A Call To End Unfair FEMA Regulations

By Kevin Gunter

Reconstruction and clean up continues for the town of Washington IL. Many people have to start from scratch as their homes were completely demolished. All the while the question is still being asked, where is the government help, why is Washington, East Peoria, and Pekin getting the support they requested from the federal government?

The current laws are population based, if a certain percentage of citizens of the entire state are affected then the state gets FEMA help. The reason Washington, East Peoria, and Pekin didn’t get any support is because the majority of the population for Illinois is in Chicago, therefore the percentage of citizens affected didn’t meet the requirements for FEMA to get involved, even though most of a large neighborhood was destroyed, and several others were heavily damaged. The Illinois general assembly is urging congress to pass HR0922 the federal disaster act. Currently the State Government Administration Committee is drafting a proposal to congress in order to get the requirements changed.

Now how do MHS students feel about this subject? When asked if he thought Washington deserved aid Kyle Robetson replied, “Yes, if they needed it.” I asked Matt, a resident of Washington who lives very close to the path of destruction, the same question and he replied, “Yes, the entire neighborhood was leveled, I mean all them down there in Kansas get help when they get hit, here was just as bad.” Both Kyle and Matt feel the requirements are outdated. Matt feels that Illinois has the right to request the regulations be changed because, “Most of Illinois population is in Chicago, so it would take the leveling of an entire town to warrant the aid we need, and even then that might not be enough.”

Now what are a couple possible solutions to this problem? Kyle had this to say, “I feel that maybe percentage of the population of the entire town is effected maybe, say like, 60% of the population of the town is affected then they get the aid.” Matt also chimed in with, “How many people are affected in general, or maybe how much damage the twister does as far as money goes, I’m actually not quite sure how to answer that, I’m no politician.” The facts remain that Washington, East Peoria, and Pekin requested federal help, and were denied because not enough of Illinois was affected.