In assessing Romney's argument that disaster response should be a state or private responsibility, we should consider his record in Massachusetts. In his last year as governor, Romney refused to provide state assistance when major floods hit western Massachusetts., even though the state government had ample funds. Romney had already begun to run for President, and was frequently out of state. Here's what a local conservative newspaper had to say:

> It's been two months, governor. Many Massachusetts residents are still living in temporary housing or trying to rebuild destroyed basements and first floors, racking up credit-card debt and taking out home-equity loans.
>
> What's wrong with fronting the money and having those loans repaid when, and if, federal agencies come through with more cash?
>
> If ignoring the pleas of legislators and constituents is the way Romney's going to handle a crisis situation, why would anyone vote for him for president? How would he handle a national crisis, by flying in for photo ops and then hiding in his White House office?

I posted last night about Romney's opposition to federal emergency assistance. As I explained, his argument in favor of shifting this role entirely to the states does not hold up under analysis. It turns out that he was equally indifferent to the needs of disaster victims when the question was state government assistance.

UPDATE. The Washington Post has now picked up on the issue:

> Hurricane Sandy's battering of the East Coast is expected to produce historic rainfall totals and cause billions of dollars in damage and wholesale disruptions to the close presidential race. The storm could also provide a moment of sharp contrast between President Obama and Mitt Romney and how their different ideas of governing apply to the federal response to large-scale disasters.

UPDATE: On a related note, a story about the efforts of House Republicans to eliminate emergency social service for disaster victims.