



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

December 5, 2024

Mr. Chad C. Hershey



Dear Mr. Hershey:

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 that then-FEMA employee, Marn'i Washington, instructed relief workers to "avoid homes advertising Trump" when surveying damage to identify residents who may qualify for federal disaster relief aid in Lake Placid, Florida following Hurricane Milton.<sup>1</sup> This guidance was reportedly conveyed both verbally and through a group chat. Leaked images show that government workers recorded when they did not contact the residents of several homes that had Trump signs or flags, providing explanations such as "Trump sign, no contact per leadership."<sup>2</sup>

On November 9, 2024, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell released a statement confirming Ms. Washington's reported actions and her departure from FEMA's core values.<sup>3</sup> You also provided a statement on or about November 8, 2024 to the media confirming that "we are taking action at this moment regarding the situation . . ."<sup>4</sup> In an interview following her termination, Ms. Washington claimed that her instructions to FEMA workers were not exceptional, but rather that you, as her direct supervisor, instructed her to avoid homes that had signs bearing support for President-elect Donald J. Trump to avoid "community trends of political hostility."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Statement from FEMA Administrator Deaane Criswell on Employee Misconduct (Nov. 9, 2024), *available at* <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20241109/statement-fema-administrator-deanne-criswell-employee-misconduct>.

<sup>4</sup> *Supra* note 1.

<sup>5</sup> 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/>.

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The Committee seeks to uncover the complete nature and extent of FEMA's misconduct in withholding federal assistance from Americans based on political affiliation. Your observations and experience as Ms. Washington's Task Force Lead for the Disaster Survival Assistance Task Force are vital to the Committee's investigation. Therefore, we request that you contact the Committee on Homeland Security Majority staff at [REDACTED] to schedule a transcribed interview as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 9, 2024.

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.

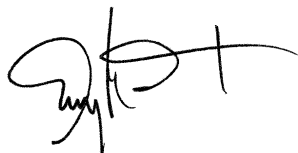
Sincerely,



MARK E. GREEN, M.D.  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security



DAN BISHOP  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight,  
Investigations and Accountability



ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Emergency  
Management and Technology

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

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

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