



Governor Tim Kaine

What an amazing community this is. Mr. President and Mrs. Bush and to all who are part of this Virginia Tech community in this room, on this campus, worldwide today; it is a very bitter and sad day, and yet my wife, Anne, and I are very privileged to be here with you, and there is no where else in the world we would rather be than with you at this moment.

As Charlie mentioned, Anne and I had left on Sunday morning from Richmond to go on a two-week trade mission to Asia. One of the events is actually an event in India to spotlight a wonderful program of Virginia Tech. We had been in Tokyo in the hotel for about five hours and we were awakened with a call at about 1 a.m. to report the horrible tragedy on this campus, and we were stunned. Our first thought was that we need to get home—we need to be in Blacksburg with this community that we care so much about.

We had the experience of being up in the middle of the night and not being able to get home for about 10 hours. So we did what people all across the world had been doing in the last of couple of days. We sat there at first in our hotel room and then in a coffee shop and then in an airport waiting lounge with the television on watching to get news about what was happening on the campus and how the campus was handling this.

It was different being away from home, being halfway across the world, and seeing what was happening on this campus, and what you students were showing to the world. And even in the midst of the darkest day in the history of this campus, what you showed to the world yesterday, you students, was an amazing thing.

Again and again and again, in all these various news outlets, students were called forth to offer their thoughts and asked what they thought about their campus and how they were dealing with this tragedy. The grief was real and very raw and the questions were deep and troubling, but again the students came back to wearing the Virginia Tech sweatshirts, wearing the Virginia Tech caps, and the incredible community spirit and sense of unity here on this campus and how before it was about who was to blame or what could have been done differently, it was about how we take care of each other in this wonderful, wonderful community. How proud we were, even in the midst of a sad day, to see how well you represented yourselves and this university to a worldwide community.

There are deep emotions that are called forth by a tragedy as significant as this, grieving and sadness by the boatload. Anne and I have unashamedly shed tears about this and I know virtually all of you have as well. That is the thing we should be doing; we should be grieving. There are resources here on this campus and others who are on this campus to help you if you find the need for consolation, which is so important.

A second reaction that is a natural reaction is anger—anger at the gunman, anger at the circumstance. Asking, “What could have been done differently?”—that’s natural as well. One of the most powerful stories in the human history of stories is that great story central to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity—the story of Job from the Old Testament, afflicted with all kinds of tragedy in his family and health, and he was angry. He was angry with his