

The President's Weekly Address

November 3, 2012

This weekend, millions of our fellow Americans are still picking up the pieces from one of the worst storms in our history.

I toured New Jersey on Wednesday with Governor Christie, and witnessed some of the terrible devastation first hand. It's heartbreaking. Families have lost loved ones. Entire communities have been wiped away. Even some of the first-responders, who repeatedly put themselves in harm's way to bravely save the lives of others, have suffered losses of their own.

Today I ask everyone to keep them in your prayers. And as President, I promise them this: Your country will be there for you for as long as it takes to recover and rebuild.

Throughout the week, I've been in constant contact with Governors and mayors in the affected areas, who are doing an excellent job in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. And we owe the first-responders and National Guardsmen who have been working around the clock our deepest gratitude.

Our number-one concern has been making sure the affected States and communities have everything they need to respond to and recover from this storm.

From the earliest hours, I ordered that resources be made available to States in the path of the storm as soon as they needed them. And I instructed my team not to let redtape and bureaucracy get in the way of solving problems, especially when it came to making sure local utilities could restore power as quickly as possible.

Before the storm hit, FEMA prestaged emergency response teams from North Carolina to Maine and deployed resources like food, water, and generators up and down the coast. As the storm passed, thousands of FEMA personnel were on the ground responding to those in need. And by midweek, the Department of Defense was ready to fly in cargo planes that could be loaded with trucks and equipment to help local power companies get up and running faster.

But recovery will still be a long, hard road for many communities. There's a lot of work ahead.

If you've been directly impacted by this storm and need temporary assistance getting back on your feet, you can call 1-800-621-FEMA, 1-800-FEMA, or apply at disasterassistance.gov. If you know folks who are still without power, please spread the word and let them know.

And if you don't live in an affected area and want to help, supporting the Red Cross is the best and fastest way.

This week, we have been humbled by nature's destructive power. But we've been inspired as well. For when the storm was darkest, the heroism of our fellow citizens shone brightest: The nurses and doctors at NYU Medical Center who evacuated fragile newborns, carrying some down several flights of stairs; the firefighters in Queens who battled an inferno from flooded streets and rescued people from an apartment building by boat; the Coast Guard crews from North Carolina who saved a sinking ship in stormy seas and their rescue swimmer who, when he reached those in need, said, "I'm Dan, and I hear you guys need a ride."

That's who we are. We're Americans and when times are tough, we're tougher. We put others first. We go that extra mile. We open our hearts and our homes to one another, as one American family. We recover, we rebuild, we come back stronger, and together, we will do that once more. Thanks, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 7:00 p.m. on October 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on November 3. In the address, the President referred to Petty Officer Daniel Todd, USCG, rescue swimmer. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 2, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 3.

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