

infrastructure and making sure that we had a strong safety net for our seniors even as we were closing the deficit, during that entire week the dominant news story wasn't about these huge, monumental choices that we're going to have to make as a nation. It was about my birth certificate. And that was true on most of the news outlets that were represented here.

And so I just want to make a larger point here. We've got some enormous challenges out there. There are a lot of folks out there who are still looking for work. Everybody is still suffering under high gas prices. We're going to have to make a series of very difficult decisions about how we invest in our future, but also get a hold of our deficit and our debt, how do we do that in a balanced way.

And this is going to generate huge and serious debates, important debates. And there are going to be some fierce disagreements, and that's good. That's how democracy is supposed to work. And I am confident that the American people and America's political leaders can come together in a bipartisan way and solve these problems. We always have.

But we're not going to be able to do it if we are distracted. We're not going to be able to do it if we spend time vilifying each other. We're

not going to be able to do it if we just make stuff up and pretend that facts are not facts. We're not going to be able to solve our problems if we get distracted by sideshows and carnival barkers.

We live in a serious time right now, and we have the potential to deal with the issues that we confront in a way that will make our kids and our grandkids and our great-grandkids proud. And I have every confidence that America in the 21st century is going to be able to come out on top just like we always have. But we're going to have to get serious to do it.

I know that there's going to be a segment of people for which, no matter what we put out, this issue will not be put to rest. But I'm speaking to the vast majority of the American people, as well as to the press. We do not have time for this kind of silliness. We've got better stuff to do. I've got better stuff to do. We've got big problems to solve. And I'm confident we can solve them, but we're going to have to focus on them, not on this.

Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:48 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Statement on Tornado Destruction in Alabama and the Southeast *April 27, 2011*

Michelle and I extend our deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives because of the tornadoes that have swept through Alabama and the southeastern United States. Our hearts go out to all those who have been affected by this devastation, and we commend the heroic efforts of those who have been working tirelessly to respond to this disaster. I just spoke to Governor Bentley and told him

that I have ordered the Federal Government to move quickly in our response and informed him that I approved his request for emergency Federal assistance, including search and rescue assets. While we may not know the extent of the damage for days, we will continue to monitor these severe storms across the country and stand ready to continue to help the people of Alabama and all citizens affected by these storms.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in New York City *April 27, 2011*

I'm going to use a mike just because we've got two rooms. Everybody, please have a seat. Sit down, sit down.

I'm among a lot of friends, and I, first of all, obviously want to thank Jon and Sharon for hosting us in this extraordinary venue. These