



HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Chairman Jim Jordan

FIREAID APPARENTLY MISUSED CHARITABLE DONATIONS BY FUNDING ILLEGAL ALIENS, PODCASTERS, AND NON-PROFITS' ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Interim Staff Report

Committee on the Judiciary

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Executive Summary

In January 2025, deadly wildfires devastated and wreaked havoc in the state of California.¹ Over 400 people tragically lost their lives and over 13,000 homes were destroyed.² In response to the wildfires, an organization called FireAid held a benefit concert raising \$100 million, which it promised to send directly to people affected by the wildfires.³ During the concert, the emcee, actor Miles Teller, told viewers that “all the money raised will go directly to people who need it now and long-term efforts to build it back.”⁴ According to public reports, however, this promise has not been kept. FireAid has diverted donations to third-party groups instead of providing direct relief to victims of the fires.⁵

When confronted with the fact that FireAid did not directly provide the donated funds to those affected, FireAid stated that it “does not have the capability to make direct payments to individuals and that was never the plan. We partnered with trusted local non-profits . . . to reach communities in need.”⁶ Although this after-the-fact rationalization does not square with FireAid’s earlier commitment that “all” donations “will go directly” to victims, FireAid later asserted that the \$100 million in donations “ha[s] been designated for direct relief and will not be used for administrative purposes.”⁷ New information obtained by the Committee suggests that this assertion, too, is false and that funds raised for fire victims have been used for purposes wholly unrelated to fire relief—direct or otherwise.

On August 18, 2025, the Committee, in an effort led by Congressman Kevin Kiley, sent a letter to FireAid requesting a detailed breakdown of all non-profits that received money from FireAid.⁸ The Committee detailed a concern that FireAid fraudulently led donors to believe that all contributions would provide direct support to victims. On September 8, 2025, FireAid responded to the Committee’s letter and produced hundreds of documents and an internal

¹ William La Jeunesse, *California wildfire victims left wondering where \$100M went following FireAid benefit concert*, FOX NEWS (July 25, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-wildfire-victims-left-wondering-where-100m-went-following-fireaid-benefit-concert>.

² Nadine Yousif, *More than 400 indirect deaths linked to LA wildfires, study suggests*, BBC NEWS, (Aug. 6, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx29wjg3vz2o>; Riley Hoffman et. al., *LA fires aftermath: How people are rebuilding after losing almost everything*, ABC NEWS (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/la-wildfires-aftermath-insurance-housing-rebuild-update/story?id=119209482#:~:text=It%20took%20just%20a%20spark,were%20so%20suddenly%20changed%20forever>.

³ *Questions and Controversy About FireAid Funds*, AXS TV (July 29, 2025), <https://axs.tv/news-story/questions-and-controversy-about-fireaid-funds/>.

⁴ William La Jeunesse, *California wildfire victims left wondering where \$100M went following FireAid benefit concert*, FOX NEWS (July 25, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-wildfire-victims-left-wondering-where-100m-went-following-fireaid-benefit-concert>.

⁵ Fox 11 Digital Team, *\$100 Million FireAid money under scrutiny. Where have the concert funds gone*, FOX 11 LOS ANGELES (July 22, 2025), <https://www.foxla.com/news/fireaid-money-scrutiny>.

⁶ William L Jeunesse, *California Wildfire Victims Left Wondering Where \$100M Went Following FireAid Benefit Concert*, FOX NEWS (July 25, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-wildfire-victims-left-wondering-where-100m-went-following-fireaid-benefit-concert>.

⁷ *Statement from FireAid*, FIREAID (last accessed Aug. 4, 2025), <https://www.fireaidla.org/>.

⁸ Letter from Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary & Congressman Kevin Kiley, to FireAid (Aug. 18, 2025).

investigative report into the use of the raised funds.⁹ The internal investigation, conducted by a national law firm, found that there was no evidence of misrepresentation of the solicitation of charitable funds and no deviation from FireAid’s stated mission.¹⁰ However, based on internal documents reviewed by the Committee, instead of helping fire victims, donations made to FireAid helped to fund causes and projects completely unrelated to fire recovery, including voter participation for Native Americans, illegal aliens, podcast shows, and fungus planting. Finally, despite FireAid’s promise that “funds be used solely for direct community support for relief, recovery and rebuilding — not for overhead or salaries,” donations went to pay salaries and bonuses for those working at non-profits and other organizations.

While the documents and information received to date shed light on some of the recipients of the millions of dollars raised during the FireAid benefit concert, more information is still needed to understand the full story. The Committee will continue to follow the facts to help advance legislative reforms that protect benevolent Americans from fraud and protect the integrity of charitable donations following federal disasters.

⁹ Letter from Makan Delrahim to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary & Congressman Kevin Kiley (Sept. 8, 2025).

¹⁰ Latham & Watkins, FireAid Investigative Report as of September 8, 2025 (Sept. 8, 2025), https://www.fireaidla.org/assets/press-releases/pdfs/fireaid_investigative_report_09-08-2025.pdf.

FireAid's Apparent Misuse of Charitable Donations

To date, FireAid has granted \$75 million, of the \$100 million raised, to a total of 188 non-profits.¹¹ FireAid plans to disperse the remaining \$25 million by the end of the year.¹² Although the internal review, requested and paid for by FireAid, found that “grants were disbursed consistent with FireAid’s stated mission,” documents provided to the Committee suggest that donations were funneled to some recipients with little or no nexus to assisting fire victims.¹³ The documents show that FireAid funded voter participation efforts for Native Americans, illegal aliens, podcast shows, fungus planting, and the salaries and bonuses for those working at non-profits and other organizations.

\$100,000 of FireAid donations went to promote voter participation.

The “CA Native Vote Project” received \$100,000 in grant funds from FireAid.¹⁴ The CA Native Vote Project describes itself as “the first-of-its-kind statewide effort to engage Native American communities across dozens of counties to build political power through an integrated voter engagement strategy.”¹⁵ The group told FireAid it would use the funds to provide “financial assistance for displaced and affected Native families.”¹⁶ However, this group is most well-known for increasing Native American voter participation and it is unclear whether this group partook in any wildfire relief.¹⁷

\$550,000 of FireAid donations went to groups involved in political advocacy.

Several other grants went to non-profits that focus on political advocacy for certain favored populations.¹⁸ For example, the NAACP Pasadena, which is dedicated to “fighting for basic human dignities” for African Americans, received \$100,000.¹⁹ The Los Angeles Black

¹¹ William L Jeunesse, *California Wildfire Victims Left Wondering Where \$100M Went Following FireAid Benefit Concert*, FOX NEWS (July 25, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-wildfire-victims-left-wondering-where-100m-went-following-fireaid-benefit-concert>.

¹² Ethan Millman, *FireAid Will Have Law Firm Review Distribution of Grants Amid Scrutiny Form Trump, Lawmakers*, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER (July 29, 2025), <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/music-news/fireaid-retains-law-firm-review-distribution-grants-1236333283>.

¹³ *Id.*; FAHJC-00000455; *FireAid Documents List of Grantees*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Dec. 8, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>.

¹⁴ *FireAid Documents List of Grantees*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Dec. 8, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>.

¹⁵ *About Us*, CALIFORNIA VOTER PROJECT (last accessed Dec. 8, 2025), <https://canativevote.org/about/>.

¹⁶ *CA Native Vote Project*, FIREAID (last accessed Dec. 9, 2025), <https://www.fireaidla.org/grants>.

¹⁷ *FireAid Documents List of Grantees*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Dec. 8, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>; Joel B. Pollak, *FireAid Money Went to California Native Vote Project*, BREITBART (July 21, 2025), <https://www.breitbart.com/entertainment/2025/07/21/fireaid-money-went-to-group-in-newsoms-office-california-native-vote-project-too/>.

¹⁸ Jared Downing, *\$100M in LA wildfire aid is being doled out to fund pet clinics, DEI projects and fungus planting – but not a dime directly to victims*, NEW YORK POST (Sept. 10, 2025), https://nypost.com/2025/09/10/us-news/fire-victims-baffled-at-how-100m-in-charity-concert-money-was-spent-its-a-stshow/?utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=nypost&utm_source=twitter.

¹⁹ *FireAid Documents List of Grantees*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Dec. 8, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>.

Worker Center received \$250,000 in grant funds from FireAid.²⁰ Its mission is “to increase access to quality jobs, reduce employment discrimination, and improve industries that employ Black workers through action and unionization.”²¹ The group “My Tribe Rise” received \$200,000. The organization’s mission is to create “programs that meet the immediate needs of working-class, elderly, and disabled Black residents of Altadena and Pasadena.”²²

California Native Vote Project, or CNVP, is the first-of-its-kind statewide effort to engage Native American communities across dozens of counties to build political power through an integrated voter engagement strategy.

California Native Vote Project has deep partnerships with California Indian Tribes and Native-led nonprofits throughout California and is a member of national Native American groups: Native Voice Network, the Native American Voting Rights Coalition, and Advance Native Political Leadership. It is also a part of several statewide multi-racial, multi-issue tables, including Youth Organize California, Power California and California Calls.

²⁰ NAACP Pasadena (last accessed Oct. 24, 2025), <https://naacppasadena.org/>.

²¹ Jared Downing, *\$100M in LA wildfire aid is being doled out to fund pet clinics, DEI projects and fungus planting – but not a dime directly to victims*, NEW YORK POST (Sept. 10, 2025), https://nypost.com/2025/09/10/us-news/fire-victims-baffled-at-how-100m-in-charity-concert-money-was-spent-its-a-stshow/?utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=nypost&utm_source=twitter; *Mission*, LOS ANGELOS BLACK WORKER CENTER, (last accessed Oct. 24, 2025), <https://lablackworkercenter.org/about-us/>.

²² *Id.*; *Mission Statement*, MY TRIBE RISE (last accessed Oct. 24, 2025), <https://mytriberise.org/home>.

An unknown amount of money from FireAid donations went towards illegal aliens.

FireAid prioritized and awarded grants to illegal aliens.²³ According to internal documents, as of June 30, 2025, a group known as Community Organized Relief Efforts (CORE) received \$250,000 from FireAid.²⁴ CORE’s mission is to “empower communities in and beyond crisis” and its vision is to build a “more equitable world in which underserved communities are prepared and can effectively respond to crisis from within.”²⁵ A grant report dated February 2025 included a list of CORE’s “priority groups” that it wanted to help with money it received from FireAid.²⁶ Among those priority groups were “Undocumented Migrants” because “this group is at high risk of housing instability, economic hardship, exploitation, and homelessness.”²⁷

\$100,000 in FireAid donations was sent to podcasters.

Other information suggests that FireAid donations were sent to support portions of the entertainment industry. For example, grant forms showed that \$100,000 in money raised at the benefit concert went to Altadena Talks Foundation for the purpose of “support[ing] the Toni Raines podcast and other shows . . .”²⁸ The Altadena Talks Foundation is an organization with a mission of standing “as a beacon of hope and healing – committed to uplifting lives through disaster recovery, resilience, and lasting community support.”²⁹ Toni Raines is a “systems administrator consultant specializing in software for searching, monitoring, and analyzing machine-generated data.”³⁰ She has been heavily involved in the tech industry but found herself speaking about the California wildfires on her podcast, applied for a FireAid grant, and received funds.³¹ It remains unclear how and if this FireAid money went to directly aid wildfire victims.

²³ FAHJC-00000455.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *About Us*, COMMUNITY ORGANIZED RELIEF EFFORT (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.coreresponse.org/about-us/>.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ FAHJC-00001483.

²⁹ *Welcome to the Altadena Talks Foundation*, ALTADENA TALKS FOUNDATION (last accessed Oct. 24, 2025), <https://np.altadenatalks.org/welcome.html>.

³⁰ *About the host Antoinette “Toni Raines”*, ALTADENA TALKS (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.altadenatalks.com/toniraines.html>.

³¹ *Id.*

About the host - Antoinette "Toni" Raines

✍ Antoinette Raines, Director of Community Engagement
Local advocate and policy expert.

A Passionate Leader and Community Advocate



Antoinette "Toni" Raines is a dedicated systems administrator consultant specializing in software for searching, monitoring, and analyzing machine-generated data. Recognized for her expertise and passion, she has made a significant impact in the tech industry, simplifying complex concepts and empowering others through knowledge-sharing. As the host of Toni Talks, a widely followed Tuesday & Thursday segment, she captivates audiences with insightful discussions and actionable strategies, ensuring they leave each session inspired and informed.

In addition, FireAid provided \$500,000 to a group called the “Black Music Action Coalition.”³² This organization’s mission is to “create a unified force of action for racial equity and justice within the music industry and to use the power of our collective voice to improve communities and drive systematic change.”³³ The Black Music Action Coalition is involved in advocacy—lobbying the California state legislature to pass various policies.³⁴ The group also hosts events including an annual gala.³⁵ It is unclear how the Black Music Action Coalition spent its FireAid grants.

Over \$500,000 of FireAid donations were used to pay bonuses, salaries, and consultants for non-profit organizations.

The Committee uncovered that over \$500,000 in donations to FireAid were used to cover administrative costs for various non-profits and organizations rather than direct relief for victims. The Committee obtained a grant report from the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA), which contains a breakdown of how CCSA used its FireAid grant money as of June 30, 2025.³⁶ CCSA’s mission is to champion “great public schools of joy and rigor that prepare all California students for success in college, career, community, and life” with a focus on “being an advocacy organization advancing issues of social justice and civil rights.”³⁷ In its grant documents, CCSA claimed that the “grant was distributed to four charter schools . . . to help return to classes, whether to rent temporary facilities, provide classroom equipment, provide supplementary

³² *FireAid Documents Summary of Expenditures*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Dec. 8, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>.

³³ *We are the Black Music Action Coalition*, BLACK MUSIC ACTION COALITION (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.bmacoalition.org/main>.

³⁴ *The Fair Act*, BLACK MUSIC ACTION COALITION (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.bmacoalition.org/advocacy>.

³⁵ *BMAC Gala 2025*, BLACK MUSIC ACTION COALITION (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.bmacoalition.org/>.

³⁶ FAHJC-00000223-224.

³⁷ *Who We Are*, CALIFORNIA CHARTER SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.ccsa.org/who-we-are>.

counseling.”³⁸ However, according to the breakdown provided to the Committee by FireAid, CCSA funded two stipends for staff with the FireAid grant, including \$64,149 to Pasadena Rosebud Academy and \$34,400 to Alma Fuerte Public School.³⁹ These “stipends” for staff were to recognize “extraordinary contributions” or those “who responded immediately with their time and efforts.”⁴⁰

CCSA is not the only organization that diverted grant funds toward paying salaries and labor costs. The Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) used \$92,038 of grant funds to pay for “personnel costs,” “salaries,” and “benefits for attorneys, paralegals, and secretaries.”⁴¹ NLSLA provides free legal assistance and aims “to unravel entrenched disparities that have resulted from longstanding injustice, systematic racism, and institutionalized inequality.”⁴² While NLSLA does provide legal assistance for individuals who were harmed by natural disasters, it is unclear why FireAid money was used to pay salaries and benefits rather than directly assist wildfire victims.⁴³

In total, the Committee found six organizations that allocated FireAid grants towards labor, salaries, or other related costs:

- California Charter Schools Association (CCSA): \$98,549.⁴⁴
- The Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA): \$92,038.⁴⁵
- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank: \$170,255.⁴⁶ The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank’s mission is to “mobilize resources to fight hunger” in its community.⁴⁷
- LA Disaster Relief Navigator: \$43,347.⁴⁸ The LA Disaster Relief Navigator is an online tool to help those impacted by the wildfires to navigate the various resources available including applying for government assistance and making insurance claims.⁴⁹

³⁸ *FireAid Documents Victims Reached*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Oct. 9, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ FAHJC-00000514.

⁴² *Our Work*, NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://nlsla.org/who/work/>.

⁴³ *Disaster Assistance Project*, NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY (last accessed Oct. 9, 2025), <https://nlsla.org/services/disaster-assistance/>.

⁴⁴ FAHJC-00000223-224.

⁴⁵ FAHJC-00000514.

⁴⁶ FAHJC-00000335.

⁴⁷ *Our Mission*, LOS ANGELES REGIONAL FOOD BANK (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.lafoodbank.org/about/mission-and-vision/>.

⁴⁸ FAHJC-00000597.

⁴⁹ *About LA Disaster Relief Navigator*, LA DISASTER RELIEF NAVIGATOR (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://wildfires.betterangels.la/about>.

- Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC): \$29,268.83.⁵⁰ CCALAC’s mission is to empower “health centers to remain at the forefront of health care transformation” and forging “partnerships, foster[ing] innovation, promot[ing] health equity, and advocat[ing] for the communities they serve.”⁵¹ CCALAC stated that it “spent a small amount on staff salaries,” expanded “training in mental health and trauma care,” and gave “small grants of \$75,000 to 4 community health centers.”⁵²
- LA Conservation Corps.: \$69,136.53.⁵³ LA Conservation Corp.’s mission is to “create equitable opportunities for young people to build resilience in themselves, their communities and the environment through a program of work, education and support.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ FAHJC-00000645; These grants went to personnel/staffing for salaries and benefits, including the President & CEO, COO, Vice President of Member Relations, Assistant Director of Training and Equity, Training and Events Specialist, and Administrative Assistant, \$6,625 of the total grants went “consultants” and “trainers.”

⁵¹ *About*, COMMUNITY CLINIC ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://ccalac.org/about/>.

⁵² *FireAid Documents Victims Reached*, CONGRESSMAN KEVIN KILEY (last accessed Oct. 9, 2025), <https://kiley.house.gov/fireaid-documents>.

⁵³ FAHJC-00000779-780.

⁵⁴ *Our Mission*, LA CONSERVATION CORPS (last accessed Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.lacorps.org/about-us>.

Conclusion

FireAid advertised that all donations raised during its benefit concert would go directly to victims of the California wildfires. Unfortunately, this was not the case.⁵⁵ Instead, money went towards left-leaning pet projects, illegal aliens, and the administrative costs related to running non-profit organizations. FireAid still has \$25 million in donated funds to disperse.⁵⁶ It is critical that the remaining money—donations intended to help Californians in need—be allocated directly to victims of the California wildfires.

Americans are generous and benevolent, and always willing to help a neighbor in a time of need. Unfortunately, oftentimes bad actors prey on Americans’ generosity. Congress has a particular interest in eliminating fraud and abuse in charitable donations solicited in response to federally declared disasters. The Committee will continue to conduct oversight into FireAid funds to evaluate whether legislative reforms are necessary to deter such fraudulent behavior.

⁵⁵ William L Jeunesse, *California Wildfire Victims Left Wondering Where \$100M Went Following FireAid Benefit Concert*, FOX NEWS (July 25, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-wildfire-victims-left-wondering-where-100m-went-following-fireaid-benefit-concert>.

⁵⁶ Ethan Millman, *FireAid Will Have Law Firm Review Distribution of Grants Amid Scrutiny Form Trump, Lawmakers*, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER (July 29, 2025), <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/music-news/fireaid-retains-law-firm-review-distribution-grants-1236333283/>.