



Dear Media and 1st responders:

Hurricane Irma is falling the same time of the month Ivan did 13 years ago. Many families are too strapped financially to prepare much or evacuate. Some are too frightened to go anywhere even a shelter when undocumented. Here are many reasons before one judges .

- ◆ Financially unable
- ◆ Many homeowners choose not to leave the only home they have ever known in case they somehow can prevent more damage or destruction because of lack of insurance. ◆ Undocumented immigrants are afraid to go anywhere fearful of ICE and even more now with latest presidential actions concerning DACA.
- ◆ Families spent much on school supplies, school sports, clothes, shoes and haircuts for their children as school has already begun across the country everywhere except where Hurricane Harvey hit.
- ◆ Many seniors, disabled citizens are on fixed incomes. ◆ Many medically challenged citizens prefer to stay at home due to medical needs, machines and comfort.
- ◆ Many citizens have pets they cannot afford to board and are therapeutic for them during highly stressful times so they do not evacuate. Only a few places take pets if any nearby and then there are strict rules . They made this mistake during Harvey sadly and only at the end said pets would be permitted at shelters.

Please realize it is often the poorer citizens not the irresponsible who do not evacuate . We have been there ourselves as a military family. I am a therapist so I hear the feedback by many even again during Harvey . Be sensitive please.

We still will continue urging everyone to evacuate when asked or especially if there are special needs . Why ? Because staying back endangers 1st responders who must come out to rescue you if you have a medical emergency or your home is too damaged to keep staying . Remember too it's not just if your home is damaged or not . You may not be in an area able to sustain your basic needs after a storm hits your neighborhood or town . Please whatever you do – whatever you report – stay sensitive to other people's situations and stay safe.

In peace – Shalom .

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⚠ Advice to Disaster Management Teams :

Reassure citizens they can bring pets, are welcome and will not be checked if non-documented , do not need monies at shelters. Also make certain medical shelters are identified as early as possible with pets allowed as many disabled citizens have service and therapy dogs . Please translate everything in Spanish when making any social media posts and holding press conferences in addition to sign language . This is how one saves lives .