

our most cherished values as a nation of immigrants.

So far, the Republicans in the House have refused to allow meaningful immigration reform to move forward at all. We know there are Republicans in the House who want to do the right thing. I'm going to work with everybody who's serious about strengthening our borders, modernizing our legal immigration system, keeping more families together, and getting this done. And it's the right thing to do for our economy, for our security, and our future.

The majority of Americans agree with me on this. It's time for Members of Congress and Republicans in the House to catch up with the rest of the country. So I need all of you to go out there and mobilize, particularly over the next 2 months. Tell them to get on board. Get on board with business leaders and faith leaders, law enforcement, Republicans and Democrats across the country. Say yes to fixing our

broken immigration system. Let's get it done right now once and for all.

So today, on Cinco de Mayo, we celebrate our shared heritage, our shared history, our shared future. And that's not something to be afraid of, that's something that we need to embrace. That's what I'm going to be doing, not just today, but every day, to keep fighting for opportunity for all people and greater understanding between all nations. And I know that's what you're fighting for as well.

So gracias. Que Dios los bendiga, y feliz Cinco de Mayo. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to José Ramón Andrés Puerta, chef/owner, ThinkFoodGroup; and Patricia Jinich, chef/host, PBS's "Pati's Mexican Table" program.

Statement on the Death of Billy Frank, Jr.

May 5, 2014

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Billy Frank, Jr., Chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and a member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Billy fought for treaty rights to fish the waters of the Pacific Northwest, a battle he finally won in 1974 after being arrested many times during tribal "fish-ins." Today, thanks to his courage and determined effort, our resources are better protected and

more tribes are able to enjoy the rights preserved for them more than a century ago. Billy never stopped fighting to make sure future generations would be able to enjoy the outdoors as he did, and his passion on the issue of climate change should serve as an inspiration to us all. I extend my deepest sympathies to the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and to Billy's family, and to his many friends who so greatly admired him.

Statement on Israeli Independence Day

May 6, 2014

I send my warmest wishes to the Israeli people as they celebrate their independence. Generations of Jews dreamed of the day when the Jewish people would have their own state in their historic homeland, and 66 years ago today, that dream came true. Today, Israel thrives as a diverse and vibrant democracy and as a "startup nation" that celebrates entrepreneurship and innovation.

The United States was the first nation to recognize the Government of Israel in 1948, and today, we are still the first to come to Israel's defense. The enduring relationship between our two nations, based on shared democratic values and our unwavering commitment to Israel's security, has never been stronger. We will continue to work with Israel to support a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict,

one that ensures that the Israelis will live alongside their neighbors in peace and with security.

On behalf of the American people, I wish President Peres, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the Israeli people a joyous *Yom Ha'atzmaut*.

Remarks Following a Tour of Tornado Damage in Vilonia, Arkansas May 7, 2014

Well, good afternoon, everybody. Obviously, we just had a chance to tour some of the areas that were devastated by last week's tornadoes and had a chance to meet with some of the families who lost loved ones. I also had a chance to thank some of the first responders and the recovery workers and members of the National Guard who have been working non-stop to help families and businesses pick up the pieces after this devastating tornado.

I want to express my deep appreciation for Governor Beebe and his outstanding leadership; Senator Pryor, Congressman Griffin, Mayor Firestone. They all showed great leadership and were here, hands-on, on the ground throughout these difficult days. And I'm here to make sure that they know and that everybody who's been affected knows that the Federal Government is going to be right here until we get these communities rebuilt. Because when something like this happens to a wonderful community like this one, it happens to all of us, and we've got to be there for them.

After the tornadoes touched down, I immediately approved a major disaster declaration to make sure every Federal resource was available to help folks in Faulkner County and other areas affected by the tornadoes. At my direction, FEMA deployed Incident Management Assistance Teams to support local recovery efforts. Craig Fugate was down here the day after the storm, and a team of the Army Corps of Engineers has been helping search through the debris.

Here in Vilonia, the recovery process is just beginning. It's especially difficult because this town has seen more than its fair share of tragedy. Almost exactly 3 years ago, another tornado leveled parts of Vilonia, and some families and businesses had just finished rebuilding when they were forced to start all over. But folks here are tough. They look out for one another,

and that's been especially clear over the past week.

Immediately after the tornado hit, about 200 people, including fire crews from other counties, were ready to go house to house searching for injured neighbors. Some survivors were driven to the hospital by complete strangers, and in the days that followed, thousands of volunteers showed up to help remove debris and hunt for belongings, pick up trash, and deliver supplies and water. And one volunteer, 16-year-old Casey Williams, did such a good job coordinating relief efforts that Arkansas State troopers started taking orders from her. I had a chance to meet her, and she is extraordinarily impressive. So I don't know what she's going to be doing in the future, but I know it's going to be something great.

More than any disaster, it is that dedication and that commitment to each other that truly defines this town. As one resident said, "We just say a prayer and then get to work." So the people of Vilonia and all the other towns devastated by the storm understand there's a lot of work that remains to be done. But I'm here to remind them that they're not doing this work alone. Your country is going to be here for you. We're going to support you every step of the way. You are in our thoughts and prayers, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for the great leadership that you've shown. I know that you can count on your Governor and your Senator and your Congressman here to make sure that every resource that we have available to you is going to be there.

And one of the things that the mayor expressed to me that we've got some concerns about is when this happens in a town like this, it's not just the infrastructure and the buildings that are torn down. You also lose part of your sales tax base. And so we're going to have to figure out how they can make sure that they get