

# [***GoFundMe's Ties to Donald Trump Come Under Scrutiny***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCH-67K1-JBR6-90S6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Kate Plummer

**Highlight:** Some have suggested the crowdfunding effort may be in breach of the platform's rules.

**Body**

GoFundMe's alleged ties to [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) have come under scrutiny after [*the crowdfunding platform defended a fundraiser*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-gofundme-civil-fraud-fine-1871176?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) for the former president, set up to pay his civil fraud fine.

On Friday, Elena Cardone, the wife of real estate businessman Grant Cardone, [*made the GoFundMe page*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-gofundme-raises-84k-355-million-target-24-hours-1870940?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) titled "Stand with Trump; Fund the $355M Unjust Judgment."

The fundraiser was set up following a ruling by Judge [*Arthur Engoron*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/arthur-engoron?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) that Trump will have to pay roughly $355 million in penalties. The New York court held that Trump and top executives at The Trump Organization committed fraud by inflating the value of his assets to obtain more favorable terms from lenders and insurers.

Since the fundraiser was set up, it has brought in over $600,000 in donations from more than 11,000 contributors at the time of writing on the morning of February 20.

It has also attracted scrutiny, with some suggesting the crowdfunding effort may be in breach of the platform's rules which state that GoFundMe fundraisers must not raise money for "the legal defense of alleged financial and violent crimes." The donations can only go to individuals or charities, per the platform's terms.

Jalen Drummond, the platforms' director of public affairs, told *Newsweek* on Monday: "This fundraiser is currently within our terms of service."

Following the statement, further questions have been raised about the fundraiser's legitimacy due to Drummond's previous working relationship with Trump. *Newsweek* has contacted GoFundMe's press team and Drummond by email outside of working hours to comment on this story.

Drummond previously worked as a White House assistant press secretary during the Trump administration.

According to his LinkedIn profile, he first served as an associate director at the Office of Communications at the White House, from November 2019 to August 2020. From August 2020 to January 2021, when Trump left office, he was the assistant White House press secretary.

"Incredibly thankful to have been promoted to Assistant Press Secretary," Drummond posted on [*Facebook*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/facebook?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) following the career step-up, according to Alabama publication *Trussville Tribune*.

"No President has accomplished more at this point in his first term than President Trump and he has shown time and again that he's not afraid to confront and take on the big challenges facing this country. The American people elected Donald Trump because they saw a fighter who could lower taxes, broker reciprocal trade deals, bring jobs back, secure the border, rebuild the military, strengthen alliances, confront our enemies, fight for the vulnerable, appoint conservative judges, and get the Washington Swamp out of their daily lives. Promises made, promises kept!"

*Newsweek* was not able to independently verify this post.

Upon leaving the White House, he tweeted a photo of himself with Trump and called the experience "an honor of a lifetime."

In 2022, *The New York Times*' [*Maggie Haberman*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/maggie-haberman?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) reported that he "was present at a meeting with Trump and staff" on January 5, 2021, the night before the Capitol riot, and had been asked to testify voluntarily before the House Select Committee investigating the attack.

Meanwhile, GoFundMe collects a 2.9 percent transaction fee and 30 cents on each donation.

Speaking to *Newsweek*, Todd Landman, professor of political science at the School of ***Politics*** and International Relations, University of Nottingham in the U.K., pointed out that the judgments that prompted the fundraising effort were in civil cases.

"The press officer's previous role may raise questions as to impartiality, but it appears to me that the funding campaign remains within the terms and conditions," he said, adding that it appeared the funds would go to Trump as an individual, not his business organization.

Of the platform profiting from the page, he said: "I think it is important also to note that many charities have overheads, so when people donate, only a portion of what they donate flows through to the people in need. Charities are indeed non-profit in nature and GoFundMe is for profit, but the use of some funds to pay for the service is the same."

Following Engoron's ruling, [*Trump called Engoron "crooked"*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-rages-against-crooked-judge-engoron-after-355-million-fine-1870868?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and New York Attorney General Letitia James "totally corrupt" in a Truth Social post. His lawyer Christopher Kise told *Newsweek* at the time that Trump plans to appeal the judge's ruling in James' "unjust political crusade against the front-running candidate for President of the United States."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2351217/donald-trump.jpg)

**Graphic**

Donald Trump

Photo by Steven Hirsch-Pool/Getty Images

Republican presidential candidate, former U.S. President Donald Trump attends a pre-trial hearing at Manhattan Criminal Court on February 15, 2024 in New York City. A representative for the fundraiser platforming donations to the former president used to work for him.

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