

marine and soldier over there who proudly choose to defend their country.”

A mother’s plea: Please don’t forget. On this Memorial Day, and every day, let us be true and meet that promise. Let it be our task, every single one of us, to honor the strength and the resolve and the love these brave Americans felt for each other and for our country. Let us never forget to always remember and to be worthy of the sacrifice they make in our name.

May God bless the fallen and all those who serve. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington Na-

tional Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Michael S. Linnington, USA, commanding general, and Col. Michael E. Brainerd, USA, command chaplain, Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region and Military District of Washington; Kathryn A. Condon, Executive Director, Army National Military Cemeteries; Christopher C. Cullen, husband, and Lynn Brinkworth Knutson, mother, of Capt. Sara M. Cullen, USA; Francis G. Phillips III and Cherie Forslund Phillips, parents of S. Sgt. Francis G. Phillips IV, USA. The related proclamation of May 24 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks in Asbury Park, New Jersey May 28, 2013

The President. Hello, New Jersey! It is good to be back in Jersey.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back!

Let me, first of all, say thank you to Governor Christie for that introduction and the great work he’s done here. Your mayor, Ed Johnson, is here as well and has been working tirelessly on your behalf. We’ve got three great Representatives in Congress from New Jersey: Rush Holt, Frank Pallone, Donald Payne, Jr.

Now, last week, my advisers asked me, they said, Mr. President, do you want to spend next Tuesday in Washington, or would you rather spend it at the Jersey Shore? And I’ve got to say, I’ve got to make some tough decisions as President, but this wasn’t one of them. *[Laughter]*

Audience member. We love you anyway.

The President. I appreciate that.

Governor Christie and I just spent some time on the Point Pleasant boardwalk. I got a chance to see the world’s tallest sandcastle being built. We played some Touchdown Fever. I’ve got to say, Christie got it in the tire the first try—*[laughter]*—although I did pay for his throws. *[Laughter]* I played a little Frog Bog, and Governor Christie’s kids taught me the right technique for hitting the hammer to get those frogs in the buckets the way I was sup-

posed to. *[Laughter]* And of course, I met with folks who are still rebuilding after Sandy.

Now, we all understand there’s still a lot of work to be done. There are homes to rebuild. There are businesses to reopen. There are landmarks and beaches and boardwalks that aren’t all the way back yet. But thanks to the hard work of an awful lot of people, we’ve got wonderful shops and restaurants and arcades that are opening their doors. And I saw what thousands of Americans saw over Memorial Day weekend: You are stronger than the storm. After all you’ve dealt with, after all you’ve been through, the Jersey Shore is back and it is open for business, and they want all Americans to know that they’re ready to welcome you here.

And I’ve got to say, if they ever let me have any fun, I’d have some fun here. *[Laughter]* I was telling my staff on the ride over, I could see being a little younger—*[laughter]*—and having some fun on the Jersey Shore. I can’t do that anymore. *[Laughter]* Maybe after I leave office. *[Laughter]*

I think a friend of mine from here once put it pretty well: “Down the shore, everything’s all right.” He’s the only guy a President still has to call the Boss. *[Laughter]* Other than the First Lady. *[Laughter]*

But for generations, that's what this place has been about. Life isn't always easy. We're people who have to work hard and do what it takes to provide for our families. But when you come here, everything's all right. And whether you spend a lifetime here or a weekend or a summer, the shore holds a special place in your heart and in—a special place in America's mythology, America's memory.

When I was here 7 months ago, Hurricane Sandy had just hammered communities all across the East Coast, and lives were lost, and homes and businesses were destroyed, and folks were hurting. And I remember something Chris said back then. He said, "We cannot permit that sorrow to replace the resilience that I know all New Jerseyans have."

Audience member. Yes, we do!

The President. And it didn't. You didn't let it. You kept going. Because these towns have a special character, not just in the summer, but all year round. From the moment the hurricane hit, first responders worked around the clock to save lives and property. And neighbors opened their homes and their hearts to one another. And you came together as citizens to rebuild.

And we're not done yet, and I want to make sure everybody understands that, because for somebody who hasn't seen their home rebuilt yet or is still trying to get their business up and running again after all those losses, we don't want them to think that somehow we've checked a box and we've moved on. That's part of the reason I came back: to let people know we're going to keep on going until we finish.

But if anybody wondered whether the shore could ever be all right again, you got—you got your answer this weekend. From Sea Bright to Bay Head, from Belmar to Seaside Heights, folks were hanging out on balconies and beaches. Shows were sold out at the Stone Pony. Kids were eating ice cream, going on rides, going and eating some more ice cream. [*Laughter*] Guys were trying to win those big stuffed animals to impress a special girl. So, like I said, the Jersey Shore is back in business.

The work's not over, though. Seven months ago, I promised you that your country would

have your back. I told you we would not quit until the job was done, and I meant it. [*Applause*] I meant it.

Craig Fugate, the head of FEMA, he couldn't be here today, but I want to thank him and his team for their ongoing work. FEMA was here before Sandy made landfall; they're still here today. They're working with the Governor's team and with the Task Force I set up to support families and communities who still need help. Since the storm hit, we've provided billions of dollars to families and State and local governments across the region, and more is on the way.

And even as my team is helping communities recover from the last hurricane season, they're already starting to prepare for the next hurricane season, which starts this Saturday. Because if there's one thing that we've learned last year, it's that when a storm hits, we've got to be ready. Education, preparation, that's what makes a difference. That's what saves lives. And anyone who wants to make sure they're ready—for a hurricane or any other disaster—I want them to visit something: a website called ready.gov. Make a plan. It's never too early.

And we've also got to remember that rebuilding efforts like these aren't measured in weeks or months, but they're measured in years. That's why just this past Thursday, we announced billions of new relief aid for New York and New Jersey transit agencies. And that's why the Army Corps of Engineers is working to restore beaches and strengthen the shore's natural defenses. That's why I joined Governor Christie and your representatives, fighting to get a relief package through Congress. We're going to keep doing what it takes to rebuild all the way and make it better than it was before, make it stronger than it was before, make it more resilient than it was before.

So, Jersey, you've got a—you've still got a long road ahead, but when you look out on this beach—this beautiful beach here—even in the rain, it looks good. You look out over the horizon, you can count on the fact that you won't be alone. Your fellow citizens will be there for you, just like we'll be there for folks in Breezy

Point and Staten Island, and obviously, we're going to be there for the folks in Monroe [Moore],^o Oklahoma, after the devastation of last week.

Part of the reason I wanted to come back here was not just to send a message to New Jersey, but send a message to folks in Oklahoma: When we make a commitment that we've got your back, we mean it, and we're not going to finish until the work is done. Because that's who we are. We help each other as Americans through the bad times, and we sure make the most of the good times.

So let's have some good times on the New Jersey Shore this summer. And next summer and the summer after that and all year long,

America, bring your family and friends. Spend a little money on the Jersey Shore. You'll find some of the friendliest folks on Earth, some of the best beaches on Earth. And you'll see that even after a tough couple of months, this space is as special as ever, and down the shore, everything is still all right.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. at Asbury Park Convention Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew, Sarah, Patrick, and Bridget Christie, children of Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; and musician Bruce Springsteen.

Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month May 28, 2013

The President. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you so much. Aloha!

Audience members. Aloha!

The President. Welcome to the White House, everybody. And thank you, Joan, for the introduction. And I want to thank everybody who's here, the incredible warmth of the reception. A sign of the warmth is the lipstick on my collar. [Laughter] I have to say, I think I know the culprit. Where is Jessica Sanchez? [Laughter] Jessica—no, it wasn't Jessica. It was her aunt. Where is she? [Laughter] Auntie, right there. Look at this. [Laughter] Look at this. I just want everybody to witness. [Laughter] So I do not want to be in trouble with Michelle. [Laughter] That's why I'm calling you out right in front of everybody. [Laughter]

We are here today to honor the incredibly rich heritage and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. And there's no better example of that diversity than the people who are in this room. We've got Members of Congress. We've got members of my administration. We've got lots of special guests and talented performers.

And every day, we're reminded of the many ways in which Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders have all contributed and enriched our Nation throughout our history. Obviously for me, I don't have to look any further than my own family. I've got my brother-in-law here, Konrad, who is—Konrad Ng, who's heading up the Smithsonian Asian American center—or it probably has a longer name than that. [Laughter] My sister Maya, their beautiful daughters, my nieces Suhaila and Savita.

I can think back to my college years when my roommates were Indian and Pakistanis, which is how I learned how to cook *keema* and *dal*. [Laughter] Very good. And of course, I can dig back into my own memories of growing up in Hawaii and in Indonesia. And so, certainly, it's been a central part of my life, the entire Asia-Pacific region.

But it's more than food and family, because generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders helped build this country and helped to defend this country and to make America what it is today. It's a history that speaks to the

^o White House correction.