



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 20, 2025

# FEMA Withheld Disaster Aid From Trump Supporters: Report

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) did indeed refuse to help some people in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton because they were perceived as supporters of President Donald Trump, according to a forthcoming report from the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Privacy Office (PRIV).

## The Great Scapegoat

Just after last year's presidential election, [The Daily Wire](#) broke the news that Florida FEMA supervisor Marn'i Washington had told her subordinates to "avoid homes advertising Trump" when distributing post-Milton disaster relief.

The website wrote:

Photos from the system used by federal relief workers to track what homes they visit showed that relief workers followed Washington's guidance. Several addresses were marked "not able to access property" with listed explanations such as: "Trump sign no entry per leadership," "Per leadership no stop Trump flag," "Trump sign," and "Trump sign, no contact per leadership."

In an effort to contain the scandal, FEMA swiftly [terminated](#) Washington, with then-FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell [telling](#) Congress the Milton practice was an "isolated incident."

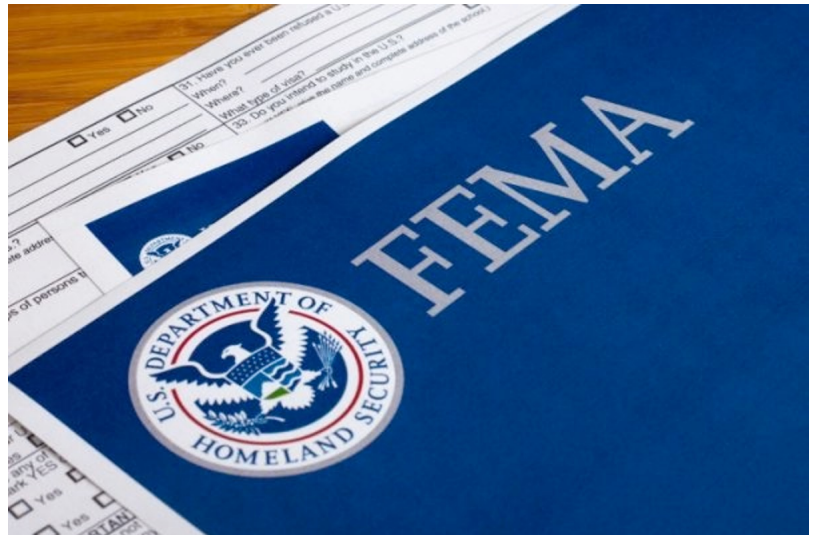
Washington, however, refused to serve as FEMA's scapegoat, [telling](#) all who would listen, "My orders come from my superior." That person, she averred, is the one who instructed her to tell aid workers to bypass homes that made them "uncomfortable."

Nevertheless, the pattern persisted.

In February, the Office of Special Counsel [filed a complaint](#) against Washington, accusing her of violating the Hatch Act, which forbids federal employees from engaging in political activity on duty.

The next month, FEMA [exonerated itself](#) of all wrongdoing in the Milton incident, writing that it "found no evidence that this was a systemic problem, nor that it was directed by agency or field leadership." It also [fired](#) three other employees in connection with the incident.

Suspensions remained. Washington [claimed](#) FEMA's anti-Trump discrimination was a "colossal event" that had also occurred in states hit by Hurricane Helene, which struck just weeks before Milton. [The Daily Wire](#), in fact, reported that FEMA took its sweet time delivering aid to Trump-loving hamlets hammered by Helene. Were Americans supposed to believe there were other rogue FEMA supervisors



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in those states ordering political targeting when a top-down policy made more sense?

## Nothing More Than Feelings

Assuming the contents of the PRIV report were accurately relayed by [Racket News' Matt Taibbi](#) on Monday, we still don't know whether the order to withhold aid from Trump supporters came from FEMA headquarters. But we do know there are serious, long-standing problems with the latitude FEMA gives its employees in deciding whom to help and whom not to help.

Concerning the report, Taibbi wrote, "Perhaps unsurprisingly, the new administration found more than just one 'isolated incident,' describing violations of the Privacy Act of 1974, which with a few exceptions bars collection of information about First Amendment-protected speech, like political signage."

Moreover:

DHS investigators found — in a near-exact parallel to trends in pro-censorship programs — that a lot of the political controversy surrounding FEMA aid grew out of the vague way in which the agency's Disaster Survivor Assistance Field Operations Guide was written.

The Field Operations Guide instructed FEMA workers to "Remove yourself from the situation if you feel threatened" when dealing with "hostile" individuals, the only problem being, as the new report notes: "The Disaster Survivor Assistance Field Operations Guide does not define the term 'hostile.'"

"The way the guide was written, FEMA employees had leeway to skip outreach to a house if its signs made them feel uncomfortable," one Washington-based First Amendment lawyer put it last week. "So it's basically the same concept of a harm or distress standard we're seeing in Europe with speech issues, where the emotional response of the observer is what matters legally, as opposed to a concrete rule."

## Biden Bias

The instances of political bias in distributing disaster aid weren't limited to Milton. PRIV found that "FEMA impermissibly collected prohibited information at least dating back to the Hurricane Ida disaster in September 2021" — in other words, throughout the entire Joe Biden administration.

Taibbi listed a few of the examples in the report:

October, 2021: "Homeowner had sign stated... this is Trump country." September, 2021: "A lot of political flags, posters, etc. '[F—] Joe Biden,' 'MAGA 2024,' 'Joe Biden Sucks' 'Trump 2024' We do not recommend anyone visiting this location." November 2024: "There was a political flyer so I didn't leave a FEMA brochure."

In its report, PRIV makes several recommendations to rectify these matters, but the underlying issues indicate "a broader, hairier problem," observed Taibbi:

Federal aid workers empowered to withhold relief based on what they consider "hostile" signage in either direction creates an opening for a federalized version of the old "walking-around-money" operation pioneered by ward-heelers in city elections, in which petty cash



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made it into the hands of one party's potential voters. The number of incidents in the new DHS report don't come close to suggesting an election-altering phenomenon (the most controversial instances came last year, but still totaled under 100 episodes), but as one official who worked on the report noted, the phenomenon still "really escalated in the last administration."

"People hate the government enough as it is," the D.C.-based lawyer told Taibbi. "If it's known that disaster relief can be politicized and nobody fixes the problem, imagine how mad people will be one or two cycles from now."

Of course, the simplest way to solve the problem would be to shutter the unconstitutional FEMA, without which Americans survived for over 200 years.



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