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For Immediate Release
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BLUMENTHAL STATEMENT ON NEW DEADLINE FOR TRANSITIONAL SHELTER ASSISTANCE FOR PUERTO RICAN EVACUEES OF HURRICANE MARIA

(Hartford, CT) – U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) issued the following statement today regarding news that a U.S. District Court Judge in Massachusetts has denied a request from housing advocates to block FEMA’s attempted end to Transitional Shelter Assistance aid for Puerto Rican evacuees of Hurricane Maria. The judge extended TSA to midnight on September 13, giving families until September 14 to check out of hotels and find new housing. In Connecticut, there are 39 families from Puerto Rico staying in hotels through the TSA program.

“This Administration now has two weeks to do what it should have done from the start—activate a meaningful, long-term housing plan for Puerto Rico. Hotel rooms are no solution to this humanitarian catastrophe, but ending this lifeline without a plan to help these families find safe, stable, affordable homes is recipe for disaster. I have proposed one, reasonable solution—the Disaster Housing Assistance Program—but if the Trump Administration stubbornly and arbitrarily continues to reject that path, it is on them to produce an alternative to prevent mass homelessness and chaos,” Blumenthal said.

The Disaster Housing Assistance Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides affordable, long-term housing support for victims of natural disasters, and was deployed in the wake of other recent natural disasters, including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Sandy. It provides temporary rental assistance that gradually tapers off to encourage families to help prepare to assume full responsibility for housing costs at the end of the program. Families are also provided case management to assist with finding permanent housing, employment and in accessing other benefits.

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