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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Center for Law and Economic Justice Joins Loyola University’s College of Law in Seeking Records Concerning Government Response to Mass Displacement by Hurricanes Laura and Zeta

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA – The National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ) joined Bill Quigley and Davida Finger of Loyola University’s College of Law in filing public record requests today under the Freedom of Information Act and Louisiana Public Records Law Act to obtain documents concerning the state and federal response to the displacement of tens of thousands of Louisiana residents from Hurricanes Laura and Zeta.

Four and a half months after the two hurricanes devastated Louisiana, thousands remain displaced from their homes. Nearly 47,000 homes were damaged by Hurricane Laura alone—16,000 of which are in need of major repairs. Many families have been forced to move five or more times as a result of grossly inadequate response efforts by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other agencies. These conditions are further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as displaced residents are especially vulnerable without adequate shelter and resources.

“It is past time that the nation turned its attention to the tens of thousands of people who are still suffering the aftermath of Hurricanes Laura and Zeta,” said Bill Quigley, an attorney and law professor emeritus at Loyola University New Orleans. “We need greater transparency and accountability from FEMA to ensure that these families receive safe and stable housing as soon as possible.”

“As we’ve witnessed time and again, those hit hardest by the hurricanes have been low-income families, communities of color, and people with disabilities,” said Linda Morris, a staff attorney at NCLEJ. “These disparities will only worsen if FEMA fails to provide immediate and more equitable relief for the people of Louisiana.”

The records requested include information and documents related to the following:

- Numbers of displaced Louisiana residents, including individuals with disabilities, who have applied for, received, or been denied housing assistance because of the hurricanes
- Records concerning state and federal government agencies’ projected plans, numbers, locations, and delivery dates of housing assistance for survivors of the hurricanes
- Records concerning the COVID-related precautions taken to protect individuals, including people who are immunocompromised, who were displaced by the hurricanes

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