



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2024

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Criswell:

The Committee on Homeland Security (Committee) is investigating the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) potential discrimination against disaster victims based on political affiliation. On November 8, 2024, the media reported a story alleging that during recovery efforts following Hurricane Milton, a FEMA employee instructed relief workers to pass over homes with yard signs supporting President-elect Donald J. Trump.¹ In a November 9 press release, FEMA confirmed the report.² FEMA further indicated that this employee had been terminated and that her actions did not reflect the attitudes, behavior, or actions of FEMA.³

In an interview following her termination, the former FEMA employee, Marn'i Washington, claimed that her instructions to FEMA workers were not exceptional, but rather that FEMA has an institutional policy of avoiding "politically hostile" households, including those with signs bearing support for President-elect Donald J. Trump.⁴ Ms. Washington's statement contradicts FEMA's press release and points to a possibly systemic bias within FEMA against individuals that support President-elect Donald J. Trump. If such bias is present within FEMA, the Committee is deeply concerned that households that support President-elect Trump and even neighborhoods consisting of primarily Republican-aligned households might be receiving diminished levels of resources, manpower, and support, significantly protracting recovery following natural disasters.

¹ Leif Le Mahieu, *EXCLUSIVE: FEMA Official Ordered Relief Workers To Skip Houses With Trump Signs*, THE DAILY WIRE, Nov. 8, 2024, <https://www.dailywire.com/news/exclusive-fema-official-ordered-relief-workers-to-skip-houses-with-trump-signs>.

² Press Release, Fed. Emergency Mgmt. Administration, Statement from FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell on Employee Misconduct (Nov. 9, 2024) (on file with author).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Emily Crane et al., *FEMA Worker Accused of Telling Staff to Skip Hurricane-Ravaged Trump Homes Claims it was Common Practice: 'This is not isolated'*, N.Y. POST, Nov. 12, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/11/12/us-news/fema-worker-accused-of-telling-staff-to-skip-hurricane-ravaged-trump-homes-claims-it-was-common-practice-this-is-not-isolated/>.

To provide clarity regarding FEMA's policies, instructions, and guidelines for disaster response, the Committee requests that the following FEMA employees be made available for transcribed interviews, and for FEMA to confirm with Committee Majority staff the scheduling of those interviews, as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 22, 2024:

1. Chad Hershey, Disaster Survivor Assistance, FEMA
2. Robert Samaan, Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 4
3. Robert P. Ashe, Deputy Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 4

Please contact Committee on Homeland Security Majority Staff at (202) 226-8417 to schedule the transcribed interviews or with any questions about this request.

Per Rule X of the U.S House of Representatives, the Committee on Homeland Security is the principal committee of jurisdiction for overall homeland security policy, and has special oversight functions of "all Government activities relating to homeland security, including the interaction of all departments and agencies with the Department of Homeland Security.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

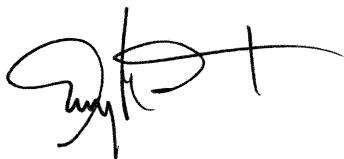
Sincerely,



MARK E. GREEN, M.D.
Chairman



DAN BISHOP
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight,
Investigations, and Accountability



ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO
Chairman
Subcommittee on Emergency
Management and Technology

cc: The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security

Administrator Criswell

November 15, 2024

Page 3

The Honorable Glenn Ivey, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability

The Honorable Troy Carter, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology