

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Navy League Statement on U.S. Coast Guard Hurricane Supplemental Request**

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy League of the United States is greatly disappointed with the emergency hurricane supplemental request for the Coast Guard submitted by the Administration, which shorts the Coast Guard about \$574.4 million in needed funding. This supplemental exacerbates the problem of an underfunded Coast Guard, leaving them in a funding hole that will have a devastating impact on the service, undercutting essential safety requirements and service levels and potentially costing American lives in future storms, accidents and natural disasters.

An unprecedented five hurricanes--four of which were Category 4---hit over 2,540 miles of American shoreline this year. The Coast Guard was the first response, rescuing over 11,300 people, 1,500 pets, and assisting more than 3,600 grounded vessels.

“The remarkable men and women of our Coast Guard did an outstanding job during these recent hurricane responses. Time and again they’ve responded to the calls for help. Not funding the costs they bore leaves them unprepared for the next storm,” said Navy League National President Alan Kaplan. “The men and women of our Coast Guard put their lives at risk; and many ignored the damage inflicted to their own homes to help save others. This request, less than half of what the Coast Guard requested, shows a shameful lack of gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifice borne by these servicemen and women and their families—700 of whom are still displaced. I can only imagine the effect on morale, to know their political leaders do not care about Coast Guard families. Not only is it morally wrong to repay their sacrifice with a pittance like this, but it is short-sighted bordering on negligence. It will leave the Coast Guard dangerously vulnerable during the next storm, impacting their ability to save lives.”

Coast Guard officials have openly discussed that they are facing an approximate \$1 billion shortfall after their hurricane response, for operations, direct damage, and resiliency. However, the emergency supplemental requests less than half of that, leaving a \$575.4 million shortfall, with no funds for resiliency. Funding resiliency is crucial to ensure the Coast Guard is ready for the next storm, and protects their own safety. This supplemental request slaps a band-aid on problems like aging housing instead of investing to ensure Coast Guard housing in vulnerable areas can withstand the next storm. This budget means that the Coast Guard will have to rebuild each time a storm hits.

The Coast Guard already has an anemic budget, with a flat operations account and a \$1.6 billion aging and damaged infrastructure backlog. Not only that, they also sustained \$92 million in direct damages from Hurricane Matthew last year, but received only \$15 million in funding. These budget shortfalls are building, putting the Coast Guard further and further behind in terms of readiness and operations.

The Navy League is urging Congress to plus up the supplemental for the Coast Guard. “The Navy League has mobilizing its 50,000 members to take action and urge Congress to fund the Coast Guard’s supplemental at the full \$1 billion they need to fully recover from these four storms – and be ready to save American lives in the next one,” said Kaplan. “I’ve also sent letters to the leadership of the appropriations committees. I hope they do the right thing.”

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