



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 11, 2024

## FEMA Fires Official Who Denied Aid to Trump-voting Hurricane Victims. House Oversight Panel to Investigate.

In what might be the worst scandal of the Biden administration — one that could have ended in the death of hurricane victims — a top FEMA official ordered the agency’s hurricane relief workers to not help those whose homes had campaign signs for President-elect Donald Trump.

FEMA — the Federal Emergency Management Agency — fired the official, supervisor Marn’i Washington, and now, two states and at least one U.S. House committee are probing the order. FEMA workers have skipped helping almost two dozen homes since October.



Public Domain

The scandal blew up on November 8 when [The Daily Wire published](#) the order from Washington.

### **The Message: Don’t Help Trump Voters**

Washington “told workers in a message to ‘avoid homes advertising Trump’ as they canvassed Lake Placid, Florida to identify residents who could qualify for federal aid,” the message reviewed by The Daily Wire says.

The hate-Trump extremist

relayed this message both verbally and in a group chat used by the relief team, multiple government employees told The Daily Wire.

The government employees told The Daily Wire that at least 20 homes with Trump signs or flags were skipped from the end of October and into November due to the guidance, meaning they were not given the opportunity to qualify for FEMA assistance. Images shared with The Daily Wire show that houses were skipped over by the workers, who wrote in the government system messages such as: “Trump sign no entry per leadership.”

Whether FEMA workers ignored Trump supporters elsewhere in the country isn’t known. FEMA is a subsidiary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). That agency created a “surge capacity force team,” the website reported, of volunteers from other DHS agencies.

The order shocked the consciences of some workers, the [website reported](#):

“I know they’re short-staffed, I thought we could go help and make a difference,” one of the employees said. “When we got there we were told to discriminate against people. It’s almost unbelievable to think that somebody in the federal government would think that’s okay.”

The employee said it felt wrong to discriminate against Trump supporters when they were at



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their “most vulnerable.”

“I volunteered to help disaster victims, not discriminate against them,” the employee said. “It didn’t matter if people were black, white, Hispanic, for Trump, for Harris. Everyone deserves the same amount of help.”

Washington ordered workers to ignore Trump voters even

as the Biden administration was criticized over its sluggish response to Hurricane Helene in rural areas across the country. In Roan Mountain, Tennessee, for example, locals told The Daily Wire it took nearly two weeks for FEMA to show up. The town is located in Carter County, which voted 81% for Trump.

Washington’s target in Florida was Highlands County. Vote for Trump: 70 percent.

She ordered workers to skip helping Trump supporters on October 22, but began “walking back” the order on October 30.

## Reaction

On Saturday, FEMA chief Deanne Criswell [said that](#) Washington had been fired, saying after The Daily Wire uncovered the scandal:

Recently, one FEMA employee departed from these values to advise her survivor assistance team to not go to homes with yard signs supporting President-elect Trump. This is a clear violation of FEMA’s core values and principles to help people regardless of their political affiliation. This was reprehensible.

Criswell has referred the matter to the Office of Special Counsel.

Florida and Tennessee are probing the scandal.

“The blatant weaponization of government by partisan activists in the federal bureaucracy is yet another reason why the Biden-Harris administration is in its final days,” GOP Florida Governor Ron DeSantis wrote on X. He ordered the state’s Emergency Management Division to probe the discrimination.

Republican Tennessee Governor Bill Lee also ordered a probe. [Lee told](#) the website:

Americans should never have the government weaponized against them. I am working with the Tennessee Attorney General to seek answers and determine whether Tennesseans were discriminated against, and look forward to President Trump taking swift action to remove partisan bureaucrats when he takes office.

The U.S. House Oversight Committee has already scheduled a hearing, to which Criswell has been “invited” to appear.

The letter from GOP committee chief James Comer (Ky.) reminds Criswell that the committee “has broad authority to investigate ‘any matter’ at ‘any time.’”



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Criswell also received a missive from Florida GOP Representative Anna Paulina Luna, who wonders whether FEMA purposely left Trump supporters in her 13th District to fend for themselves, the [website reported](#).

“It is completely unacceptable that a FEMA official was allowed to exploit Hurricane Milton to further their political beliefs at a time when Americans were struggling due to the damage caused by the storm,” she wrote on X. “The opportunity to apply for federal aid through FEMA should never be used to discriminate against an individual.”

Luna wants to know when FEMA learned that Washington ordered workers not to help pro-Trump Americans, and whether the agency has contacted those victims to ensure they received the help they need.

## **Media Coverage**

Strangely, CBS illustrated its story about Washington’s firing with a photo of Criswell, inviting the accusation that it led readers to believe Washington is white.

“This CBS report is disgusting and is designed to give you the impression that the FEMA worker who instructed rescuers to ignore Trump supporting homes is white,” Ian Miles Cheong wrote on X. “The FEMA worker in the image is NOT Marn’i Washington, who is black.”

[CBS claimed](#) that FEMA had not identified Washington, a seeming explanation for using Criswell’s image. But The Daily Wire had identified Washington.

On September 30, Trump reported that FEMA workers were not helping Republicans. [He wrote](#) on Truth Social:

[I] don’t like the reports that I’m getting about the Federal Government, and the Democrat Governor of the State, going out of their way to not help people in Republican areas.

[The New York Times quickly reported](#) that Trump’s claim “lacks evidence.”



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