

what we started, and we will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at Scott High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kenyatta Jones, member, UAW Local 14; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks Following a Tour of Hurricane Damage in Saint John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana *September 3, 2012*

Well, good afternoon, everybody. I want to just say, first of all, how proud I am to be joined by Governor Jindal, Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator David Vitter, Representative Cedric Richmond. We've got Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans, Saint John the Baptist Parish President Natalie Robottom, and we've also got Saint John the Baptist Sheriff Mike Tregre.

As you can see, there has been enormous devastation in Saint John's Parish, and that's not the only place that's been hard hit. We've also seen enormous damage in Plaquemines Parish and in other parts of Louisiana and Mississippi.

I want to commend everybody who's here for the extraordinary work that they've done in making sure that lives were saved, that although there was tremendous property damage, people were in a position to get out quickly and, as you can see, folks are on the ground already clearing out the debris and making sure that they're able to recover as rapidly as possible.

I want to particularly thank FEMA and the State and local authorities, because sometimes in the past, we haven't seen the kind of coordination that is necessary in response to these kinds of disasters. This time we've seen it. We made sure that we had the disaster declarations happen quickly so that we weren't behind the eight ball. We've approved individual assistance for this area, which means that these folks, if they've suffered additional losses beyond what they're insured for, that they are potentially eligible for some help. We're going to be providing Saint John's the Baptist Parish

with help in debris removal, in some of the other losses that have been suffered.

I particularly want to commend the sheriff and his team because they've been working around the clock saving lives. Some of the folks that we just walked by literally had to be saved by boat. They were in their homes, trapped. The waters came in so quickly. And this is an area that hadn't been flooded in 17 years, so as a consequence, folks just weren't anticipating and accustomed to the scale and scope of the destruction. But because of the great work of law enforcement, National Guard, Coast Guard, making sure that folks were out in rescue mode rapidly, even in some cases at risk to their own lives, no lives were lost.

And keep in mind that many of these folks who have been working so hard, they themselves suffered losses. So I've just been talking to the sheriff and his wife about the fact that they're having to do—actually, his wife is having to do exactly what these families are having to do while he's on the job.

A couple of final points I want to make. Obviously, right now we're still in recovery mode, and that means that our biggest priority is helping to house people who have been displaced, making sure that they've got the resources they need to reenroll their kids in school, make sure that they're able to get to their jobs, make sure that they can have the kind of support that they need to get restarted. That's in the short term. And I'm confident that with Craig Fugate and his team on the job, on the ground, that that's going to happen in a seamless fashion.

But we've got a larger issue involved here, and that is how do we anticipate these storms

and how do we make sure that an area like Saint John's is protected when you have these kinds of disasters. The good news is, is that the Army Corps levees that were built around New Orleans and Jefferson Parish and some of these other areas worked very well and they were done expeditiously. And so what I've pledged to these folks is, we're going to make sure that at the Federal level we are getting on the case very quickly about figuring out what exactly happened here, what can we do to make sure that it doesn't happen again, and expediting some of the decisions that may need to be made to ensure that we've got the infrastructure in place to protect people's property and to protect people's lives.

So the final point I'll make is, one thing you know about folks in Louisiana, they are resilient. People in Mississippi, they are resilient. They know what tough times are like, but they know that they can bounce back. There is enormous faith here, enormous strength here. You could see it with these families. I mean, they were just devastated a few days ago, and they're already smiling and laughing and feel-

ing confident about the future and pulling together.

We heard one story about one of these homes where a local church group came in and did all the work that was needed to strip out the damaged interior of the house. They did it not for any pay, weren't even asked. But they did it because they care about their neighbors and they care about their friends.

And that's what we do here in the United States of America, and that's what happens in Louisiana. When disasters like this happen, we set aside whatever petty disagreements we may have. Nobody is a Democrat or a Republican; we're all just Americans looking out for one another. And I couldn't be prouder of this group right here that's around me for the great work that they've done.

So thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Tanya Stevens Tregre, wife of Sheriff Michael K. Tregre of Saint John the Baptist Parish, LA.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Norfolk, Virginia September 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Norfolk State! Go Spartans! Can everybody please give Ed a huge round of applause not just for that introduction, but for his extraordinary service to our country and to our veterans? It's good to see all of you. We've got Bobby Scott, your great Congressman, in the house. We've got your next Congressman, Paul Hirschbiel is here. We are very proud to have an Olympic gold medalist, Francena McCorory, 4x400 relay winner. I'm not that fast. [Laughter] I was watching those folks on TV; I said, those are some fast people.

It is good to be back in Norfolk! This is our last stop on the way to the convention in Charlotte. I decided to come back here today despite the fact that, back in March, Norfolk State ruined my NCAA bracket. I had Missouri going pretty deep. But I want you to know I've got no hard feelings. [Laughter] Let's just say you owe me one. [Laughter]

Now, I know that whatever I say here today, it's going to be, at best, a distant second to the speech you will hear tonight from the star of the Obama family, Michelle Obama. This is just like a relay, and you start off with the fastest person. [Laughter] So I'm going to be at home and I'm going to be watching it with our girls. And I'm going to try not to let them see their daddy cry, because when Michelle starts talking, I start getting all misty.

The President. But I'm looking forward to being in Charlotte myself; I'll go down there tomorrow. And last week, our friends in the other party had their convention.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote! Vote!

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

The President. Now, just in case some of you missed it, some of you didn't DVR the Repub-