

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 14, 2024

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Administrator Criswell,

We write to express our grave concerns regarding recent reports of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) official directing hurricane relief workers to avoid homes with Donald Trump for President campaign signs as the agency conducts disaster response efforts in Florida.¹

Several regions of the country are reeling from natural disasters, which have left families and communities struggling to recover. In this critical time, FEMA's disaster recovery assistance is needed to assist our communities to get back on their feet. However, recent reports have revealed that a FEMA supervisor in Florida directed relief workers to bypass homes displaying support for President-elect Donald Trump, thereby denying assistance to residents in critical need. Sources from inside FEMA have reported that at least twenty homes with Trump signs or flags were skipped from the end of October through November due to this guidance, leaving homeowners without the opportunity to qualify for FEMA assistance.

Even worse, this FEMA supervisor has publicly stated that this behavior is not an isolated incident at the agency.² In fact, according to the supervisor, the practice of denying assistance to certain storm victims based on political beliefs is a "colossal event of avoidance, not just in the state of Florida but in the Carolinas as well." She even went so far as to state that "senior leadership will lie to you and tell you that they do not know, but if you ask the [Disaster Survivor Assistance] crew leads and specialists what they are experiencing in the field, they will tell you."

Such blatant discrimination is a severe breach of FEMA's duty to serve all Americans impartially, especially in times of disaster when people's lives and livelihoods are at stake. It is alarming and unacceptable that a federal agency would exhibit such blatant and politically charged bias, disregarding residents based on their political beliefs. This conduct erodes public trust and undermines FEMA's mission to deliver unbiased and effective aid.

While FEMA has stated that this individual has been fired, you must work to ensure that any other bad actors are identified and immediately held accountable.

We also request assurances that that any families "skipped over" for assistance are contacted, apologized to and provided with the highest level of assistance moving forward.

¹ Le Mahieu, L. (2024, November 8). EXCLUSIVE: FEMA Official Ordered Relief Workers To Skip Houses With Trump Signs. Daily Wire. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/exclusive-fema-official-ordered-relief-workers-to-skip-houses-with-trump-signs>

² Crane, E., King, R., Taer, J., & Christenson, J. (2024, November 12). FEMA worker accused of telling staff to skip hurricane-ravaged trump homes claims it was common practice: "this is not isolated." New York Post. <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/>

FEMA must ensure that its services are delivered to all citizens free from political prejudice, and that this sort of despicable action is never able to take place again.

Americans deserve better. In this country, we protect all our citizens, regardless of political affiliation. We urge FEMA to take swift and decisive action to address this issue, hold those responsible fully accountable and restore public trust in its ability to serve every American in need.

To ensure that appropriate measures are taken to prevent these actions from occurring again, we ask that you respond to the following questions by December 14th, 2024.

1. What guardrails are being put in place to ensure political discrimination like this incident will not occur at the agency again?
2. What approval processes are in place to ensure that all guidance being sent out by FEMA officials has been appropriately authorized before it is shared with teams?
3. Has FEMA contacted the residents of the homes that were skipped to ensure that they are receiving access to the federal aid they may be qualified for?
4. It has been stated that FEMA is investigating the matter to prevent this from happening again. How long will it take to conduct this investigation?
5. Have any other FEMA personnel been identified as directing workers to avoid homes with pro-Trump signs in Florida, the Carolinas or elsewhere? If so, have they been reprimanded or terminated?
6. Please provide any incident reports of FEMA employees not engaging with citizens due to their political affiliation.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue, and we look forward to your timely response outlining the steps FEMA will take to rectify this situation and ensure that all affected Americans receive the assistance they deserve.

Sincerely,



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



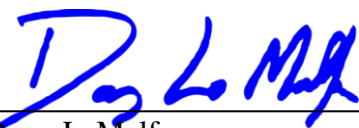
Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



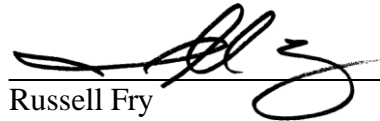
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Warren Davidson
Member of Congress



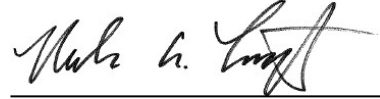
Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Russell Fry
Member of Congress



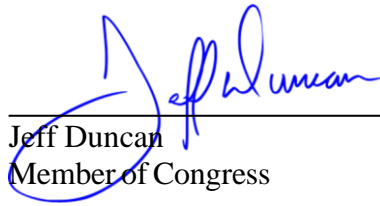
Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



Nicholas A. Langworthy
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



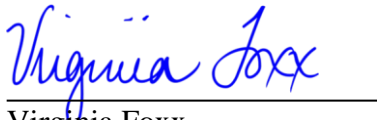
Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress



Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress



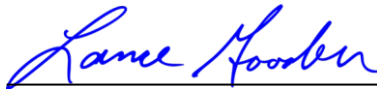
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



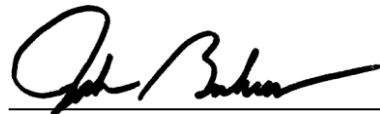
Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress



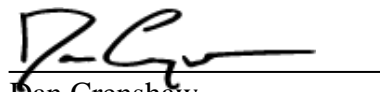
Lance Gooden
Member of Congress



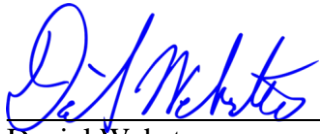
Josh Brecheen
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C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



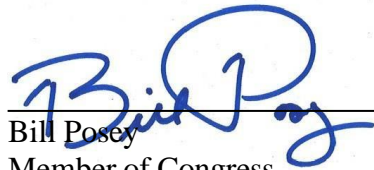
Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann
Member of Congress



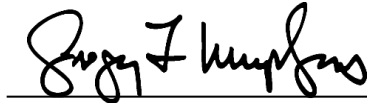
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress



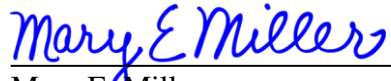
Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



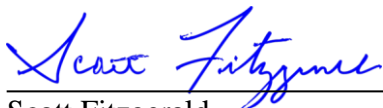
Brian J. Mast
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French Hill
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Mary E. Miller
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Scott Fitzgerald
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Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
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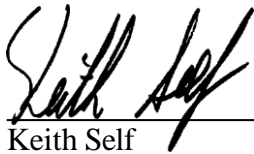
Lauren Boebert
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Burgess Owens
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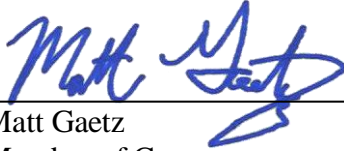
Kat Cammack
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Keith Self
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Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



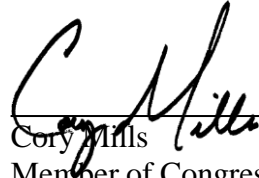
Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



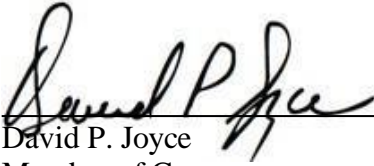
Mike Carey
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Cory Mills
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David P. Joyce
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Richard Hudson
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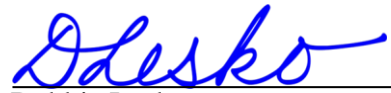
Kevin Hern
Member of Congress



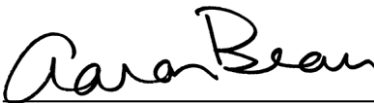
Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



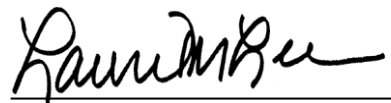
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Laurel M. Lee
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Guy Reschenthaler
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Byron Donalds
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