

NC’s Mark Robinson sues CNN for \$50 million over story revealing porn website posts

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RALEIGH
Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, the Republican nominee for governor, announced Tuesday that he was suing CNN for its report last month tying him to a series of racist, disturbing and sexually graphic comments on an online pornography forum.

“This is a high-tech lynching on a candidate who has been targeted

from day one by folks who disagree with me politically and want to see me destroyed,” Robinson said at a press conference in Raleigh. “We are glad to take these first steps to fight back against what we consider to be one of the greatest examples of political interference in this state’s history.”

The lawsuit, filed in Wake County Superior Court, seeks \$50 million in damages, alleging that CNN intentionally defamed Robinson with its

report, which he has called “salacious tabloid lies.”

The lawsuit comes nearly a month after CNN published its story, which tied Robinson to online comments on a website called Nude Africa that included saying he was a “Black NAZI” and would buy enslaved people if slavery came back.

Louis Love Money, the source for a separate story from The Assembly who said that Robinson was a frequent customer at his pornography shop, is also

named as a defendant in the lawsuit.

Amid the fallout from CNN’s report, most of Robinson’s campaign staff and half of his official staff resigned and the national Republican Governors Association withdrew its financial support.

“When times of trouble come in this thing we call politics, it separates the strong folks from the weak,” Robinson said Tuesday. “The weak will turn and run, and the strong will stand and fight

— and that’s what we’re doing here today. We’re standing and fighting regardless of who turned and ran away from us, regardless of who doesn’t believe us.”

Robinson announced the hiring of the Binnall Law Firm to investigate CNN last month as top Republican officials publicly said that Robinson needed to show proof that the report was inaccurate.

Jesse Binnall, Robinson’s attorney, called the report a “journalistic hit job” on Tuesday and said the “posts could have been made by anyone.”

The lawsuit does not provide specific evidence as proof that CNN’s report was false, but says that the data came from a dubious website and was “apparently sourced from hacked, data breach files, obtained from the dark

web.”

Binnall said that more information will come forward as part of the discovery process in the lawsuit.

In defamation cases, public figures must prove not only that the reporting was false, but also that the defendant either knew the information was false or acted with reckless disregard for the truth.

CNN’s report tied Robinson to the comments using biographical data shared by the Nude Africa account “minisoldr,” a username Robinson had used on other internet accounts as well.

Shortly after CNN’s story came out, POLITICO reported that the minisoldr account had accessed the website from an IP address close to Robinson’s home in Greensboro.

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HELENE

avoid sending aid to Helene-damaged parts of Western North Carolina that are more likely to vote Republican.

Trump has also falsely claimed that FEMA is only giving Helene survivors \$750 in assistance. The \$750 payment is an immediate, urgent payment to help people impacted by the storm meet daily needs like baby formula, food or gasoline. Even after people receive that payment, FEMA said, the agency will continue to consider eligibility for other funds.

Cooper also called out Mark Robinson, North Carolina’s lieutenant governor and the Republican nominee in the governor’s race. Immediately after Helene, Robinson started to claim that Cooper was failing the people of North Carolina, a claim he has repeated persistently as

he’s campaigned and helped organize a donation drive.

“He needs to stop it, and there are other people who need to stop this disinformation which is ending up hurting people who’ve lost everything,” Cooper said.

North Carolina’s Department of Public Safety has made law enforcement available to coordinate with officials on the ground, including FEMA employees and other volunteers who may be threatened, Cooper said.

PEOPLE STILL MISSING

There are now 95 confirmed deaths from Tropical Storm Helene in North Carolina, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody Kinsley said Tuesday.

The state has also formed a task force that will work with local law



Gov. Roy Cooper and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell continued Tuesday to urge a halt to disinformation about the response to Tropical Storm Helene in Western North Carolina. A man carrying guns was arrested and misdemeanor charges were brought over the weekend after he allegedly said he intended to harm FEMA personnel.

enforcement to review missing persons reports and see how many people are still unaccounted for after the storm. As of Tuesday, 92 people had been reported missing and have not been found, Cooper said.

“I want to caution that this is not a definitive count because the task force is continuing its

work. The number will continue to fluctuate as more reports come in and others are resolved,” Cooper said.

COLD WEATHER COMING

As temperatures have started to dip in Western North Carolina, the state is working to send cold-weather items like heat-

ers, blankets and coats to the region.

In Buncombe County, a weather station at UNC-Asheville’s campus recorded a 36-degree Fahrenheit temperature at 8 a.m. Tuesday. That the second time since Helene hit on Sept. 27 that the station has recorded a temperature below 40 degrees.

“We’ve seen a shift from the type of commodities that were the focus two weeks ago, kind of food and water, and are now moving into more of that cold-weather gear,” said N.C. Emergency Management Director Will Ray, adding the state is working to fulfill those requests “as quickly as possible.”

The state is working with the National Guard and Department of Transportation to make sure that people who have lost their homes are able to stay warm, Ray said. That also includes finding room in shelters or more stable temporary housing.

There are still 13 shel-

ters open in Western North Carolina housing more than 500 people and 80 pets, Ray said.

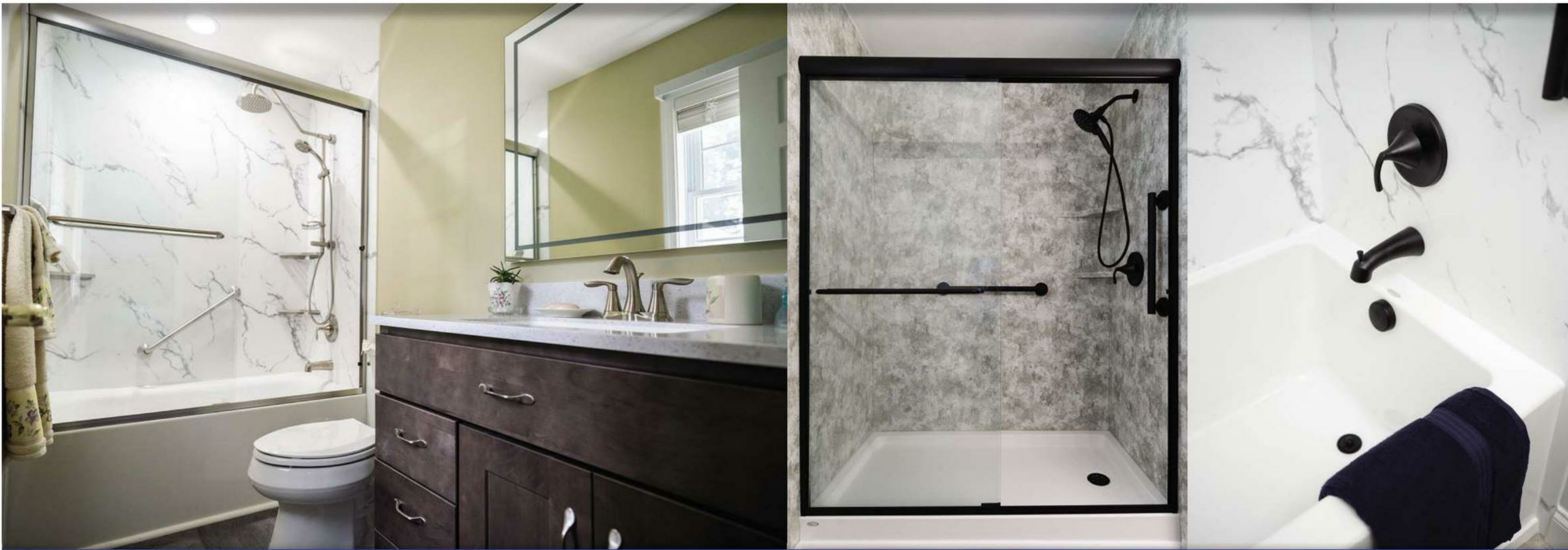
About 4,600 people with storm-damaged homes are staying in hotels via FEMA’s Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.

“We’re trying to get every available option on the table to support those that have been impacted, particularly related to housing,” Ray said.

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