

Ryan Blackburn

Independent Study and Mentorship

Spiece 4B

22 September 2017

**A Need for Reform - The Expanse of Public Policy's Applications**

**Research Assessment 3**

**Subject:**

State Public Policy

**Works Cited:**

Giles, David. "Moving People out of Danger: Special Needs Evacuations from Gulf Coast Hurricanes (B)." *HKS Case Program*, Harvard Kennedy School, [case.hks.harvard.edu/moving-people-out-of-danger-special-needs-evacuations-from-gulf-coast-hurricanes-b/](http://case.hks.harvard.edu/moving-people-out-of-danger-special-needs-evacuations-from-gulf-coast-hurricanes-b/). Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

**Assessment:**

Many issues that reach the scrutiny and judgement of state legislative bodies are often those that are not often thought about; however, these topics require as much deliberation and thought to ensure that the lives of those it affects are kept secure and maintain core American ideals. Such is articulated through a case study conducted by the Harvard Kennedy School, in which the subject of evacuation for special needs citizens amidst or after a natural disaster is analyzed heavily. The case study “Moving People out of Danger: Special Needs Evacuations from Gulf Coast Hurricanes” underlines a deeper understanding of the issues facing hurricane-stricken areas such as Houston (from Hurricane Harvey) and South Florida (from Hurricane Irma), and discusses certain topic points such as the relocation of hospital patients receiving life-supporting care or the rescue of those afflicted by immobilizing conditions. Later in the article, a discussion of the current policies enacted is presented, where the author, David Giles, underscores a variety of places to advance procedures so to better preserve each citizen’s right to quality of life.

From reading more of the dire circumstances surrounding those in critical condition amidst a natural disaster, I feel encouraged to further understand the consequences of policy-making; among this is the principle of cause and effect: how can elected officials ensure that their policies are truly the best for their constituents? In an attempt to answer this question, I pondered more concerning the creation of public policy, and how statistics and other forms of justification act to enact a bill in the first place. This further research has led me to expect more

of my representatives: being a part of reforming American legislature clearly lacks facility, but it must be done with both tact and purpose.

In addition to the realization of the significance of justifying reformation to a procedure, I have also gained more education on the wide impact that public policy creates. Even a single bill can have substantial repercussions nationally - such is justified as Giles articulates the mass of patients and critical care recipients that would receive aid from governmental procedures to extract them from the danger zone. This concept both motivates and intimidates me, as the reach of public policy works to showcase American ideals to the remainder of the world. I hope to be able to reform the quality of life for all underprivileged American citizens, and state legislature and policies will help aid me in this task. However, I also realize my potential limitations as I act to move towards reform - at such a large scale, my policies and beliefs would undergo strict scrutinization and may not contribute towards a solution to the topic at hand.

From the events and applications of public policy illustrated within Harvard Kennedy School's case study, I feel more motivated than ever to not only work towards resolutions in critical issues at a national level, but also to reevaluate my own justification for its implementation. As I move towards the future, I must correlate American ideals to the reasoning behind acting to reform past legislation to ensure that such a vital procedure fosters prosperity of and promotion of essential rights for all citizens in the United States.

**Abstract:**

This case examines the steps political leaders, emergency management professionals, and public health officials in Louisiana and Texas took to improve their capacity to evacuate, shelter, and repatriate individuals with special needs following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, both of which revealed serious shortcomings when it came to the execution of evacuation processes. (In the context of evacuation management, the term special needs generally refers to people requiring assistance to move out of harms way, including those with disabilities and medical conditions, the elderly, the institutionalized, the homebound, and people without direct access to their own means of transportation.).

**Learning Objective:**

The case also looks at how well the states revised plans prepared them to manage yet another round of special needs evacuations when, in 2008, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike threatened the New Orleans and Houston metropolitan regions, respectively. A companion case, *Moving People out of Danger (A)* explores the specific problems Louisiana and Texas experienced in evacuating special needs individuals during Katrina and Rita.