

Politics and Professional Conduct

Lecture Objectives

- understand the conflicting roles of media and science**
- what are PDD's?**
- what is the Stafford Act?**
- awareness of political influences on PDD's**

Next Reading: VDAP

<http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Vdap/framework.html>

-”Background and Information”

-”Special Items of Interest”

-what is VDAP?

-who supports VDAP?

-VDAP program needed for all types of hazards?

Science vs the Media

Steve Sparks and Carter (2001)

Sparks (scientist)

- how does the media portray science and scientists?
- inaccuracies and long term damage done by the TV programs?
- what should the role of the media be to science and the public?

Carter (TV producer)

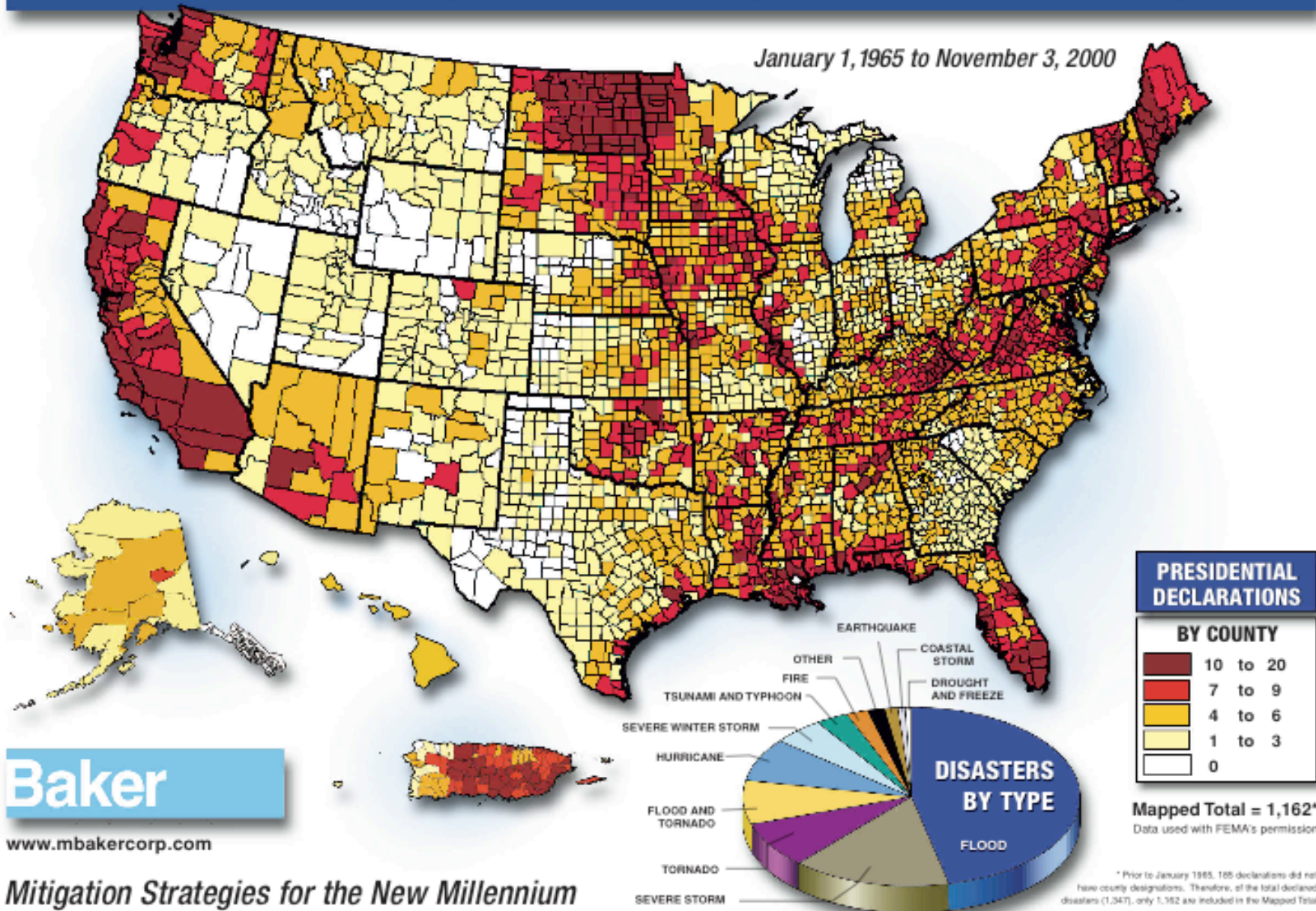
- role of TV in scientific communication?
- who and what is a scientist? Is science education/communication “science”?
- what are the responsibilities of scientists to the public?

Overall

- what are the basic conflicts between science and media?
- what reasonable solutions might there be?

Presidential Disaster Declarations

January 1, 1965 to November 3, 2000



Baker

www.mbakercorp.com

Mitigation Strategies for the New Millennium

Presidential Disaster Declarations (PDD)

In 1988, the Robert T. Stafford ***Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act*** was enacted to support State and local governments and their citizens when disasters overwhelm them. This law establishes a process for requesting and obtaining a **Presidential disaster declaration**, defines the type and scope of assistance available from the Federal government, and sets the conditions for obtaining that assistance. FEMA, now part of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security, is tasked with coordinating the response.

STAFFORD ACT OPTIONS

Major disaster.

The President issues a major disaster declaration after receiving a request from the governor of the affected state. 3 Major disaster declarations may be issued after a natural catastrophe or, “regardless of cause, fire, flood or explosion.” A declaration authorizes DHS to administer various federal disaster assistance programs for victims of declared disasters. Each major disaster declaration specifies the type of incident covered, the time period covered, the types of disaster assistance available, the counties affected by the declaration, and the name of the federal coordinating officer.

Emergency.

The declaration process for emergencies is similar to that used for major disasters; the President may, however, issue an emergency declaration without a gubernatorial request if primary responsibility rests with the federal government. An emergency declaration may be issued on “any occasion or instance” in which the President determines that federal assistance is required. Under an emergency declaration, the federal government funds and undertakes emergency response activities, debris removal, and individual assistance and housing programs. DRF expenditures for an emergency are limited to \$5 million per declaration unless the President determines that there is a continuing need; Congress must be notified if the \$5 million ceiling is breached.

STAFFORD ACT OPTIONS CONT.

Fire suppression.

The Secretary of DHS is authorized to provide fire suppression assistance to supplement the resources of communities when fires threaten such destruction as would warrant a major disaster declaration.

Defense emergency.

Upon request from the governor of an affected state, the President may authorize the Department of Defense (DOD) to carry out emergency work for a period not to exceed 10 days. DOD emergency work is limited to work essential for the preservation of life and property.

Pre-declaration activities.

When a situation threatens human health and safety, and a disaster is imminent but not yet declared, the Secretary of DHS may place agency employees on alert. DHS monitors the status of the situation, communicates with state emergency officials on potential assistance requirements, and deploys teams and resources to maximize the speed and effectiveness of the anticipated federal response and, when necessary, performs preparedness and preliminary damage assessment activities.

STAFFORD ACT ASSISTANCE

Individuals and households

— immediate temporary shelter, cash grants (maximum of approximately \$25,000, adjusted for inflation) for uninsured emergency personal needs, temporary housing assistance (rental and mortgage payments) generally for 18 months, home repair grants, unemployment assistance due to the disaster, debris removal from private property when deemed in the public interest, emergency food supplies, legal aid for low-income individuals, and crisis counseling

State, tribal, and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations

— repair, reconstruction, or replacement of infrastructure and recreational facilities; emergency protective measures, emergency communications and transportation systems; and loans to replace lost revenue or meet federal cost-sharing requirements; and,

State governments

— hazard mitigation assistance to reduce future disaster losses.

DISASTER RELIEF FUND, FY1974 - FY2005

(millions of dollars, 2005 dollars)

Source: U.S. presidents annual budget documents

FY	Total Appropriations					Outlays	
	Requested	Original	Supp.	Nominal	Constant	Nominal	Constant
1980	194	194	870	1,064	2,175	574	1,173
1990	270	98	1,150	1,248	1,668	1,668	1,781
2000	2,780	2,780	0	2,780	3,019	2,628	2,853
2001	2,909	300		5,890	6,249	3,217	3,413
2002	1,369	664	7,008	12,160	12,677	3,947	4,114
2003	1,843	800	1,426	2,199	2,255	8,541	8,761
2004	1,956	1,800	2,275	2,042	2,068	3,044	3,082
2005	2,151	2,042	8,500	10,542	10,542	3,363	3,363
Total	24,240	16,360	48,988	72,099	84,455	50,648	60,224

Total Appropriations

Requested: first budget request submitted by Administration
 Original: original funding supplied by Congress
 Supplemental: supplemental funding requests
 Nominal: total funding received
 Constant: nominal dollars normalized to 2005 dollars

Outlays

Nominal: actual money spent
 Constant: nominal dollars normalized to 2005 dollars

Politics and Disaster Declarations

(Downton, M.W. and R.A. Pielke, 2001. Natural Hazards Observer, March Issue.)

Despite the Clinton Administration's notable improvements in national disaster policies, a serious flaw remains: the essentially political nature of the presidential disaster declaration (PDD) process. The Stafford Act provides federal disaster relief to states and local communities that receive a disaster declaration from the president.

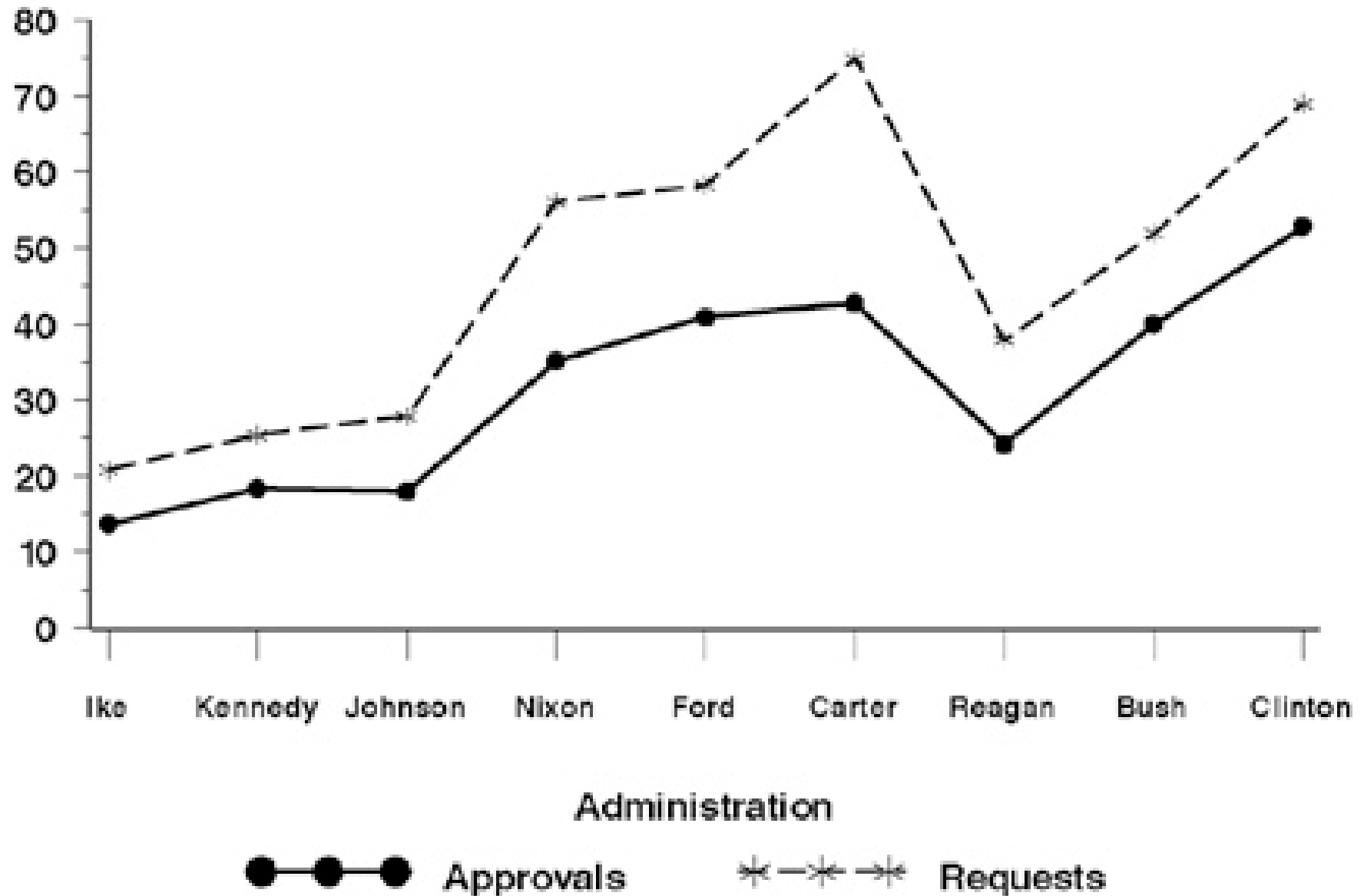
-Declarations are made at the president's discretion, and presidents have differed markedly in their use of that authority.

-Guidelines governing the president's decision include consideration of a state's ability to respond, but these guidelines are vague, leaving the process open to influence from media coverage, cronyism, and political pressure.

-One reason it is difficult to assess the PDD process is the lack of unified accounting for federal disaster costs, which are not tracked in a comprehensive or consistent manner. A complex mix of federal agencies and programs provide the disaster assistance made available by presidential declarations.

-Consequently, the results of presidential discretion are not subject to the usual scrutiny placed on most government activities.

Average Annual Number of PDD Requests and Approvals



Mean Annual Flood-Related Disaster Declarations by Presidential Administration

President	Fiscal Years	Total Years	Annual Means		
			Disaster Declarations	Counties Included	Damages (1995 \$)
Johnson	1965-1968	4	11.8	190	1,681
Nixon	1969-1974	6	27.2	393	4,469
Ford	1975-1976	2	26.0	251	5,370
Carter	1977-1980	4	20.0	181	3,478
Reagan	1981-1988	8	14.5	133	3,440
Bush	1989-1992	4	22.3	357	1,469
Clinton	1993-1997	5	32.2	603	7,553

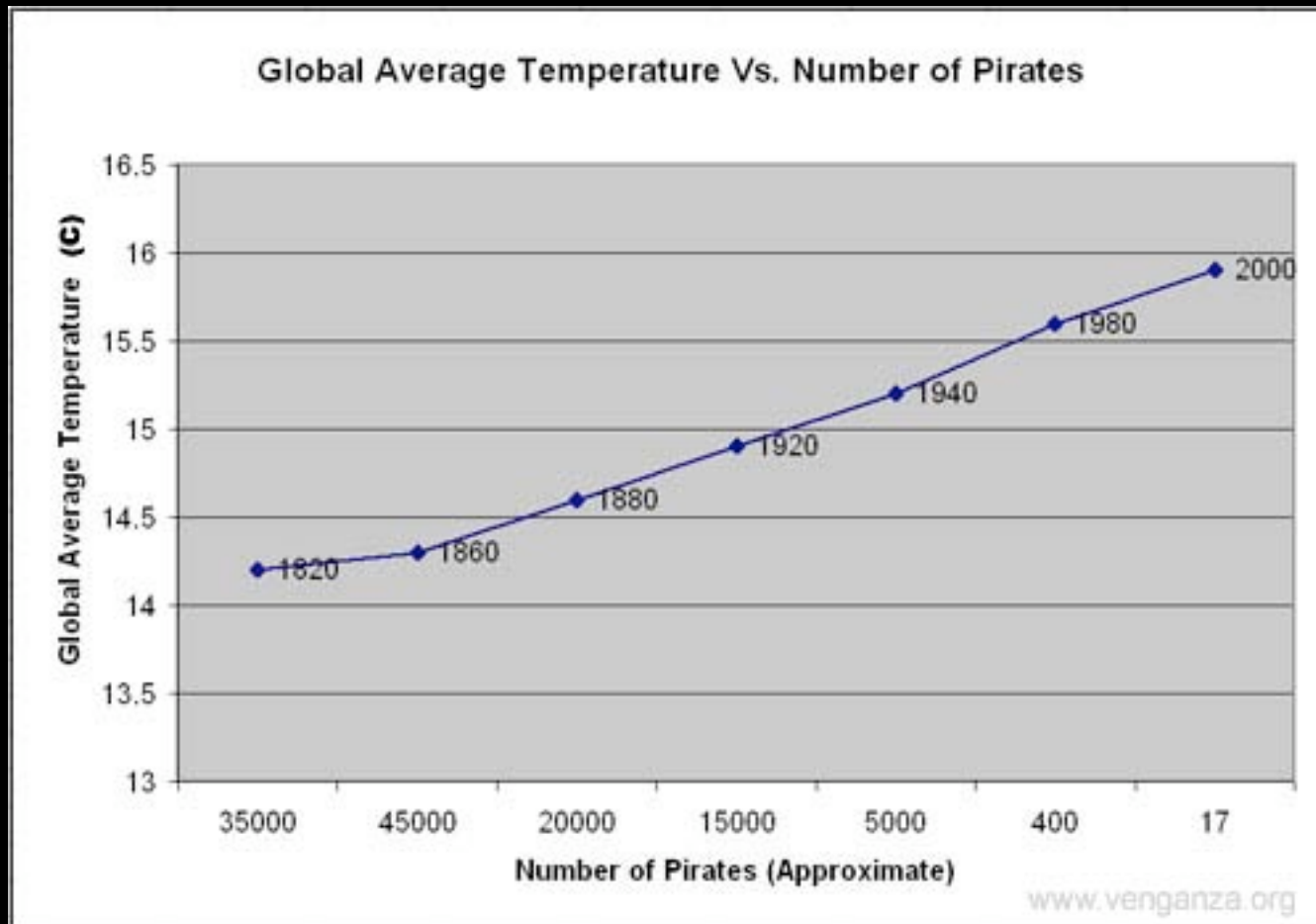
The Politics of Disaster - Andrew Reeves, Harvard University

An analysis of 10 years (1989-1999) of such decisions by former presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton shows that, **at least in marginal disasters, the size of the state (in terms of electoral votes) and whether the political parties view it as "competitive" matters quite a bit.** In 1994, for example, Bill Clinton turned down a request by Illinois governor James Edgar for help with floods on Chicago's South Side that caused \$6.7 million in damage. The 1992 Clinton campaign had declared Illinois Republican territory. A year later, Clinton did declare a disaster in response to New Orleans floods that caused \$10 million in damage; Clinton's strategists considered Louisiana a pivotal state.

"An uncompetitive state with three electoral votes is 50 percent less likely to receive a disaster declaration than a competitive state with 20 electoral votes," says Andrew Reeves, a doctoral candidate in the department of government. **"The best predictor of a presidential disaster declaration, bar none, is actual need. The question arises in these marginal cases, when it's unclear whether to give or not."** Marginal disasters include events like the 1994 "deep freeze" in Michigan, which garnered less than \$6 million in aid.

During his four years in office, President George H.W. Bush averaged 39 disaster declarations annually. The seven years of the Clinton presidency that Reeves studied averaged 72 disasters per year. When he focused on the presidential election years of 1992 and 1996, Reeves found that **"President Clinton was about 60 percent more likely than President Bush to declare a disaster in a pivotal, electorally important state."**

www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~reeves/papers/fema.pdf



From: <http://www.venganza.org>

Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster