the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act creating positions of employment for people with significant disabilities. That was a two-year commission that generated a large set of recommendations we actually continue to mind that set of recommendations even though it is two years old. We continue to use that. So that's one of the reasons that we put a limit on a commission. Again in this particular case, we've written in the option to actually extend the commission as necessary. There would still need to be that three-year report, though, even if it were extended.

There are two other sections that I want to point out. At this point there is Section 8, which would be a Justice Department review of disaster-related settlement agreements. One of the things that has happened since Katrina and actually since the inception of the Americans with Disabilities Act, is that we find that there are cases that individuals' civil rights have been violated or that there has not been accessible disaster responses that have occurred. This section of the bill would direct the Department of Justice to create an internal commission that would view all settlement agreements since Katrina up through the current time.

To report out on what those Security Agreements, it will be very useful not just for Congress but probably for the greater community to see where the settlement agreements have occurred and what the themes and trends of those settlement security agreements. It will be a way to collect information where civil rights are being violated, where access is not being considered, and will help inform certainly the disaster centers but also localities and states and

Congress in terms of what we need to pay attention to, where there are real problems, and how we can actually respond to those problems. So that review we think will be extraordinarily helpful. It will also shine a light on something that often is just not seen very well in many cases. So in this case what we'll get is we'll get, we think, very significant information about where problems are in terms of violation that are occurring.

In the last section here, we are asking for a GAO report. GAO tends to do good comprehensive reports for Congress. One -- and I will tell you that currently GAO is doing quite a number of studies in response to Harvey, Irma, and Maria from 2017. But what we really would like them to do so to spend some real time looking at how federal disaster funds have been used related to people with disabilities and older adults. This will provide another set of information, much like the Justice Department review and also the requirements in Section 5 about how we are actually spending dollars and when dollars maybe are being misspent on services and equipment that are not accessible and are not supporting individuals with disabilities and those who are older and, again, will allow us to really look at how we can get better at spending those dollars.

If you're getting a sense of a theme here, the theme in this piece of legislation is to make sure that we're uncovering where we are not following through on accessibility in general and how we can get better. And the best way we can get better is really to uncover how things have been done in the past, documenting them well, make sure we've got good data, and then moving forward from there.

This particular bill -- I'm sorry. This particular report we're requiring would have to be provided in two years. It's not unusual for GAO to spend nine, 12 months on a report. We think this one is actually really important and we were wanting to give them a little bit more time to be as comprehensive as possible on this. So two years after the passage of the law they would need to provide this particular report to us. Those reports are public. They get made to the general public. And they usually have recommendations attached to them as well. So we think this will be another piece of important information to be able to move forward with.

That provides a general overview of what the legislation covers. I mentioned at the onset that we have worked through what we call spec language, the specific language, of this bill. It has been submitted to our legislative counsel. We've seen their first draft of this, answered a bunch of their questions, and we expect that legislative language back hopefully today or tomorrow. Once it comes back, we will share it with the general community as well. So you will be able to see that language and specifically how it has been structured.

Moving forward what we have at this point is we are looking for a number of things. One is co-sponsors for the bill. This comes at a funny time in terms of just Congress in general. We are moving forward with this so that we are looking for Republican and Democratic co-sponsors here. Because it's the end of the congressional session, we have until the end of December 31 to finish out this session, we'd really like to get this in a bipartisan level and get a Republican or maybe two Republican offices onboard for this particular introduction. Of course, we would often -- we would want as many as possible -- we would absolutely welcome any co-sponsors at all on this bill. And any help that you all could do to help do that.

I will be pretty straight forward with you in terms of who we are looking at. We, frankly, are looking at the southeastern coast, from Texas to Virginia, so all of the senators from Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, all the way up through Virginia are some of our targets for that, on both Democrats and Republicans we're also looking at the senators from

Colorado, partly because there's a really strong research center in disasters in Colorado. But we would welcome any and all members of the Senate to co-sponsor us.

One of the great ways to make that happen is to have constituents in their states reach out to them and ask them to sponsor this piece of legislation. If you do that or if folks are interested in doing that, it can be referred to as the READI for Disasters Act. It does not have a bill number at this point. And it doesn't have a bill number because it hasn't been introduced yet. But if you refer to it as the READI for Disasters Act being offered by Senator Casey's office, and certainly give my name, those staffs should be able to find me that way.

We'll expand -- we're also looking for letters of support from disability, aging, state and local organizations as well. I'm happy to report we have over 35 organizations that have already sent letters in support, which has been great. And, again, many thanks for their great efforts for getting people onboard. It would be great to have somewhere between 50 and 75 organizations onboard. That will mean a lot to other Senate offices.

And then the other thing is that we will be hopefully introducing this piece of legislation in the House as well, Representative Thompson from Mississippi would be the lead on that. And once we had legislative language, we will share it with him. Hopefully they will introduce it there as well.

Right now our goal to introduce next week, probably Wednesday or Thursday if we're able to get a Republican co-sponsor. If we don't have a co-sponsor but we have somebody who is interested, we may actually delay until the week of the 26th. It's pretty important to both my boss and I think just in terms of how to do legislation in general to do it as bipartisan as possible. So we would actually be willing to delay if we were able to get somebody, say, from North Carolina or Louisiana or pretty much from anywhere who is a Republican co-sponsor to come onboard. We know that we will have some Democratic co-sponsors on board, for sure, as well. But you should see it this month, for sure, hopefully next week.

As I mentioned, this session of Congress ends at the end of December. Many of you probably know that what happens at the end of December is that any bill that's not passed dies at that point. If this is not moved forward, we would reintroduce after the first of the year and work to move it forward to passage as well.

Just a couple of last things overall. If you know of folks, of organizations, that want to support the bill, that information should be sent to Josh Dubensky, who is listed here. Josh has been collecting all of those letters of support. And those letters can be formal letters from an organization. They can also be an e-mail indicating the support as well, as long as your organization is willing to be listed as supporting the legislation.

If you're interested in helping to secure co-sponsors, you can contact me or Rachel Feldman at the e-mail addresses that are attached as well.

And then if you have further questions about anything after this webinar, please feel free to send me an e-mail. I am happy to answer questions on specifics or just about the overall goals of this as well, including helping to get co-sponsorship for the piece of legislation.

One way we have done this a little differently than what we do with other types of legislation, we've been very, very inclusive of the community overall into the construction of this piece of legislation and we really, really appreciate all of the input that has occurred here.

One of the things I will tell you that may happen as we move forward is that if we have some co-sponsors who want to come onboard, they may ask for some changes. We will circle back with the community to make sure that those changes are ok or how to change the

language from those requests. We feel pretty responsible to the groups that have helped move this legislation forward. And we want to honor those groups and honor all of you who have been a big part in getting to this point with this piece of legislation.

I have been talking a long time. Lewis, I think if it's ok with you, if we have questions, we have comments, I think we could open up right now.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. That sounds great.

Before we do that, I just want to read out Michael's e-mail address for those of you to make sure that you have it. It's michael_gamel-mccormick@aging.senate.gov. That way you can reach Michael if you are interested in further information or to help with the co-sponsors.

All right. Thank you, Michael. That was really amazing and really interesting. And I think for not the least of which is the content but also just a little view into legislation and strategy of legislation before it's introduced I think is also kind of interesting from an observer point of view.

So here's -- we have a couple of questions. At this point, everyone, please remember to submit your questions in the chat window and we'll work on those right now.

The first question, Michael, somebody asked -- this is at the very beginning, where are the numbers, particularly to people with disabilities, obtained? That was when you were referring to how many people with disabilities I think were in the disasters, in the very beginning.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Yeah. I will embarrass Lewis and tell him that one of the places it came from was a piece of work that Lewis himself actually did. All of them come from peer reviewed data, published documentation either in journals or in organizations like the Centers for Disease Control or other governmental agencies that actually produce formal, vetted documents. So there's about 20 findings at the front end of this bill. And all of them are actually cited and documented. You won't see that in the legislation itself. We tend not to do that. But what all of them do have is a data source behind them.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. And actually just as a follow-up, how would somebody be able to find the document when it's available?

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: So, it will be available in congress.gov. So if you just go to www.congress.gov, you'll be able to find it as ready.

>> Lewis Kraus: Great.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Or through Senator Casey and they will be under him as well.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Another couple -- there are some questions on some of the details. This one came in but I'm not sure which committee you were talking about. Somebody asked: How will individuals be selected to the committee? There's a few committees so I'm not sure which committee. But any of them, how would they be selected?

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: For the commission, the overseeing group would be the Secretary of -- I can't remember if it's Health and Human Services or Homeland Security. The agency would actually be responsible for recruiting individuals.

There are very specific definitions of who would have to be on the committee. And I'll give you an example of that. So in the 11 members who have disabilities, they would need to be members who have a wide variety of disabilities in disaster experiences, there would have to be geographic diversity, ethnic and racial diversity, age diversity, and there would have to be gender and LGBTQ status diversity as well as veteran diversity as well.

So we create these categories that hopefully makes sure that we're doing a real good diversity of distribution of individuals. I'm sorry, that also includes diversity of type of

disability as well.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Next question would be on -- On which website can the comprehensive report for Congress be found?

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: I'm not sure what's being referred to there.

>> Lewis Kraus: Right.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: If we're talking about a future report, there would be a couple of places where it could be found. Once those reports are established, they would go on the authorizing committees. And that would mean in the Senate it would be the Homeland Security and Government Oversight Committee or the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. In the House it would be Energy and Commerce, Education and Workforce. And there's one other as well.

But these reports would actually be publicly available and we would push them out to non-governmental groups as well. So if -- once they're out, you know, somebody like NCIL could have them, National Council on Independent Living, could have them on their website. Anybody could post these.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Great. So for those of you who are writing about where you can find the presentation information, these PowerPoints, they are available. As I mentioned at the beginning, on the www.adapresentations.org website where you signed up. Right now it's under the schedule, for today it's under schedule.php. As of tomorrow and next week, all of the archives will be up there. It will be there in archive is what I mean to say.

So the next question. Would this address other types of emergency planning efforts such as active shooter emergency response planning or is it specific to natural disaster type events?

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Yeah, this is specific to natural disasters. So not to those other types of emergencies. As I said in the past, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, those type of emergency situations.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Next question. The grant funding allow pass-through funds to help support community-based organizational participation in planning activities? The current capacity to do so is almost non-existent unless resource support is available.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Yes. The short answer is yes.

>> Lewis Kraus: [Laughter] I mean, basically you're saying probably you're talking about that they would be parts of the team that would be assembled under the different grant processes within the legislation. Right? Yeah. Ok.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Right. And that would be required, actually.

I should also note that right now how we have the large commission, Section 8, written, those individuals with disabilities that are not employed by a government entity would get a stipend and travel allowance to participate.

We know that if somebody lives in North Dakota or Nevada or wherever and they want to be part of a national commission, it's costly. So they would get both a stipend and travel expenses to participate in that commission. That typically has not been done and it limits who can actually participate.

>> Lewis Kraus: Right. Ok. And I just want to encourage everyone, if you have questions about this legislation right now, this is your great opportunity to ask it. Go ahead and type it into the chat window.

I'm going to ask a question. You have a lot of research findings that are built into this. Can you say a little bit more about how you see the findings cycling back into the work? I

mean, is it something where the legislation gets relooked at to emphasize things that are found in the research or is it just simply the research becomes part of the training and technical assistance that goes out from those TA centers? How do you imagine it being used?

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: That's a great question. Certainly the research would be cycled through the centers. And then because those centers are charged with providing the training and technical assistance to the Non-Governmental Organizations, the VOADs and to the local and state governments, the research would be cycled specifically straight to them. But what we found in the past with these types of commissions where there's generated information that's research-based, is that they then become the foundation for new legislation moving forward.

So there becomes this iterative cycle of the centers developing this information, the commission in its report, the GAO report, the Department of Justice Commission. All of those generating well-founded, strong research, evidence-based information that then would get turned into new types of legislation moving forward.

And to be very honest, Lewis, in a lot of cases -- the federal government is not always the target for this. In this many cases that information can be used at localities, at state levels where we begin to see change. In some cases faster certainly than at the national level. That's why these centers are so important, to make sure that this information gets disseminated as widely as possible. And one of the reasons we said let's make sure there's 20 of them and that they're in each of the regions, the Health and Human Service regions, so they can actually get to know the organizations in those areas and push out that information as much as possible.

>> Lewis Kraus: Great. And if I can piggyback on that, if anybody is still here from Region 9 as an emergency management office and you want to participate in our survey, do contact us at support@adapacific.org and ask for the link to be in it if you haven't already received it. And if you have received it, please go ahead and take the survey. It cycles right into, as Michael talked about, how it gets used in the community.

We have another question. "When did you say the READI Act would be proposed and made available on line? I'd like to read the proposal if possible."

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: So, we're waiting on the legislative language right now. Once the legislative language comes from our legislative counsel, we'll actually distribute that information through a number of organizations, so through Marcie Roth's information, who will probably pass it on to Lewis, I would imagine, you'll be able to see it. When it gets formally introduced into Congress, it will be available on Congress.gov. So you'll have the actual access there. It will have a bill number at that point, which will make it easier to find.

But as I said, you'll be able to look under either Senator Casey or READI for Disasters Act. I can't tell you exactly when that's going to be. We hope it's next Thursday. If it needs to be delayed to the week of the 26th of November because of co-sponsorships, it might be then. But certainly within the month.

Once we introduce it formally, it usually takes a couple of days for it to be loaded into congress.gov. So we'll let people know when it gets introduced. And then it's a couple of days afterwards that it's available on congress.gov.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. And just in case people were wondering, the organization that Michael is referring to with Marcie Roth is Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies. And I think you can search on that on the internet and be able to find it. She may have posted more information as Michael has described.

All right. Well, I am not seeing any further questions. So I think we might have run to

the end of our cycle here.

For all of you who are listening, you will receive an e-mail with a link to your -- to an online session evaluation. Please complete it for today's program. We really value your input. We want to make sure that we're demonstrating impact for our funder.

We want to thank Michael today for sharing his time and knowledge with us. It's very interesting information.

A reminder, today's session was recorded. You will be able to see it next week at www.adapresentations.org/archives.php.

We will be not having a December session. We will be all celebrating the holidays. How about that? And then we will come back in January and have a presentation from the American Red Cross on what they are doing now to include people with disabilities in their work. That will be in January. January 10. We hope you can join us for that and watch for that e-mail two or three weeks ahead of time for the opening of registration for that session.

Thank you all for attending today. Thank you, again, Michael, for your time and effort on this. We really look forward to watching the progress of this as it makes its way through Congress.

>> Michael Gamel-McCormick: Thank you, Lewis. I really appreciate it.

>> Lewis Kraus: Very good.

All right, everyone. Have a great rest of your day and we will talk to you in January.

Bye-bye.

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