

## Remarks Following a Hurricane Preparedness Briefing at the Federal Emergency Management Agency *May 31, 2016*

Well, my important responsibility as President of the United States is to keep our people safe. And that's why I just met with key members of my Homeland Security team, including our FEMA director, Craig Fugate, here at FEMA's National Response Coordination Center. And Craig and his team gave us updates on preparations for the 2016 hurricane season, which starts tomorrow.

All of us have seen the heartbreak, the damage, and in some cases, the loss of life that hurricanes can cause. And as climate continues to change, hurricanes are only going to become more powerful and more devastating. Now, States play the primary role in preparing for and responding to disasters. But our team here works around the clock to make sure that those States and the people living in those States have everything that they need to get the job done.

One of the things that we have learned over the course of the last 7½ years is that government plays a vital role, but it is every citizen's responsibility to be prepared for a disaster. And that means taking proactive steps, like having an evacuation plan, having a fully stocked disaster supply kit. If your local authorities ask you to evacuate, you have to do it. Don't wait.

And so one of the biggest, most important messages that we're going to be delivering throughout hurricane season is that you cannot judge the dangerousness of a hurricane based on the fact that in the past it dissipated or it missed you. If your local authorities say that you need to start evacuating, you need to start evacuating and get it done. Because, often-times, despite the enormous progress that we've made technologically and in terms of forecasts, the way that urban centers are designed today, even in areas that are not big metropolises, evacuations take time and people have to respond.

And what we've been seeing is some public complacency slipping in: a large portion of

people not having preparedness kits, not having evacuation plans. We've been stagnant a little bit with respect to the number of people, the percentage of people, who respond to an evacuation order. All that has to pick up, because we want to make sure that, although it's hard to prevent property damage, that we are doing everything we can to prevent loss of life.

If you need information about how to put together an evacuation plan, how to put together a disaster preparedness kit, as Craig said, we've got an app for everything now. We have a FEMA app in English and in Spanish to help you prepare your family for a disaster. You can update the National Weather Service alerts. You can get safety tips for more than 20 kinds of hazards. It provides you directions to nearby shelters.

So I would encourage every American, no matter where you live, to stay vigilant, to check [ready.gov](http://ready.gov). I will repeat that: That is [ready.gov](http://ready.gov). Check that regularly to make sure your family is prepared for severe weather.

Finally, I just want to thank all the outstanding public servants not only at FEMA, but at NOAA, which does a lot of our forecasting. Our National Hurricane Center—Rick Knabb does a great job. Some of you guys have seen him on TV when things happen. When I came into office, I think FEMA was an organization that was still, as Craig put it, wrapped around the axle. It now exemplifies the extraordinary role that effective Government agencies and the people who work there can play in making our lives better, in saving lives, in helping people pick themselves back up after they've gotten hit with a tremendous blow.

So I want to publicly acknowledge not only the outstanding work that Craig has done, the leadership that he's provided here at FEMA, but everybody at FEMA, because they have dealt with everything: hurricanes, storms, tornadoes, flooding, fires. And in every situation, FEMA has been there on time, ready. And I think it's a testament to their effectiveness that

very rarely, if ever, have you heard a complaint from a Governor or a mayor or a local community about a lack of responsiveness when it comes to FEMA, no matter what the disaster is.

But having said all that, having been really proud of the way that FEMA has operated and all the agencies involved in disaster preparedness have operated over the last 7 years—7½ years, what we also know is, it only takes one. It just takes one big disaster that—for us to really see some severe impacts. What we’re always worried about is—are the things we don’t know, things we can’t anticipate, things that we haven’t seen before. And that is why it’s so important to make sure that every American, every family participate actively in getting prepared. And if we do that, then we’re going to

have the kind of resilience that we’re all looking for.

So thank you very much for the great work that all of you are doing. And we’re going to keep on being forward leaning throughout this hurricane season to make sure that we’re doing everything we can. We can’t control the weather, but we can control our responses to it. And you’ve got a Government here who’s ready to help.

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the M1 Conference Room. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Knabb, Director, National Hurricane Center.

## Remarks Honoring the NCAA Men’s Basketball Champion Villanova University Wildcats

May 31, 2016

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Hello. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. And I guess it is the blue-and-white house today—[laughter]—because we’re giving it up for the 2016 NCAA Champion Villanova Wildcats!

Now, you should know that we have some big ’Nova fans here, from both sides of the aisle in Congress. We also want to acknowledge Villanova president, Reverend Peter Donohue, who is here. Athletic Director Mark Jackson, who capped off his first year as athletic director with a national championship—pretty good job. [Applause] Pretty good.

Unfortunately, perhaps the most important ’Nova grad here, Dr. Jill Biden, could not be here. I think she may be teaching, but her husband Joe wanted me to remind you that he picked ’Nova to win it all. [Laughter] This is the type of wise counsel that you are looking for from a Vice President. [Laughter] Unfortunately, I didn’t follow his counsel, and so my bracket was busted. [Laughter]

We have the best dressed man in college basketball—the George Clooney of coaches—[laughter]—Jay Wright. And today we cele-

brate a remarkable team that worked tirelessly to make Coach look good in terms of his job and not just his wardrobe. [Laughter] His tailor and stylist could not make it, but we do have his basketball players here. [Laughter]

So Coach Wright and this team treated us to as memorable a run and as memorable a championship game as I can remember. We’ll talk more about that game in a second, but these Wildcats were about more than just one moment or one shot. They had unbelievable defense. They had great clutch shooting. A senior class that won more games than any group in Wildcats history. They had a stable of talented players who were as happy hitting the deck for a loose ball as they were cutting down the nets.

You had Daniel Ochefu, a.k.a. “the Chef”—[laughter]—who became just the seventh player in program history to score 1,000 points and grab 900 boards—pretty good. Also not afraid to do the little things, we saw him grab that mop right in the middle of the game. [Laughter]

We had Josh Hart who led the Wildcats in scoring. Congratulations, Josh. Josh, where’d you go to school?