

# RICK SCOTT'S UNQUALIFIED POLITICAL APPOINTMENT TO LEAD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IS UNPRECEDENTED

## Summary:

Rick Scott's [recent appointment of a 29-year-old political operative](#) to lead Florida's Department of Emergency Operations is unprecedented in recent Florida history. In fact, new appointee Wes Maul's recent predecessors have all had *decades* of experience in emergency management and services prior to entering the job. Maul, on the other hand, has spent just one year doing *any* type of relevant work.

### **Here are a few of the jobs Maul's predecessor's held before they led the Florida Department of Emergency Management:**

- Bryan Koon (2011-2017) was watch commander for the White House Emergency Operations Center, working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Secret Service.
- David Halstead (2010-2011) was at the Florida Division of Emergency Management during the aftermath of the 1998 wildfires and 9/11 attacks, and served as Emergency Services Branch Chief during the 2004 hurricane season.
- Ruben Almaguer (2009-2010) was Deputy Director of The Florida Division of Emergency Management, prior to serving as director, and earlier had been the Division Chief of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department.
- Joe Myers (1993-2001) was Director of Emergency Management in North Carolina for eight years prior to taking the job in Florida.

**Meanwhile, Wesley Maul's resume would only be impressive to Tallahassee lobbying firms.** He has only one year of experience working at the Division of Emergency Management. He has no degrees or professional credentials in emergency management. Just four years ago, Maul was a mattress delivery associate while enrolled in law school. Following that, he was a travelling aide to Rick Scott, handling the governor's personal calendar and making sure the governor stuck to his schedule.

**The head of Florida's Division of Emergency Management is responsible for a budget of [hundreds of millions of dollars](#).** Florida is the third most populous state in the U.S. and [one of the most prone to natural disasters](#) like hurricanes, tropical storms and wildfires.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida, becoming the most expensive natural disaster in U.S. history until Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Since Hurricane Andrew, Florida governors from both sides of the aisle have understood the unique importance of emergency management in Florida, appointing people with impressive resumes and years of experience to run the state's emergency operations. Until now.

## **Bryan Koon (2011-2017)**

**Feb. 2009-Jan. 2011: Bryan Koon Served As Director Of Emergency Management For Wal-Mart.** According to Bryan Koon's LinkedIn, he was the Director of Emergency Management at Wal-Mart for two years, February 2009 until January 2011. [Bryan Koon LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

**Prior To Serving At The Florida DEM, Bryan Koon Was A Watch Commander For The White House Emergency Operations Center, Where He Worked With Agencies Such As FEMA And The Secret Service.** According to the Naples Daily News, "Scott recruited Koon to the state DEM after he worked five years as the disaster manager for Walmart.

Scott hired the 44-year-old Suwannee County native during his push to run the state more like a business, but Koon rooted his career in public service. He attended Cornell University, where he joined the Navy ROTC program. He served on a series of ships before he was assigned to become a watch commander for the White House Emergency Operations Center. He was promoted to become a training officer, which allowed him to work with agencies such as FEMA and the Secret Service.” [Naples Daily News, [6/19/16](#)]

## David Halstead (2010-2011)

**Jan. 2010-Jan. 2011: David Halstead Was Interim Director Of The Division Of Emergency Management For Four Months Before Being Appointed Director.** According to the Florida Division Of Emergency Management, “Halstead served as Interim Director of the Division of Emergency Management from January 4, 2010 to April 29, 2010 and was appointed as Director by Governor Crist on April 30, 2010. Halstead joined as Deputy Director of the Division of Emergency Management with Director Koon on February 7, 2011.” [Florida Division Of Emergency Management, [2/11/11](#)]

**Apr. 2006-Jan. 2010: David Halstead Was Bureau Chief For Response At The Florida Division Of Emergency Management.** According to the Florida Division Of Emergency Management, “Halstead returned to the Division in April, 2006 as Bureau Chief for Response. He also serves as the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Chief, responsible for managing the day-to-day and activation operations of the State Watch Office and State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, the alternate Emergency Operations Center, Domestic Preparedness Grants, Critical Infrastructure, and the State Logistics Response Center in Orlando.” [Florida Division Of Emergency Management, [2/11/11](#)]

**2004-Apr. 2006: David Halstead Was Chief Of Domestic Preparedness For The Florida Department Of Law Enforcement.** According to the Florida Division Of Emergency Management, “In 2004 he was appointed as the first Chief of Domestic Preparedness for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. In that capacity he coordinates the efforts of the state working group for domestic preparedness in developing and refining an all discipline approach to potential acts of terrorism.” [Florida Division Of Emergency Management, [2/11/11](#)]

**1999-2004: David Halstead Worked At the Florida Division Of Emergency Management During The Aftermath Of The 1998 Wildfires And 9/11 Attacks, Served As Emergency Services Branch Chief During The 2004 Hurricane Season.** According to the Florida Division Of Emergency Management, “David Halstead started his fire service career as a volunteer firefighter in 1970 in Central Florida, later becoming a paid firefighter for the City of Altamonte Springs and retiring in 1998 as an Assistant Fire Chief. During his service to the City he was a paramedic, instructor for hazardous materials, became a certified emergency manager and coordinating the cities emergency management program. In 1992 he was part of a task force from Seminole County that immediately responded to Miami-Dade County in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. After his retirement he came to the State Division of Emergency Management serving from 1999-2004, implementing the recommendations made to the Governor after the devastating wildfires of 1998. He coordinated the statewide assessment for emergency services after the attacks of September 11, 2001. He served as Emergency Services Branch Chief during the 2004 hurricane season. In 2005 he assisted in leading more than 1,000 of Florida’s responders into the southern counties of Mississippi immediately after Hurricane Katrina devastated the area.” [Florida Division Of Emergency Management, [2/11/11](#)]

## Ruben Almaguer (2009-2010)

**2009-2010: Ruben Almaguer Served As Florida’s Interim Emergency Management Director Following The Resignation Of The Previous Director.** According to the Tampa Bay Times, “The man in charge of disaster preparedness for the state abruptly resigned Monday amid allegations from his own employees that he discriminated against female staffers, overstated department travel savings and made improper purchases with his state taxpayer-funded credit card. Ruben Almaguer, Florida’s interim emergency management director since Craig Fugate left to head -FEMA in May, is accused in a whistleblower complaint of allowing men but not women in his division to stay overnight at the state’s logistics response center in Orlando — a move he insists he made ‘for the privacy and safety of female senior staff.’” [Tampa Bay Times, [1/4/10](#)]

**Jan. 2007: Ruben Almaguer Was Appointed Deputy Director Of The Florida Division Of Emergency Management.** According to Ruben Almaguer’s LinkedIn, he began working at the Florida Division Of Emergency Management in January 2007. [Ruben Almaguer LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

**Dec. 1985-Jan. 2007: Ruben Almaguer Served As Division Chief Of The Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department.**

According to Ruben Almaguer's LinkedIn, he was the Division Chief of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department from December 1985 to January 2007. [Ruben Almaguer LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

## **Craig Fugate (2001-2009)**

**2001-Mar. 2009: Craig Fugate Served As Director Of The Florida Division Of Emergency Management.** According to CNN, "The White House announced Wednesday that President Barack Obama will nominate Craig Fugate, the director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, as the new FEMA administrator. 'From his experience as a first responder to his strong leadership as Florida's Emergency Manager, Craig has what it takes to help us improve our preparedness, response and recovery efforts and I can think of no one better to lead FEMA,' Obama said in a statement. 'I'm confident that Craig is the right person for the job and will ensure that the failures of the past are never repeated.' In his current position, Fugate is in charge of coordinating the disaster response and preparedness for the state of Florida, which has been hit by a number of devastating hurricanes since he took charge in 2001." [CNN, [3/7/09](#)]

**1997-2001: Craig Fugate Served As Deputy Director Of The Florida Emergency Management Division.** According to NBC News, "He was promoted to fire department lieutenant, and then was appointed emergency manager in 1987. After serving as county emergency manager for 10 years, Fugate became the deputy director of the Florida Emergency Management Division, a stepping stone to becoming director in 2001. The appointment by the Republican governor at the time, Jeb Bush, showed the respect Fugate, a Democrat, had already garnered at that stage in his career." [NBC News, [9/22/13](#)]

**After Serving As A Paramedic And Fire Department Lieutenant, Craig Fugate Was Appointed Alachua County Emergency Manager In 1987 – A Position He Served In For Ten Years.** According to NBC News, "Fugate — born William Craig Fugate at a Jacksonville, Fla., naval air station — got involved in emergency services at a young age. Both his parents died before he finished high school. Orphaned, he found a passion in volunteering as a firefighter. He attended Florida State Fire College, and then was a paramedic for Alachua County. He was promoted to fire department lieutenant, and then was appointed emergency manager in 1987. After serving as county emergency manager for 10 years, Fugate became the deputy director of the Florida Emergency Management Division, a stepping stone to becoming director in 2001. The appointment by the Republican governor at the time, Jeb Bush, showed the respect Fugate, a Democrat, had already garnered at that stage in his career." [NBC News, [9/22/13](#)]

## **Joe Myers (1993-2001)**

**1993-2001: Joe Myers Served As Director Of The Florida Division Of Emergency Management.** According to Joe Myers LinkedIn, he was the Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management from 1993 to 2001. [Joe Myers LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

**1985-1993: Joe Myers Served As Director Of Emergency Management In North Carolina.** According to Joe Myers LinkedIn, he was the Director of Emergency Management in North Carolina for eight years. [Joe Myers LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

**1976-1985: Joe Myers Served As An Emergency Management Area Coordinator For The North Carolina Division Of Emergency Management.** According to Joe Myers LinkedIn, he was an Emergency Management Area Coordinator for the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management from 1976 to 1985. [Joe Myers LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

**1975-1976: Joe Myers Served As An Emergency Management Training And Education Specialist For The North Carolina Division Of Emergency Management.** According to Joe Myers LinkedIn, he was an Emergency Management Training and Education Specialist for the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management from 1975-1976. [Joe Myers LinkedIn, Viewed [9/27/17](#)]

## **Gordon Guthrie (1982-1992)**

**1984-Sept. 1991: Gordon Guthrie Served As Director Of The Florida Division Of Emergency Management.** According to the Tallahassee Democrat, "Gordon Lewis Guthrie passed away Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at the age of 78. He was a resident of Tallahassee, Florida for over 40 years. He leaves behind his loving wife of nearly 30 years, Barbara Davidson Guthrie. [...] In 1984 he was appointed Director of the Division of Emergency Management for the State of Florida where he

acted as advisor to the Governor for disaster and emergency planning and preparedness. In September 1991, Gordon retired from the State of Florida and enjoyed spending time with his family and playing golf at Hilaman Park Golf Course where he also worked part-time as an assistant manager.” [Tallahassee Democrat, [9/20/14](#)]

**Beginning In 1973, Gordon Guthrie Worked For The Florida Department Of Community Affairs.** According to the Tallahassee Democrat, “Gordon Lewis Guthrie passed away Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at the age of 78. He was a resident of Tallahassee, Florida for over 40 years. He leaves behind his loving wife of nearly 30 years, Barbara Davidson Guthrie. [...] In 1960 Gordon began working as a machinist apprentice with Union Carbide Nuclear Division in Oak Ridge. In 1973 he moved to Tallahassee where he worked for the Florida Department of Community Affairs.” [Tallahassee Democrat, [9/20/14](#)]