

representatives from the AFL–CIO and the Chamber of Commerce, two groups who don’t see eye to eye on much, but who agree that it’s critically important for our economy that Congress act now.

That’s also why 128 mayors from both parties wrote to Congress asking them to come together and pass a clean extension. These are local leaders who are on the ground every day and who know what would happen to their communities if Congress fails to act.

So I’m calling on Congress, as soon as they come back, to pass a clean extension of the transportation bill to keep workers on the job, keep critical projects moving forward, and to give folks a sense of security.

There’s a lot of talk in Washington these days about creating jobs. But it doesn’t help when those same folks turn around and risk

losing hundreds of thousands of jobs just because of political gamesmanship. We need to pass this transportation bill and put people to work rebuilding America. We need to put our differences aside and do the right thing for our economy. And now is the time to act.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:30 p.m. on September 1 in the Blue Room at the White House, for broadcast on September 3. In the address, the President referred to Richard L. Trumka, president, AFL–CIO; and David C. Chavern, executive vice president and chief operating officer, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 2, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 3.

Remarks Following a Tour of Hurricane Damage and an Exchange With Reporters in Paterson, New Jersey

September 4, 2011

The President. Well, obviously, visiting Wayne, visiting Paterson, many of these surrounding communities, gives you a sense of the devastation that’s taken place not only here in New Jersey, but in upstate New York and Vermont and a whole range of States that were affected by Hurricane Irene.

I want to thank Governor Christie, Mayor Jones, the entire congressional delegation that has coordinated in an unprecedented way to try to deal with this crisis. And part of what I think has helped to avert even worse tragedies and greater loss of life is because of the extraordinary responsiveness and farsighted thinking of State, local, and Federal officials. I’m very proud of the work that FEMA has done not only from our central Agency, but more importantly, the folks locally here on the ground who have been coordinating with the emergency management teams here in New Jersey.

I want to thank the Red Cross for their extraordinary responsiveness. We’ve seen a huge outpouring of volunteers, private sector getting

involved in trying to do what they can to help communities that have been hard hit.

The main message that I have for all the residents not only of New Jersey, but all those communities that have been affected by flooding, by the destruction that occurred as a consequence of Hurricane Irene, is that the entire country is behind you and we are going to make sure that we provide all the resources that are necessary in order to help these communities rebuild.

And I know that there’s been some talk about whether there’s going to be a slowdown in getting funding out here, emergency relief. As President of the United States, I want to make it very clear that we are going to meet our Federal obligations, because we’re one country, and when one part of the country gets affected, whether it’s a tornado in Joplin, Missouri, or a hurricane that affects the Eastern Seaboard, then we come together as one country and we make sure that everybody gets the help that they need. And the last thing that the residents here of Paterson or the residents of

Vermont or the residents of upstate New York need is Washington politics getting in the way of us making sure that we are doing what we can to help communities that have been badly affected.

So again, I want to thank Federal, State, local officials who've been working round the clock to respond to this crisis. We know it could have been worse, but we should not underestimate the heartache that's going through a lot of these communities and affecting a lot of these families. And we want to make sure that we're there to help, and I'm going to make sure that even after the cameras are gone and attention is somewhere else that FEMA and Federal offi-

cial continue to work with our local officials to make sure we're doing the right thing.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

Hurricane Irene Damage and Recovery Efforts

Q. Mr. President, Congressman Cantor—
The President. Thank you, guys.

Q.—has talked about offsetting budget cuts—

The President. We're going to make sure that the resources are here. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:44 p.m. at the Temple Street Bridge. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jeffery Jones of Paterson, NJ.

Remarks on Labor Day in Detroit, Michigan *September 5, 2011*

The President. Thank you, Detroit. Thank you, Michigan. Oh, this is a—

Audience members. Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. It is good to—

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. I can tell Ghana got you fired up. Thank you, Ghana, for that introduction. Thank you all for having me. It is good to be back in Detroit. I'm glad I was able to bring a friend, a proud daughter of the Teamsters, your Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, in the house.

We're thrilled to be joined by so many other friends. I want to acknowledge, first of all, two of the finest Senators in the country: Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow in the house. Outstanding members of the congressional delegation: John Dingell, John Conyers, Sandy Levin, Gary Peters, and Hansen Clarke.

The president of the Metropolitan Detroit Central Labor Council, our host, Sandra Williams; AFL-CIO president, Rich Trumka; president of the Michigan AFL-CIO, Mark

Gaffney; and some proud sons and daughters of Michigan representing working people here and across the country: SEIU President Mary Kay Henry, Teamsters President Jimmy Hoffa, UAW President Bob King, Utility Workers President Mike Langford. We are proud of them, and we're proud of your congressional delegation, who are working every single day with your State and local elected officials to create jobs and economic growth and prosperity here in Michigan and all across the country.

I am honored, we are honored, to spend this day with you and your families, the working men and women of America. This day belongs to you. You deserve a little R&R, a little barbecue—[laughter]—little grilling, because you've been working hard. You've been working hard to make ends meet. You've been working hard to build a better life for your kids. You've been working hard to build a better Detroit. But that's not all I'm going to talk to you about.

I also want to talk about the work you've been doing for decades: work to make sure that folks get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, work to make sure that families get a fair shake. The work you've done that helped build the greatest middle class the world has ever known. I'm talking about the work that got us a 40-hour workweek and weekends, and paid leave and pensions, and the minimum