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Aug. 30, 2011

### Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

## Should disaster aid be conditional?

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### Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Disaster relief is a form of welfare - transferring assets from some to others. We can do that voluntarily, or through government. If the latter, then in a world of scarcity - i.e., the real world - only those who haven't grasped those elementary facts can imagine that the issue won't be political.

Republicans are right to remind us that there's no such thing as free disaster relief, and to ask what we want to give up to provide such relief. Democrats who call that question "unfair" and an "unprecedented approach to emergency management" are right on the second point. That's why we're in our deficits and debt mess. So the question remains: give up something, or incur more debt? Take your choice, but choose you must.

**Subject**

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**Date**

Aug. 29, 2011

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