

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0609

November 19, 2024

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
FEMA Administrator
500 C St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator Criswell:

We are writing today to express our deep concern over recent reports that a U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) employee advised disaster assistance teams in Florida responding to Hurricane Milton to avoid homes that had yard signs supporting President-Elect Donald Trump.¹

FEMA's mission is "helping people before, during, and after disasters."² When a natural disaster overwhelms state and local resources, FEMA is the option of last resort to help American families rebuild their lives in times of great distress and upheaval. For a FEMA employee to withhold aid or support from a household due to political affiliation is unacceptable and frankly reprehensible. While there are many dedicated public servants who are working around the clock to help disaster survivors at their most vulnerable point, it is clear that FEMA has fallen well short of its core mission to provide disaster relief to all Americans impacted by a natural disaster.

While we appreciate your swift condemnation of these actions and termination of the responsible employee,³ your former employee has made subsequent claims that this was not an isolated incident, even happening in Western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene brought devastating rains and floods the likes of which we have never seen.⁴ The idea that citizens, whose tax dollars fund FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) and pay FEMA officials' salaries, may be purposely excluded from vitally needed aid is chilling and further erodes many people's already tenuous trust in this administration.

We demand answers, accountability, and transparency to hold your agency accountable to the American people and ensure that FEMA employees are providing support to *all* victims.

In the interest of assisting us in conducting appropriate oversight and ensuring that our constituents and fellow Americans are not being harmed by their own federal government on the basis of their political beliefs, please respond to the following questions and directives by December 3, 2024:

1. Please provide all relevant communications between Ms. Washington and her Survivor Assistance Team.

¹ <https://www.dailywire.com/news/exclusive-fema-official-ordered-relief-workers-to-skip-houses-with-trump-signs>

² <https://www.fema.gov/about>

³ https://x.com/FEMA_Deanne/status/1855322112719741197

⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14069059/fema-worker-marni-washington-fired-breaks-silence-trump-voting-hurricane-victims.html>

2. Please provide the number of houses across all declared disaster zones, and all related documents, that were marked “not able to access property.” Please provide the reasoning the FEMA official gave for each.
3. Please detail when FEMA was made aware of Ms. Washington’s conduct.
4. Please provide a timeline, and all relevant documentation, of the steps FEMA took after being made aware of Ms. Washington’s conduct.
5. Please detail what steps you will take to investigate the claim that FEMA officials directed a “colossal event of avoidance” against households with Donald Trump flags or yard signs.⁵
6. Please explain whether it is a violation of federal law for FEMA administrators to direct subordinates to avoid households based on their apparent political beliefs.
 - a. If so, please detail which laws FEMA believes may have been violated.
7. Please explain what steps FEMA will take to contact any households that were listed as “uncontacted” due to the presence of Donald Trump flags or yard signs.

Given the shocking and reprehensible nature of these allegations, our constituents deserve immediate answers and maximum transparency. As Members of Congress, we are committed to holding those responsible accountable and making sure that rank weaponization against the American public is never tolerated.

Sincerely,



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator

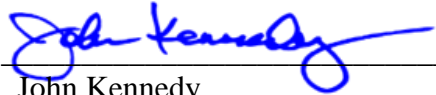


John Cornyn
United States Senator

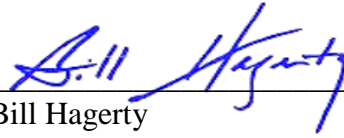


Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

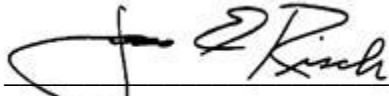
⁵ https://x.com/FEMA_Deanne/status/1855322112719741197



John Kennedy
United States Senator



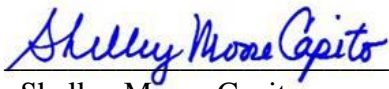
Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



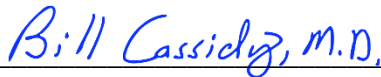
James Lankford
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



Tim Scott
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator