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Today’s Key Stories

IA-03: House passes resurrected LGBT measure [The Hill, [05/26/2016](http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/281316-house-passes-resurrected-lgbt-measure)]

*Young reverses vote on Maloney LGBT amendment, now attached to Energy bill*

House Democrats on Wednesday resurrected a measure ensuring equal protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people after their last attempt erupted in chaos last week.

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY) reprised his amendment to enforce an executive order President Obama issued in 2014 to prohibit federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The House approved his amendment to an Energy Department spending bill in a 223-195 vote late Wednesday night, in contrast to a similar vote a week ago when the measure failed by a single vote. Forty-three Republicans joined with all Democrats to support the amendment.

Cheers broke out on the House floor after the amendment passed.

Maloney's proposal originally had enough votes to pass last Thursday on another appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). But House GOP leaders held the vote open for seven minutes as they frantically lobbied Republicans to change their votes so that it would fail.

GOP leaders warned that adoption of Maloney's amendment would have jeopardized passage of the underlying VA spending bill. The night before, the House had passed the annual defense authorization with a provision that effectively exempts religious organizations from complying with Obama's executive order.

While unveiling his reprised amendment, Maloney, who is openly gay, angrily recalled the events of last week as the votes in favor of his measure gradually switched against it.

"With all time expired, it was clear as could be that equality had won the vote. But when the world watched, something else happened. Something shameful happened," Maloney said. "Something about treating LGBT people fairly just wouldn't do. "

Republicans were more prepared this time for Maloney's amendment since it was clear ahead of time that it would come up for a vote. Last week's vote, meanwhile, came with little warning, which resulted in GOP leaders partaking in the last-minute arm-twisting.

Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) offered a counter-amendment so that Maloney's proposal would be modified by stating that no funds could be used in contravention of the LGBT executive order except as "required by the First Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment, and Article I of the Constitution."

"Does anyone in this chamber seriously oppose Article I of the constitution, the First Amendment, or the 14th Amendment?" Pitts asked.

Maloney allowed Pitts's amendment to pass by voice vote, saying that he had no objection to simply stating adherence to the Constitution.

"What do you say we abide by the whole Constitution? The part that tries to make it more progressive, more inclusive of people like me, of people of color, of women, of people who were shut out when it was written. How about we include the whole Constitution? Can we do that?" Maloney said.

Ahead of the vote, influential conservative group Heritage Action urged Republicans to oppose Maloney's amendment and said that it would be including it on its legislative scorecard.

"Make no mistake: A vote for the Maloney amendment is a vote for President Obama’s radical transgender bathroom agenda," the notice reads.

Heritage Action further dismissed the change made by Pitts's counter-amendment, saying it had "absolutely no substantive effect."

"Simply adding a reference to the Constitution at the end of the amendment will in no way mitigate the amendment’s damage to religious liberty," it added.

Earlier Wednesday night, the House adopted, 227-192, an amendment from Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-N.C.) prohibiting the Obama administration from revoking funds previously appropriated to North Carolina in retaliation for the state's controversial transgender bathroom law.

The Justice Department filed a lawsuit earlier this month against North Carolina for its law, which requires people to use the bathroom corresponding with their birth gender instead of their current gender identity.

“We believe this is an egregious abuse of executive power and that the State of North Carolina should not be required to comply to the president’s wishes. The president is not a monarch, he is not a dictator, he does not issue fiats, we are a Constitutional divided government," Pittenger said.

Pittenger's office said he plans to offer similar amendments to upcoming appropriations bills.

The House also passed, 233-186, an amendment offered by Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.) to prohibit the use of funds in contravention of religious freedom.

All seven of the Republicans accused by Democrats of switching their votes last week - Reps. Jeff Denham (Calif.), David Valadao (Calif.), David Young (Iowa), Bruce Poliquin (Maine), Mimi Walters (Calif.), Greg Walden (Ore.) and Darrell Issa (Calif.) - voted for Maloney's amendment on Wednesday.

Young, who's one of the most vulnerable House Republicans up for reelection this cycle, said in a statement that the tweaked version of the Maloney amendment was a "commonsense solution which furthers policies that adhere to our nation's principles and religious beliefs."

Issa maintained to The Hill earlier this week that he had changed his vote before House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) approached him on the floor and that he intended to oppose the amendment.

"People hit the wrong button regularly," Issa insisted.

Maloney had the ability to force another vote on his proposal on Wednesday because the Energy Department spending bill was considered under a process that allows members of either party to offer unlimited amendments.

However, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) laid out plans this week to require lawmakers to submit their amendments in advance for upcoming spending bills to avoid more political curveballs from Democrats like last week's chaotic vote.

IA-03 Young

Local News

Rep. Young knew better than to change his vote on LGBT (LTE) [Des Moined Register, [05/26/2016](http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2016/05/26/rep-young-knew-better-than-change-his-vote-lgbt/84803300/)]

Letter hits Young for bending under pressure

U.S. Rep. David Young voted against banning LGBT discrimination by federal contractors. He and other Republicans decided to side with the self-righteous folks who claim the religious right to discriminate.

Young knows better. He first voted for the ban, but bending to political pressure, later changed his vote. LGBT persons of the 3rd District and their families and friends should remember this act of cowardice in November.

— Timothy Olson, West Des Moines

Meet the Candidates: David Young [KMA Land, [05/26/2016](http://www.kmaland.com/news/meet-the-candidates-david-young/article_4b424db8-2294-11e6-bac3-7f978a0c24e0.html)]

Young highlights EPA rules, economic issues, and national security issues as key areas in race

 (Van Meter) -- It's time once again on KMA News for another segment of "Meet the Candidates," highlighting candidates running in key local races in the June 7th Iowa Primary. Wednesday's segment features the second of two candidates running for Iowa's 3rd Congressional District's Republican nomination, incumbent David Young.

A lifelong resident of Van Meter in Dallas County, Young has served as Iowa's 3rd District Congressman since 2014. Prior to his current position, his role was Chief of Staff to Iowa Senator Charles Grassley. His educational background includes time at Buena Vista College and graduating from Drake University in Des Moines. Young says his decision to run for reelection was easy.

"The job, I find, is fulfilling," Young said. "I believe I'm making an effective impact here on behalf of the state's 3rd Congressional District. Iowa is so special to me and I want to make sure she has a seat at the table. One of the reasons I got on the Appropriations Committee, is because when the federal budget is dispersed, I want to make sure Iowa is not left behind with things like agriculture, rural health care, and rural telecommunications. We have a seat at the table and our values are at the table as well."

Young says he's focusing on several issues facing Iowans this election.

"I'm not only advocating good policies for Iowans, but also fighting bad policies," Young said. "I'll give you an example; the EPA's Waters of the U.S. Rule. The implications that could have on the heartland are detrimental. I'll be fighting bad things and pushing forward good things. We need more transparency in our government. We also need to allow people to keep more of their hard earned dollars and not send them to Washington D.C. to be wasted. Economic security is a big issue."

On the topic of economic security, Young says he will continue his push to help fix the nation's economy.

"On the job front, we need to make sure we have access to markets. We also need to make sure that to get to those markets, we have a strong grid and transportation system," Young said. "I was proud to vote for the new five year transportation bill. Not only will it help us get access to markets, but also it will keep our families safe on the road. We also need to make sure we keep a check on this administration--or any administration--when it comes to higher taxes and higher fees that they are trying to suck out of rural Iowa and southwest Iowa."

Young adds national security is also a main highlight this year.

"I'll be working to secure the border and bring accountability to the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, which I've been doing by sitting on the Appropriations Subcommittee," Young said. "We need to try to work with the president--and anyone else--to get a strategy in place to defeat ISIS. I want to make sure Iowan's constitutional rights are secured because we have a federal government that is big and bloated. They need to be put in check. I am at the seat of the table to work to do that."

Young also addressed allegations made against him by his GOP opponent, Joe Grandanette of Des Moines. In a recent interview with KMA News, Grandanette claimed Young "betrayed [us] when he got into Washington, D.C."

"I don't know what he is referring to, but I will tell you this, I have been consistent with my words and my actions," Young said. "I'm on the "No Budget, No Pay" bill. When Congress did not get a budget on April 15, I kept my word to the American people and Iowans of the 3rd District. I have not received a paycheck because it is the law to do the budget by April 15. I have kept my commitment to be accessible in the district to every county every month. I've had over 660 meetings and tours throughout the 3rd Congressional District. I've missed zero votes as well as a member of Congress. I'm keeping my word."

Adams says education top priority after seeing benefits [Des Moines Register, [05/26/2016](http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2016/05/25/desmund-adams-says-education-top-priority-after-seeing-benefits/84929516/)]

Adams speaks about universal pre-K support, criminal-justice reform

Desmund Adams' top priority, if elected to Congress, would be fully funding education — from universal preschool to free community college.

“The reality is, I am where I am because of education,” Adams told The Des Moines Register editorial board Wednesday.

Adams, who is running in the Democratic primary for Iowa's 3rd Congressional District, grew up in inner-city Chicago, dropped out of high school at the age of 17 and went to the federally funded Job Corps program to earn his high school equivalency degree.

He later attended community colleges before enrolling at Drake University and graduating with an undergraduate degree in education as well as a law degree. But he conceded he has never practiced law after failing to pass the bar exam, he said.

"I have achieved success because of the failures I’ve had in life. I don’t run from the failures (that) I’ve had," he said. "But practicing law really was not the goal for me. It was not a calling for me. If it was, guess what, I would have passed that test."

Desmund Adams speaks to Register editorial board about racial profiling. The Register

Adams is an entrepreneur and business owner and one of three Democrats vying for the party’s nomination in the June 7 primary. Democrats have called the seat, which is currently held by first-term Republican incumbent U.S. Rep. David Young, a “top pick-up opportunity” for the party.

In a wide-ranging interview, Adams said he supports universal preschool, making community colleges tuition-free and reducing the interest rates on student loans. He said his family understands the weight of student loan debt; he and his wife, who also holds a doctorate degree, have accumulated six figures worth.

"I don’t believe the federal government should be in the business of making money off the backs of the very students which are going to strengthen our nation," he said.

To fund those programs, he suggested potentially decreasing defense funding or closing tax loopholes.

 “There are opportunities for us to secure that funding,” he said. “I think it’s intellectually disingenuous when individuals say the money is not there.”

Adams also called the high costs associated with housing prison inmates "unsustainable."

“Today we have a tremendous backlog of nonviolent offenders from primarily the drug offense area, which is costing us a lot of money,” he said, noting that the country spends more per prison inmate than per public school student. “… So at some point we have to make some determinations on what exactly are our priorities.”

(According to a 2015 report from the U.S. Census Bureau, per pupil spending for the nation was $10,700 during budget year 2013. A 2012 study found the average cost per inmate in the United States was $31,286.)

Adams argued the country needs criminal justice reform not just because of the financial implications, but because of the implications it has on families and communities. He said he supports giving judges more discretion when it comes to sentencing nonviolent offenders.

Adams, who would be Iowa’s first non-white congressman, said he knows what it's like to be pulled over by police for doing nothing, and said his son has been pulled over while driving in Des Moines.

“I support our police. … We have tremendous law enforcement,” he said. “But we do have bad actors. We do have bad actors. And we have a system that protects bad actors, and we have to do better at that. And that needs to be something our judicial department can really start to put eyes on and focus on so everyone can participate in the American dream. Not just the ones that look like they should be able to participate in the American Dream.”

National News

House passes resurrected LGBT measure [The Hill, [05/26/2016](http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/281316-house-passes-resurrected-lgbt-measure)]

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While unveiling his reprised amendment, Maloney, who is openly gay, angrily recalled the events of last week as the votes in favor of his measure gradually switched against it.

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House Passes Bill on LGBT Rights for Federal Contractors [AP, [05/26/2016](http://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2016-05-25/house-reverses-course-on-lgbt-rights-for-federal-contractors)]

*Young reverses vote on Maloney LGBT amendment, now attached to Energy bill*

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House reversed itself late Wednesday and approved a measure aimed at upholding an executive order that bars discrimination against LGBT employees by federal contractors.

More than 40 Republicans helped Democrats power the gay rights measure over the opposition of GOP conservatives who dominate the chamber.

Conservatives did prevail in a separate vote designed to make sure federal funding isn't taken away from the state of North Carolina over its controversial bathroom law for transgender people.

Wednesday night's 223-195 tally reverses a vote last week on the gay rights measure. Then, GOP leaders twisted arms to defeat the legislation, causing several supporters to switch their vote, leading Democrats to erupt in protest.

Openly gay New York Democrat Sean Patrick Maloney returned to attach the measure to a funding bill for the Energy Department.

This time, GOP leaders let members vote as they wished; about a dozen Republicans, including several from California, rethought their opposition and Maloney's amendment made it through fairly easily.

It would prohibit agencies funded by the bill to award taxpayer dollars to federal contractors that violate President Barack Obama's executive order barring discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

"It says you do not take taxpayer dollars and fire people just for being gay," Maloney said.

Maloney said last week's vote "snatched discrimination from the jaws of equality."

Earlier, the House voted 227-192 to block several federal agencies from retaliating against North Carolina over its law requiring transgender people to use the bathroom of their original sex.

That amendment, by Robert Pittenger, R-N.C., came in response to warnings from the Obama administration that it may take federal funding away from North Carolina in response to the state law that blocks certain protections for gay people.

"The President and his emissaries have stated ... that funds should not be dispensed to North Carolina until North Carolina is coerced into complying with the legal beliefs of the President, and his political views," Pittenger said. "This is an egregious abuse of executive power."

The North Carolina law was passed after Charlotte passed an ordinance allowing transgender people to use restrooms of their chosen gender identity. The state law went further to take away federal protections for gays, putting the state at risk of losing a variety of federal funds.

Top House Democrat Nancy Pelosi of California blasted Republicans as favoring discrimination against gays.

"Republicans overwhelmingly voted to support ... the hateful and discriminatory state law in North Carolina, and to enable anti-LGBT bigotry across our country," Pelosi said in a statement. "History will not look kindly on the votes Republicans proudly took to target Americans because of whom they are or whom they love."

Maloney's proposal had appeared on track to pass last week, peaking at 217-206 as an amendment to a veterans' spending bill.

But GOP leaders prevailed on seven Republicans to switch their votes, including California GOP Reps. Jeff Denham, Darrell Issa, Mimi Walters and David Valadao. Swing-district freshmen David Young, R-Iowa, and Bruce Poliquin, R-Maine, also switched positions on last week's vote. Each of them switched back Wednesday, joined by several other Republicans who opposed Maloney's plan last week.

The energy and water projects bill is the second spending bill for the upcoming budget year to come to the House floor.

From The Campaigns

MI-06 Upton

Local News

Upton: Opioid Compromise Likely Next Month [WSJM, [05/26/2016](http://www.wsjm.com/2016/05/25/upton-opioid-compromise-likely-next-month/)]

Upton says Opioid bill will come soon, will meet with Senate leaders soon

The final version of legislation to fight the epidemic of opioid abuse around the nation could be on the president’s desk by the end of June. Congressman Fred Upton says both the House and Senate have passed plans, and they’ll soon be worked into a compromise. Upton says he’ll serve as a conferee with Senate counterparts.

“I’m sitting down with our House Republican conferees a little bit later this week to begin the discussions, to look at the differences between the House and the Senate bills so that we know where we are, so that we can begin to work through this in a strong, bipartisan way so we can get it done,” Upton told WSJM.

Upton says the House plan is a bit more comprehensive, but he thinks something can be worked out. The House plan is designed to help strengthen treatment options, treat infants born to addiction, and increase state prescription monitoring programs. It also seeks a review of prescription practices by doctors.

House moves toward conference committee on sweeping energy bill [The Hill, [05/26/2016](http://thehill.com/policy/energy/281275-house-moves-toward-conference-committee-on-sweeping-energy-bill)]

House close to approaching Upton’s Energy bill

Lawmakers voted 241-178 to pass an amended version of the Senate’s energy bill. The House replaced the Senate measure with its own energy legislation passed last year, and attached to it numerous other, mostly Republican, energy and natural resources bills, including legislation to bring drought relief to California.

The House can now vote to formally enter a conference with the Senate. In that process, members of both parties from both chambers would be tasked with reconciling differences between the House’s package and the wide-ranging energy bill the Senate passed in April.

“This has been a multi-year, multi-Congress effort, and a lot of work has gone into making sure that the bill we put forward will support the future of American energy is truly comprehensive,” Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said on the House floor.

“This bill is about jobs. It’s about keeping energy affordable. It’s about boosting our energy security here and across the globe. H.R. 8 is the embodiment of an all-of-the-above energy strategy,” he said, referring to the energy bill the chamber passed last year.

The bill’s provisions aim to modernize energy infrastructure like the electric grid and pipelines, make pipeline and natural gas export permitting easier, increase fossil fuel research and improve job training for energy fields, among other priorities.

But Democrats said the measure was backward looking and had little to do with modernization.

“A comprehensive energy bill would need to modernize the nation’s aging energy infrastructure, train a 21st century workforce and address the critically important issue of man-made climate change. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, none of these issues are addressed in the bill that we are voting on here today,” said Rep. Bobby Rush (Ill.) the top Democrat on the Energy and Commerce Committee’s energy and power subpanel.

“This 800-page hodgepodge of Republican and corporate priorities is nothing more than a majority wish list of strictly ideological bills, many of which the minority party opposes and the Obama administration does not support and the American people do not support,” he said.

While dozens of other items have been added to the bill, the one that got the most attention in the House’s debate concerns California’s drought.

It is similar to a GOP measure the House has passed before, and would make it more difficult for the federal government to use endangered species protections to increase the amount of water flowing out of federal dams and infrastructure in California.

It answers the long-standing Republican claim that the Obama administration is prioritizing endangered fish in California over people and farmers who need the water.

“Water that can be stored is being lost. Bureaucrats release fresh water out to the sea,” said House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.). “Our most valuable resource is being wasted.”

Democrats said the drought provisions would do far more harm than good, just like the similar provisions that the House debated Tuesday as part of the appropriations bill for energy and water programs.

“This time, as last night, legislation dumped into this energy bill that will gut the environmental protections of the Delta and San Francisco Bay, destroy the fisheries, destroy the economy of the Delta and water for millions of people,” said Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.).

“Why would we want to do this? Well, presumably, to take care of the water interests of the San Joaquin Valley. Not Southern California, but the San Joaquin Valley alone,” he said. “Makes no sense whatsoever. It is the wrong policy.”

National News

From The Campaigns

NH-01 Guinta

Local News

Dan Tuohy's Granite Status: Granite Staters ready to battle with GOP for primary's date [New Hampshire Union Leader, [05/26/2016](http://www.unionleader.com/Dan-Tuohys-Granite-Status-Granite-Staters-ready-to-battle-with-GOP-for-primarys-date)]

After Guinta endorses Trump, Ashooh still waits on endorsement

U.S. REP. FRANK GUINTA, R-NH, has endorsed Trump. The two-term congressman for New Hampshire’s 1st District said on his Facebook page that Trump’s message resonated with him during the primary. Guinta said Trump “displayed a realistic understanding of New Hampshire’s drug crisis, correctly identifying Mexican cartels’ role in thousands of deaths and across the state from rampant heroin and fentanyl abuse.”

Guinta did not endorse anyone during the New Hampshire primary. And neither did Rich Ashooh, his Republican challenger.

Ashooh, former BAE Systems executive and former interim director of the Warren B. Rudman Center at UNH Law, still has not taken a position.

Democrat Carol Shea-Porter, a former congresswoman who hopes for a rematch with Guinta this year, turned her focus to Ashooh. A Shea-Porter spokeswoman called this Ashooh’s test for whether he has “the courage” to speak out against Trump. Shea-Porter, who supports Hillary Clinton, has a primary challenger in businessman Shawn O’Connor of Bedford, who endorsed Bernie Sanders.

National News

From The Campaigns

Guinta endorses Trump. The question remains- what will Ashooh do? [Porter for Congress, [05/24/2016](http://www.sheaporter.com/Media/Press-Releases/2016-05-press-release-guinta-endorses-trump-the-question-rem)]

Porter hits Guinta for Trump endorsement, calls on Ashooh to denounce Trump

Rochester, New Hampshire – Today, Frank Guinta officially endorsed Donald Trump. Nobody except Mr. Guinta can say exactly which issue finally prompted him to endorse Trump—it could be Trump's trashing women, or his new addition of murder to his conspiracy theories list, which already included his birther belief that President Obama was born in Kenya and that the Chinese created the concept of global warning.

Now, the voters of NH need to know if Rich Ashooh will make the same strong statement of support for the man who recently challenged the Mayor of London to an IQ challenge test, and of whom leading conservative and military historian Max Boot wrote in USA Today, "If voters nominate him, they will confirm everything bad that Democrats have ever said about the GOP. A Trump nomination will splinter the party, sully its good name — and increase the risk that a dangerous demagogue will assume the most powerful position in the world."

Does Rich Ashooh support and endorse Donald Trump's statements that Senator John McCain is not a war hero because he got captured and tortured? Does he think Trump insulted the military and veterans when he claimed, after enjoying military deferments, that avoiding venereal disease was "my personal Vietnam. I feel like a great and very brave soldier.” Or does he have the courage to join real Republican leaders and denounce Donald Trump's ignorant and hateful comments?

Naomi Andrews, spokeswoman for former Congresswoman and 2016 Candidate Carol Shea-Porter, said: “This is Mr. Ashooh's Profile in Courage test, and he must show voters if he has the courage to speak up against Trump, about whom Mitt Romney said, ‘His domestic policies would lead to recession. His foreign policies would make America and the world less safe. He has neither the temperament nor the judgment to be president. And his personal qualities would mean that America would cease to be a ‘shining city on a hill...’’ Mr. Ashooh was a lobbyist for the defense industry for more than two decades. Does he agree with leading military experts that Donald Trump would make the world less safe? If he does, he should say so, for the good of our country."

Carol Shea-Porter, candidate for Congress in New Hampshire’s 1st District, previously called on Frank Guinta and Rich Ashooh to denounce Trump’s deeply offensive statements. Shea-Porter additionally called on Guinta to return a personal contribution Trump made to Guinta’s re-election campaign earlier last year.

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NH-02 Kuster

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From The Campaigns

NJ-02 LoBiondo

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NJ-03 MacArthur

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FEMA sets summer deadline for reviewing Sandy claims [New Jersey Advance, [05/26/2016](http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/05/fema_sets_summer_deadline_for_reviewing_sandy_clai.html)]

Sandy FEMA review will be complete at end of summer, MacArthur has been pushing investigation

WASHINGTON — a top Federal Emergency Management Agency official said the agency should finish its review of Hurricane Sandy claims by the end of the summer.

Roy Wright, FEMA's deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation, provided the deadline during a meeting Wednesday with Reps. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-6th Dist.) and Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-9th Dist.).

"While most homeowners who filed flood claims after sandy were paid fairly and to their satisfaction, many were not," FEMA spokesman Rafael Lemaitre said. "We made a promise to those who were underpaid by their insurance companies to make this right and we're doing just that."

The lawmakers had summoned Wright because of delays in reviewing claims brought by Sandy homeowners who felt they had not been fully compensated for the damage wrought by the hurricane.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said it was responding to problems uncovered after Hurricane Sandy.

"It's been nearly four years since Hurricane Sandy devastated New Jersey and there needs to be a sense of urgency about processing the claims of these victims, who have already suffered enough," Pallone said.

"FEMA has a responsibility to implement processes to ensure that disaster victims get the resources they are rightfully owed and it is imperative that it take action immediately," he said.

FEMA agreed to reopen thousands of claims following reports that private insurers or their engineering firms shortchanged Sandy homeowners. More than $58 million has been paid out to date.

"While it is upsetting to know that FEMA has only fully processed roughly half of the claims that have been associated with fraud, they are doing it as swiftly and diligently as possible," Pascrell said.

Even so, Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-3rd Dist.) last month released affidavits from three former employees of a FEMA subcontractor claiming that they were told to use a formula based on a structure's square footage and its construction to decide how much money a homeowner was entitled to, not review actual damage reports.

The agency earlier this week said it would overhaul the flood insurance program, including taking control of the appeals process, as it has done with the Sandy homeowners who felt they were lowballed by their insurers.

FEMA also said it would review the legal fees and arguments used by the private companies when they are sued for denying claims, and proposed changing the rules governing the program to make it easier to renegotiate arrangements with the companies.

From The Campaigns

Commitment to progressive values [Cole for Congress, 05/25/2016]

Cole argues for “progressive solutions” to VA backlog problem

Dear Friend -

Our veterans need an ally with experience fixing complex systems in the government to get the bureaucracy out of the way of their care. Last year, I worked as part of a dedicated team of technology experts in the federal government to tackle issues just like this.

At the end of 2015, 70,000 veterans remained backlogged, down from an all-time high of 611,000 in March 2013. 473,000 veterans live in New Jersey. Our veterans include service members who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam.

Although progress has been made by the drive to digitize VA records, and it represents an important effort to modernize veterans’ care, the VA backlog is an issue where reliance on technology as a solution is inadequate. In this case, technology is a tool the government must use to overcome entrenched problems: the slow pace of bureaucracy and an unwillingness to share information across federal agencies.

We need a leader in Congress who has experience taking a holistic approach to solving problems in complex systems. Chip in $20 to our progressive campaign to help us meet our end of the month goal.

As a software engineer with experience at small businesses and in public service, I am used to taking the lead on messy problems and making bureaucracy work. In Congress, I’ll do everything I can to get the government working for all Americans — especially the veterans who have served our country.

By bringing start-up drive, an emphasis on using technology in a smart way to streamline problems in the bureaucratic process, and a constant focus on bringing the needs of South Jersey to Washington, I hope to create real progressive change in our government.

Are you with us? Chip in $20 to reinvigorate South Jersey’s representation in Washington with problem-solving action and commitment to progressive values.

Thank you,

Dave Cole

NY-11 Donovan

Local News

State CIOs Urge Feds to Finalize Cyberattack Response Plan [Wall Street Journal, [05/26/2016](http://blogs.wsj.com/cio/2016/05/25/state-cios-urge-feds-to-finalize-cyberattack-response-plan/)]

Donovan says DHS cybersecurity plans need to be a priority

State chief information officers and cybersecurity officials are calling on the federal government to finalize a plan of action for responding to major cyberattacks, which the U.S. Department of Homeland Security drafted over six years ago.

The National Cyber Incident Response Plan, known as N-Chirp, seeks to coordinate efforts between federal, state and local officials, as well as other stakeholders, to mitigate damages and bounce back from cyberattacks aimed at disrupting power grids, or major communications and transportation systems, among other targets.

A draft plan delivered to the White House in the fall of 2009 – and later released as an interim draft, in March 2010 – has yet to be approved by the administration.

For now, federal authorities have left the states with “a lack of guidance or successful blueprint to follow,” Mark Ghilarducci, director of California’s office of emergency services, told lawmakers at a House Homeland Security Committee hearing Tuesday.

“This has to be one team, one fight,” Mr. Ghilarducci said.

According to Rep. Dan Donovan (R., N.Y.), chair of the subcommittee on emergency preparedness, response and communication, DHS officials are expected to begin stakeholder engagement on the development of the final plan within weeks.

“Developing and finalizing this plan needs to be a priority,” Mr. Donovan said. Among other issues, he said, state aren’t clear with whom they should communicate in the federal government when a cyberattack occurs. Sharing cyber-related information with emergency management and first responders “is ad hoc at best,” he added.

“These people are going to be the first on the scene and should have insight into whether the incident they are responding to has been caused by a cyberattack,” he said.

Rep. John Ratcliffe (R.,Texas), chair of the subcommittee on cybersecurity, infrastructure protection and security technologies, said partnerships with state and local governments were the “nuts and bolts” of a successful response.

“As fast as bad actors are moving in cyberspace, we have to be constantly moving faster to stay ahead of them,” he said. “While six years is entirely too long for any type of response plan to sit on a shelf in the White House, it is especially dangerous in the case of cyber,” he added.

Beyond a lack of federal guidance, state CIOs and CISOs are facing other challenges, including tight budgets and a shortage of skilled IT workers, said Mark Raymond, Connecticut’s state CIO, and vice president of the National Association of State Chief Information Officers.

Most states spend between 1% to 2% of their overall IT budgets on cybersecurity, compared to 14% to 16% by the federal government, Mr. Raymond said.

New technologies and tools, such as the Internet of Things and increasing cloud adoption “will require state governments to constantly assess security vulnerabilities as consumer-level technology services,” he said.

National News

From The Campaigns

VA-10 Comstock

Local News

National News

From The Campaigns

Comstock on Governor McAuliffe’s Actions Regarding Metro Safety Commission [Rep. Comstock, [05/25/2016](https://comstock.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/comstock-governor-mcauliffe-s-actions-regarding-metro-safety-commission)]

Comstock supports McAuliffe’s actions on Metro

Washington, DC – Congresswoman Barbara Comstock (R-VA) released the following statement after Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe issued an executive directive to strengthen safety oversight of Washington Metro:

“It is no secret that Metro has a fundamental lack of safety culture. Metro’s previous safety body, the Tri-State Oversight Commission, failed miserably at fostering a safety culture. Safety oversight of Metro is currently being conducted by the Federal Transit Administration, but by law, this arrangement can only be a temporary solution while a new Metro Safety Commission is formed. Therefore, I welcome Governor McAuliffe’s actions, which are intended to put all available resources at his disposal for use in order to facilitate the creation of a new interstate Metro Safety Commission. It is time for Virginia, D.C., and Maryland to get moving on formulating this new commission so that consumer confidence can eventually be restored. In Congress, we will continue our aggressive oversight of Metro; and as Chairwoman of the Research and Technology Subcommittee, I intend to highlight on ways in which technology can be used to identify solutions to fix Metro.”

Questioning Metro's Violent Crime Notification Policy [Rep. Comstock, 05/25/2016]

Comstock calls for transparency at Metro

Dear Friend,

Yesterday, we held a hearing on Metro in the Transportation Committee to address many of the serious safety and accountability problems Metro riders experience on a daily basis.

One of the issues I questioned Metro General Manager Paul Wiedefeld on was WMATA's violent crime notification policy after hearing in the news about an incident where a woman was raped at 10AM on a Red Line train last month. I, like many others, had to read about this incident in the newspaper a month after it occurred. The public needs to know about these incidents when they happen, not weeks, or even days later. Today we learned that Metro Police knew this same individual committed a lewd act only a week prior.

Hours after our hearing, Metro changed their policy to ensure violent crimes are reported to the public on the same day. While I appreciate that Metro's general manager responded to my concerns and call for transparency in providing this information to the public on a prompt and regular basis, we should have had this information sooner. As I suggested in our hearing, Metro should take advantage of technology to provide crime and safety information of all kinds through social media in real time in the interest of safety and transparency.

To follow our ongoing efforts on this issue, please contact my office or read about our work here.

Does LuAnn Bennett have any plan of her own? [NRCC, [05/25/2016](https://www.nrcc.org/2016/05/25/luann-bennett-plan/)]

NRCC hits “carpetbagger” Bennett for lack of specific policy plans

@LuAnnBennett announced her carpetbagger campaign 6 months ago and still has no specific plan for #VA10.

LuAnn Bennett announced her carpetbagger campaign for Congress in VA-10 just about 6 months ago. But in those 6 months, Bennett has refused to take any positions of her own. Frankly, she has nothing to say. Take her website, for example. It’s been nothing more than a splash page for half a year. Can someone tell Bennett she can get off the bench and check herself into the game any time now considering that the election is just over 5 months away? Virginia families deserve to know where she stands on the issues.

NRCC Comment: “Since LuAnn Bennett announced her campaign six months ago, she has offered no specific plan for what she would do for Northern Virginia. Instead of hiding from voters, maybe LuAnn Bennett can start talking about what she wants to do.” –NRCC Spokesman Chris Pack