

OFFERING HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES TO THE VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES REGARDING THE HORRIFIC VIOLENCE AT VIRGINIA TECH AND TO STUDENTS, FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 306) offering heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families regarding the horrific violence at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and to the students, faculty, administration and staff and their families who have been deeply affected by the tragic events that occurred there.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 306

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) offers its heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families regarding the horrific violence at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and to the students, faculty, administration and staff and their families who have been deeply affected by the tragic events that occurred there;

(2) expresses its hope that losses from the mass shooting will lead to a shared national commitment to take steps that will help our communities prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future; and

(3) recognizes that Virginia Tech has served as an exemplary institution of teaching, learning, and research for well over a century, and that the University's historic and proud traditions will carry on.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H. Res. 306 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SCOTT of Virginia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to offer my deepest sympathies to the victims and their families who suffered the horrific shooting tragedy at Virginia Tech on Monday morning. My thoughts and prayers go out to them, the students, faculty and staff of the university.

Virginia Tech is one of the largest schools in Virginia, providing higher education to more than 28,000 students. The effects of this tragedy can be felt all across the Commonwealth of Vir-

ginia, in the Halls of Congress and in every corner of this Nation. I represent hundreds of Virginia Tech families, perhaps thousands of alumni, and members of my staff have friends and family who currently attend Virginia Tech.

Schools are meant to be sanctuaries of learning and, most importantly, sanctuaries of safety. Parents who send their children off to college with all the potential that a college education represents should be content that their children will be safe.

As we mourn with the Virginia Tech community, this Congress must explore every possible avenue towards determining what can be done to prevent this kind of tragedy in the future, whether in high schools or college campuses or on business premises or other places where people may congregate. Yet we must be realistic. From what we are hearing regarding this tragic incident, it is not clear that any law would have been effective in deterring the kind of senseless acts that occurred. Anyone willing to indiscriminately shoot down innocent people and then kill themselves afterwards would not likely be deterred by any law. Nonetheless, we must work with our colleges and universities in developing ways to anticipate, identify and prevent any such threats that we can. Some evidence is emerging that indicates that there may have been signs of mental disturbances in the alleged shooter, and this may suggest information which could lead to things to look at to avoid these tragedies in the future.

But, Mr. Speaker, today we stand together to wish a speedy recovery for the injured and to mourn with the families of the victims who died in this horrific tragedy. Virginia Tech is and will remain one of the Commonwealth of Virginia's finest institutions of higher learning, and its proud traditions will carry on beyond this darkest hour. This event will be with the students, faculty and staff of Virginia Tech for the rest of their lives, but we must not let tragedies like this stop people from living their dreams. I hope that some day all members of the Virginia Tech community will be able to celebrate life and learning on the campus again.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce into the RECORD the powerful statement presented at the service yesterday at Virginia Tech by Nikki Giovanni. That service was attended by nine of the eleven members of the Virginia delegation to Congress and both of our U.S. Senators. So I will insert that statement into the RECORD.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are sad today, and we will be sad for quite a while. We are not moving on, we are embracing our mourning.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are strong enough to stand tall tearlessly, we are brave enough to bend to cry, and we are sad enough to know that we must laugh again.

We are Virginia Tech.

We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but nei-

ther does a child in Africa dying of AIDS, neither do the invisible children walking the night away to avoid being captured by the rogue army, neither does the baby elephant watching his community being devastated for ivory, neither does the Mexican child looking for fresh water, neither does the Appalachian infant killed in the middle of the night in his crib in the home his father built with his own hands being run over by a boulder because the land was destabilized. No one deserves a tragedy.

We are Virginia Tech.

The Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hands to those who offer their hearts and minds. We are strong, and brave, and innocent, and unafraid. We are better than we think and not quite what we want to be. We are alive to the imaginations and the possibilities. We will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears and through all our sadness.

We are the Hokies.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We are Virginia Tech.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the headline atop the front page of yesterday's edition of the Virginia Tech student newspaper captured what all of us are feeling right now: "Heartache." On behalf of my colleagues on the Education and Labor Committee, my staff, my family, and my constituents, I extend my deepest sympathy and offer my prayers to Virginia Tech students, staff, administration and families.

Our institutions of higher education are places where students begin to embrace adulthood, where they begin to relish a new found freedom and indeed where they begin to realize their dreams. For that to be cut short for these young men and women by such a senseless act is beyond anyone's comprehension. So all we can do is mourn, comfort one another and pray that the Virginia Tech community and our Nation may begin to heal in the aftermath of this unspeakable tragedy.

The collective feeling inside of this building over the last few days is much like the feeling we experienced on September 11 and the days that followed when we cast aside our differences and united to stand with the victims, their families and their communities. Today, just as back then, it is a time not for politics or a time to take advantage of such a horrific turn of events to push a partisan agenda. And similarly today, just as back then, it is not a time to misdirect any blame toward anyone other than the perpetrator of this massacre. In this case, as we currently understand it, this blame belongs squarely to a single gunman who acted selfishly, brutally and without regard for human life.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that we owe sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Virginia Tech's administration, law enforcement officers, faculty and students for the way they have handled these last 3 days. Simply put, no one

could have imagined this series of crimes that has risen to the level of the deadliest in U.S. history. These men and women have done their very best to respond to it. And as we witnessed at the convocation a day ago in Blacksburg, they are doing so with a deep respect and love for the campus they call home.

May that spirit carry them through the difficult weeks, months and years ahead. And may we learn from their example as we tackle the challenges that we face as a Nation in the aftermath of this great tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER), the representative of the Ninth Congressional District, the home of Virginia Tech.

(Mr. BOUCHER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for yielding this time, and I thank him for his remarks and also express that same appreciation to the gentleman from California for the eloquent remarks that he just rendered on the floor. It is with a heavy heart that I offer these comments today.

The tragedy on Monday of this week was of a scale and a senselessness that defies explanation. And it came to a university campus that is known across our Nation for its friendliness, its peacefulness, and the close association among the faculty and the students.

Yesterday afternoon a campus-wide convocation demonstrated to the world that Virginia Tech's unity and sense of purpose will be maintained and strengthened. The convocation was attended by President Bush; by Virginia's Governor, Tim Kaine; and by the members of Virginia's congressional delegation, both House and Senate. And I want to express my appreciation to the Members of the House who traveled yesterday to Blacksburg to show support for the Virginia Tech community and to comfort those who have lost loved ones.

I also want to take the opportunity in these remarks to offer some personal thoughts. To Virginia Tech President Charles Steger and the professional staff of the university, thank you for the poise, the dignity and the strength that you have demonstrated under the most difficult and challenging of circumstances.

□ 1050

To the skilled first responders of Blacksburg and Montgomery County, thank you for your dedication and for your outstanding service on Monday that saved lives and prevented our loss from being even greater.

To the families and the friends of the victims, profound sympathy for your loss of young lives full of promise and mature lives of major contribution.

The resolution before the House this morning is sponsored by all of the Members of the House delegation from Virginia. Through the resolution, Congress offers its heartfelt condolences to all who have suffered loss, and it recognizes that Virginia Tech has served as an exemplary institution of teaching, of learning and of research, and that the university's proud traditions will continue.

Today, we mourn an enormous loss from a violent and senseless act. Tomorrow and in the months to come, the resilience of southwest Virginians and the spirit of our region that has helped to make Virginia Tech a great institution will assure that that university has an even stronger future. To that end, we in the House today pledge our support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge approval of the resolution.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, having returned from a heart-wrenching trip to Virginia Tech yesterday, it is hard to stand here and find words to express the pain and sorrow that has befallen that community. As a parent of a student approaching college age, there is absolutely nothing more upsetting than seeing young people cut down in the prime of their lives.

I will never forget, Mr. Speaker, the raw emotions that filled that convocation arena yesterday as I, along with my colleagues from Virginia, mourned with some 12,000 friends and family members of victims, half of whom at least were clad in Hokie maroon and orange. Nor will I forget the sight of a bereaved father who, overwhelmed with grief, simply collapsed.

When an act of random cruelty bewilders us and pulls us down, the sort of love, generosity, courage and heroism we have seen in Blacksburg and its response serves as a counterforce. It replenishes us and demonstrates, as the Bible says, that "love is strong as death."

We Virginians are resilient people, and I already know that under the strong leadership of President Charlie Steger, our brothers and sisters at Virginia Tech will band together and make it through this tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, in response to a moving plea from Virginia Tech's resident poet toward the end of the convocation ceremony, the crowd there erupted into cheers of "Let's go Hokies." It was a moving call to action. Let the healing begin.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I stand here with a heavy heart, and extend my deepest sympathies, especially to the families of those students who lost their lives.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODE).

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, on April 16, 2007, the news from Virginia Tech and

Blacksburg grew worse as the day progressed, and as evening fell the number of students and faculty killed reached 33. Included in that number was the apparent assassin, a fellow student who came to this country from South Korea at an early age. The death toll of 33 makes the tragedy at Virginia Tech one of the deadliest at educational institutions in the history of the United States.

Words cannot express the sorrow and hurt that the families of the victims are experiencing. We cannot bring these mostly young men and women back to the classroom, to the sidewalks of Blacksburg or to their families and loved ones. But we can always remember and know that their spirit, energy and enthusiasm in making Virginia Tech one of the finest institutions of higher education in the world will never die and will live in our memories forever.

At yesterday's convocation at Cassell Auditorium in the heart of the Virginia Tech campus, those gathered heard President Bush, heard the Governor of Virginia, heard ministers of various religions around the globe, and heard leaders of the Tech community. In a spontaneous happening towards the end of the program, one gentleman stood forth and led in the Lord's Prayer as it was prayed in unison by thousands of students, families, government leaders and others in the Virginia Tech community.

May God bless the families of the deceased, the students at the institution, Virginia Tech, and our country in this time of sorrow.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Speaker of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that Congress today recognizes the tragedy that indeed struck our country when it befell the community of Virginia Tech on Monday. We offer our condolences to the many who now grieve. I want to particularly extend my condolences to our colleagues here for the sorrow that has taken place in their State.

But the sorrow of parents who lost their children, students who lost their friends, and a community which lost 33 of its own is beyond any comfort we can give in words. Words are totally inadequate. In the days that follow, the mourning and questioning that has already begun will continue. And as it does, the thoughts and prayers of this Congress and, indeed, this Nation, will remain with the students of Virginia Tech and their families.

Among the victims there was a student resident adviser known affectionately as "Stack," a young woman whose love for horses led her to study veterinary science; one of the world's great researchers on cerebral palsy; and a Holocaust survivor who became an expert on aeronautics.

These victims, of different backgrounds and different ages, are united

in their love of one of America's great learning institutions, Virginia Tech. And today and in the days to come, as we grieve their loss, we are all Hokies.

When Robert Kennedy announced to the people of Indianapolis the news of the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, he offered comfort with the words of an ancient Greek playwright, Aeschylus, when he said, "Today, when no words can describe our sadness, or heal our grief, these words again give our Nation hope. In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

Today, on behalf of the students, faculty, staff and families of Virginia Tech, we pray for that wisdom.

I hope that it is a comfort to all who are grieving today that so many people in our country, indeed, in the world, mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS).

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I address this Chamber today. As the parent of four children in college, I share the horror and the rage, the grief and the sorrow of the larger Virginia community.

I rise today to urge my colleagues to support this resolution expressing our sorrow and offering condolences over the tragic events that took place Monday at Virginia Tech. Our hearts, our prayers and our thoughts go out to the families of those who lost lives, the injured and their families, and all those affected by this terrible tragedy, including the family of the troubled young man who perpetrated this crime.

□ 1100

The coming together of communities, the reaching over the fences to lend a hand of support at this hour of need has been touching. From the Washington Nationals wearing Virginia Tech caps last night, to the community groups that gathered spontaneously across the Commonwealth to share their sorrow, the picture of the Commonwealth today is one we can, as usual, take great pride in. Yesterday I traveled with my colleagues to Blacksburg for the convocation, and last evening over 500 Korean Americans assembled at the Fairfax County Government Center to express their outrage, to offer their prayers, to start the healing process that follows such tragic events.

Mr. Speaker, we Virginians are known for looking out for each other and this has been no different. The outpouring of love, sympathy and caring for each other has been astonishing. The pictures of students comforting each other, of students and teachers helping each other search for answers in these dark hours has been particularly moving. All of us around the Commonwealth must come together to

find the strength to move forward. We're family. We've been deeply wounded. That's what families do when they're hurt. They look to each other for strength, for inspiration and for meaning. Mr. Speaker, we hurt for the victims and we honor their lives. That's what families do. We close ranks and lend each other support in our darkest hours. Benjamin Franklin said more than 200 years ago that those things that hurt instruct. Let us learn from this. Let us hurt. It's good for the soul. It helps us to heal. It is, sadly, the only way to move forward.

Again, I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the majority leader, 1 minute.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I join all 434 of my colleagues in rising to express our sorrow, our regret, our sympathy, yes, and in some respects our outrage that this calamity has been visited on so many of our promising and wonderful young people.

Mr. Speaker, as a grieving Nation tries to comprehend the senseless, horrific violence on the campus of Virginia Tech University on Monday, the full scope of this tragedy is only now beginning to come to light. Thirty-two innocent people, 32 young people of promise, some people not so young who were at great risk and survived, 32 people were stolen from their families and friends at the hand of a deeply disturbed young man who ended the carnage by taking his own life. More than two dozen others were injured during this random, murderous rampage.

Today, a profoundly saddened Nation recognizes that these were not mere strangers, although we may not have known the victims personally. They were members of our national family and in so many ways they were a reflection of us. They were hope for the future. They were brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers who were so full of life, hope and promise for a better future, for themselves, their families, their country and indeed the world.

Those slain included a 20-year-old political science major from Dumont, New Jersey, who attended Virginia Tech on an Air Force scholarship; an 18-year-old freshman from Centreville, Virginia who distinguished herself in drama and on Virginia Tech's dance team; a 22-year-old senior from Martinez, Georgia who was majoring in psychology, biology and English and who served as a role model for many; a 76-year-old engineering professor and Holocaust survivor who survived one of the worst terrorists and despots the world has ever seen, Adolf Hitler, to come home and to teach young people, to make them better able to meet the future and to have that ability robbed from him by a senseless act. And so many others, Mr. Speaker.

We may never know the answer to the question "Why?" Why have so many loving, promising people been

taken through such senseless violence? However, let us mourn their loss and extend our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to their families and to their friends and to their fellow students.

Today, our thoughts and prayers are also with those who have been injured as well as Virginia Tech's students, faculty and staff, alumni and the entire campus community as they endeavor to cope with this monumental tragedy. Let us remind them they are not alone. Not only are they in our hearts but they will be in our prayers. I thank the gentleman from Virginia for giving me this time to join him and the Virginia delegation in recognizing the tragedy and reflecting our remembrance of those who have been hurt, those who have lost their lives, and those whom they left behind.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the amount of time left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 11 minutes. The gentleman from Virginia has 12 minutes.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am happy to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman. I thank the majority leader and the Speaker and the other Members of our delegation for their comments.

The tranquil campus of Virginia Tech and the town of Blacksburg has been shattered by the actions of a lone gunman. The horror that the Virginia Tech community has experienced this week is something that every parent, every American hopes they never have to learn has affected their families and friends.

I have a great appreciation for Virginia Tech, one of America's preeminent research institutions, having advanced from one of the original land grant universities. Thousands of people in my district which neighbors Blacksburg have gone to school there, have sent their children there, and are members of Hokie Nation. During my time in this body, I have had graduates and students of Virginia Tech work and intern for me. For years I have known what a special place it is, with its affiliated campuses and offices spread throughout the Sixth District and across the great Commonwealth of Virginia. Yet it is with great sadness that the rest of the world has come to know the compassion of Virginia Tech only through this tragedy. Although this horrendous and unspeakable violence showed the worst of mankind, it also showed what those of us who have been a part of the Tech community for years have always known—the students, the instructors, the administrators, and the citizens of Blacksburg care deeply for one another and take great pride in their community. Even in the worst circumstances, the Virginia Tech community showed great compassion for their fellow man and did what they could to help each other. Liviu

Librescu, a survivor of the Holocaust, blocked the doorway of his classroom so that his students could climb out the windows to safety. Ryan Clark, a resident adviser in the West Ambler Johnston Hall, rushed into the hallway to help his fellow students when the first attack came and became the second victim. And I was deeply saddened to learn that one of my constituents, Henry Lee, a graduate of William Fleming High School in Roanoke, was among those who died in the attack on Norris Hall. Two other of my constituents from Harrisonburg, Virginia, Heidi Miller, an undergraduate, and Guillermo Colman, a graduate student, were wounded and thankfully are okay. Now, following this brutal action, throughout the campus and community, students are relying on each other to cope with what has happened, but they will not let the sorrow and pain that has overtaken them this week be the lasting legacy to those whose lives were lost. Under the leadership of President Charles Steger, the Virginia Tech community will become stronger as a result of this. Their compassion will reach far beyond the town of Blacksburg, deep into what is affectionately known as Hokie Nation. Their vocal pride in their community will not be silenced by the actions of one misguided soul.

□ 1110

I was very moved as I witnessed the process begun yesterday at the convocation at Cassell Coliseum. Speaker after speaker, including the President, the Governor, and so many great leaders at Tech spoke of not only the grief, but of overcoming the grief and moving forward to a brighter and better future.

For the families who have lost sons and daughters, fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters, I grieve for you and your loved ones. You will forever remain in the prayers of this Nation, and I hope that in time you can come to find peace.

For the Virginia Tech community, although we grieve today, and what has happened will never leave our minds, I know that you will take this tragedy and use it to build a stronger campus and a more compassionate community for all.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in expressing my deep condolences to the families of Virginia Tech University.

Let me begin by commending Representative BOBBY SCOTT for introducing this very important resolution. As you know, Representative SCOTT is a member of the Education and Workforce Committee and has shown a tremendous interest in young people throughout his State and the Nation,

and this exemplifies the deep concern that he has for all of our children.

Let me commend the Virginia delegation for its coming together and uniting with the Governor of the State of Virginia with the State legislators, with the students to see about a way that healing can start. To the families and friends of the 32 victims, to the students, to the faculty and the staff, to the alumni of Virginia Tech, we express our condolences.

As a member of the Education and Workforce Committee, we are deeply concerned about the future of our Nation. We are concerned about our young people whether they are in preschool, in elementary or secondary education, whether they are in the institutions of higher education. And we continually learn, and we have to continually change as Toffler said in his book, "Future Shock," 20 or 30 years ago, that if institutions and agencies do not change internally with the same rate of change externally, then those institutions or agencies become obsolete. And this is, again, another example of how we have to rethink how we operate. New Jersey had 4 students of the 32 who perished in this senseless act, and so our hearts are heavy, also.

I think that we have to see how we can assist. Those of us in New Jersey heard little about Virginia Tech 20, 30 years ago until they became a part of the Big East, and then we did hear about Virginia Tech because they had overwhelming sports teams, they had such tremendous student support. It is a great institution. And we know that they left the Big East for the ACC, but we have fond memories of our competitive competition.

I am a Seton Hall graduate, so we were competing many times.

But I think that we have to use this example to see how we can heal. I think that we need to take this tragedy and see how we can better identify students who have problems, students who go to elite schools, who are lonely, students that have situations that need to be dealt with.

We have in our inner cities many young people who don't have the opportunity to go to higher learning. We need to really, I think, as a former national president of the YMCAs of the United States, I think we need to focus more of our attention on the young people. A Nation that loses its young is losing a part of its future. We need to really spend more time on our young so that we develop them, so that we can nurture them, so that we can be sure that our country can be all that it can be as we move through this new millennium.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I would just like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey who points out that this is a national incident with students from all over the country. And I would like to thank him for recognizing me as one of the sponsors of the resolution. The Virginia delega-

tion came together to present this resolution under the leadership of Mr. BOUCHER, so we appreciate his leadership today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I recognize the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 3 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. I want to thank Mr. SCOTT and Mr. BOUCHER for bringing this resolution up.

Words are inadequate at this time. And our community and our State and the Nation have been devastated by what has taken place.

Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today in support of this resolution offering the condolences of the House to the victims and their families of the horrific violence at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, on Monday morning, and to the students, the faculty, administration, staff and their families who have forever been changed by this tragedy.

My heart is heavy for the entire grieving Virginia Tech community and the families in the 10th District of Virginia who are mourning today because the young, promising lives of their children have ended. According to the morning news we have received, there are going to be at least five victims who call the 10th Congressional District, my district, home.

There really are no words that can adequately express, and as a father of 5 children and a grandfather of 12, words you can say, that can express the sorrow we are feeling for the families today. But with this resolution, it is my hope that the families in my district and the families and loved ones of all the victims will know that this district, this Commonwealth of Virginia and indeed the entire Nation are with them in spirit, offering them our heartfelt sympathy and prayers.

With my colleagues in the Virginia delegation, I attended the very moving and emotional convocation yesterday in Blacksburg. I was impressed with the Tech community, the students and staff, administration. President Bush did an outstanding job, as did Governor Kaine, in addressing the students and the administration. It was truly a feeling of family coming together to offer love and support to each other in their time of grief and loss.

There is still a numbness and incredulity about what happened on the Virginia Tech campus just 2 days ago. The wounds in Blacksburg are deep, but with the unity of spirit and the deep faith I felt yesterday on the Tech campus, it is my hope that as the tomorrows come, this outstanding institution and all those who are associated with it will find hope and peace.

May God bless all of us at this very, very difficult time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. SCOTT.

To the members of the Virginia delegation, I am here with a heavy heart, as all of you are. This is the kind of tragedy whose ripples will affect the faculty, the staff, law enforcement, Blacksburg and the State of Virginia for a long time.

Eight years ago tomorrow we had Columbine in my area. I live about 2 or 3 miles from Columbine. The emotions that I feel and the grief that I feel for you bring back a lot of memories. I wish I hadn't seen this play before; I wish I didn't know this script. But I can assure all of you, if you need anything, you have friends in Colorado. We have been through this before.

It is a difficult time. There will be mourning; there will be finger pointing; there will be all sorts of things. And I would just say to all of you, we feel your pain. Your sons and daughters are our sons and daughters.

□ 1120

We will be there, whatever you need. We have been through this. The disbelief and the despair that all of us feel today, we felt 8 years ago. If we can help in any way, you have friends in Colorado.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my colleague from the Eighth Congressional District of Virginia (Mr. MORAN) 4 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. I thank my good friend and colleague for yielding, and I appreciate the fact that this resolution has come to the floor.

It is difficult to imagine a more heartbreaking moment than to have a family receive a call from the university, where they thought they had sent their child to a secure, nurturing, learning environment, only to find out that their child's life has been cut off before any of their potential could be realized. What a horrible loss. And to think that more than 30 of those calls have had to take place over the last 2 days.

This is a time for grieving, for trying to console. But, Mr. Speaker, as important and appropriate as it is to grieve after the fact, I think it may be even more appropriate for this body to stand up before the fact, because we know that this type of tragedy, perhaps not in as large a scale, but this type of tragedy will happen again. Whether it is in the workforce or on a college campus or a high school campus or on the street, innocent victims will be mowed down. And it happens more often in our country than in any other civilized nation, than in any other civilized nation on this planet. And the reason, Mr. Speaker, is because it is simply too easy to obtain a firearm.

If you are a criminal or mentally deranged or simply emotionally upset, virtually anyone can go to a store, even a retail department store, and buy a weapon of mass destruction. That is what has happened here and will happen again. And I know that the National Rifle Association is able to brag that it controls the gun control agenda

now from the White House. And the majority of Members of Congress are not going to stand up to the NRA. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, I think we have a responsibility, particularly at moments like this when we are so acutely aware of the carnage that the proliferation of weapons throughout our society creates. When we are aware of the tragedy that this laxity causes, this lack of courage to stand up to gun manufacturers and say it is time, Mr. Speaker, no matter how politically difficult it might be, to try to reduce the number of weapons in our society. I'm not talking about those that are meant for hunting. People in Canada have all kinds of guns, but their rifles are used for hunting. They are not used for stalking and killing other human beings.

It is the proliferation of handguns, the kinds of guns that were used in this tragic incident and the ammunition clips that should be banned under the assault weapon legislation we let expire that have to be brought under control. And it is we, the people's representatives, who have to stand up and do something about this so that it doesn't have to occur again. As appropriate as it is, as I said, now to grieve with those families and to offer condolences, it is more imperative that we stand up before the fact, before another such tragedy occurs because of our lack of political courage.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I would urge our colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we would urge passage of the resolution. I want to thank my delegates from Virginia. The Virginia delegation came together on this. We were together yesterday, and we appreciate the support from across the country. We urge passage of the resolution.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, there are no words to describe the sorrow and the pain that we feel about the catastrophe that unfolded at Virginia Tech on Monday, April 16th. The most deadly shooting in our nation's history, it is indeed a tragedy of monumental proportions.

Among the 33 deaths in the attack at Virginia Tech were several New Jerseyans: Matt La Porte of Dumont; Michael Pohle from Raritan Township; and Julia Pryde, a biological systems engineering graduate student from Middletown and a resident of the 12th Congressional District. Two other Virginia Tech students killed in the attack—Mary Read and Caitlin Hammaren—had ties to New Jersey, and another—Sean McQuade of Mullica Hill—remains in critical condition.

Schools, colleges, and universities should be a safe refuge for students and faculty. They are environments that are open to new ideas, encourage learning in all aspects of academics and life, and help young adults to discover themselves and prepare for a career. Like students at colleges all over the country, the students at Virginia Tech are ambitious, intelligent, and community-oriented young people. They chose Virginia Tech, I presume, because of its high academic quality and be-

cause of the safe, pleasant community where the university is located.

I cannot begin to understand the pain and confusion that students must feel about the tragic events that have gripped the quaint town of Blacksburg. I can only begin to understand the panic and terror that parents, family members, and friends must have felt wondering about the safety of their loved ones.

In times of tragedy like these, it is important for a community to come together to help each other come to terms with the calamity that has occurred. I hope and pray that the friends and family members of the victims, the students and faculty at Virginia Tech, and others find solace and comfort as we deal together with this historic and heartbreaking episode.

This tragedy should lead other schools to review and develop their own plans for security, emergency response, and communication. Also, Congress and the entire country should reflect on what appears to be a culture of ever-increasing violence, on the psychology and methods of perpetrators of violence, and on the easy availability of guns. If there is a federal role in dealing with these matters, and I think there is, Congress should act.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, these words that I speak today do not come easily. They flow forth from a deep reservoir of sorrowful emotions that compel me to take this podium.

What we witnessed on the campus of Virginia Tech was too much. Too much for anyone to bear. Too much for a nation to bear. America weeps, Mr. Speaker.

In my life, I've seen the horrors of war. It is something I wish upon no one. To have battlefield casualties on an American college campus, is something I never thought I would see. 33 lives . . . 33 young, bright lives on the cusp of experiencing the greatness that life has to offer.

We must be mindful of everything we do. We must ask ourselves what we are doing that has created a world where this could happen. As much as it hurts we must reexamine what kind of society we want to be.

I cannot even begin to comprehend how such a terrible tragedy like this came to pass. It would be too easy to say that this horrific incident calls for some type of action by this body.

That may become necessary, but that is for another day. Today is a day for us to look within ourselves. To examine who we are as a people and never forget what happened on April 16, 2007.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the resolution. But I do so with a heart still full of sorrow over a loss so overwhelming. Two days ago, on Monday, April 15, 2007, at Virginia Tech University, one of the nation's great land grant colleges, we witnessed senseless acts of violence on a scale unprecedented in our history. Neither the mind nor the heart can contemplate a cause that could lead a human being to inflict such injury and destruction on fellow human beings. The loss of life and innocence at Virginia Tech is a tragedy over which all Americans mourn and the thoughts and prayers of people of goodwill everywhere go out to the victims and their families. In the face of such overwhelming grief, I hope they can take comfort in the certain knowledge that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Mr. Speaker, Virginia Tech is a special place to those who claim membership in

"Hokie Nation." Founded in 1872 as a land-grant college named Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and located in Blacksburg, 38 miles southwest of Roanoke, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, or "Virginia Tech," is now a comprehensive, innovative research university with the largest number of degree offerings in Virginia, more than 100 campus buildings, a 2,600-acre main campus, off-campus educational facilities in six regions, a study-abroad site in Switzerland, and a 1,700-acre agriculture research farm near the main campus. Through a combination of its three missions of teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement, Virginia Tech continually strives to accomplish the charge of its motto: *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

Virginia Tech is home to 28,469 students and 1,304 full-time faculty members, who together created an environment conducive to learning, discovery, and achievement. Little wonder the typical freshman admitted to the Class of 2010 had a high school grade point average of 3.80, and an average cumulative SAT reasoning test score was 1231. "Hokie Nation," is comprised of more than 190,000 living alumni from every state and more than 100 countries.

Virginia Tech offers bachelor's degree programs through its seven undergraduate academic colleges: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture and Urban Studies, Engineering, Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Natural Resources, Pamplin College of Business, and Science.

The university offers masters and doctoral degree programs through the Graduate School and a professional degree from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. It is also a research powerhouse. In fiscal year 2006, the university generated \$321.7 million for research program. Each year, Virginia Tech receives significant external support for research, instruction, Extension, and public service projects. Support for these projects originates from an ever-expanding base of sponsors. Today, nearly 775 sponsors fund more than 3,500 active projects. Researchers pursue new discoveries in agriculture, biotechnology, information and communication technology, transportation, energy management (including leadership in fuel-cell technology and power electronics), and a wide range of other engineering, scientific, social science, and creative fields. This research led to 87 disclosures, 17 patents, and 20 licenses in calendar year 2005.

But that seemed to matter little on Monday, which was the last day on earth for more than 30 members of the Virginia Tech family. Among them were future scientists, engineers, teachers, doctors, soldiers, fathers, mothers, friends, and leaders. All of them cut down in a hail of bullets before they reached the prime of their lives. So many promising lives interrupted; so many promising lives wasted.

The New York Times noted in its editorial that as the investigation of the Virginia Tech shootings unfolds in coming days, it will be important to ascertain whether there were any hints of the tragedy to come and what might be done to head off such horrors in the future. Campuses are inherently open communities and it is not easy to guarantee a safe haven.

But the carnage at Virginia Tech also commands that we here in this body take a stand against senseless acts of violence whether here in our own country or elsewhere around the world. It is long past time for our national community to declare that injuries inflicted on any member of the community by another simply based on hate or hatred of differences poses a threat to the peace and security of the entire community. For that reason alone, such conduct must be condemned and punished severely, if not prevented altogether.

As the poet Nikki Giovanni stated so eloquently yesterday in her stirring address at the convocation held by the university yesterday in Blacksburg:

We are Virginia Tech.

We are sad today, and we will be sad for quite a while. We are not moving on, we are embracing our mourning.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are strong enough to stand tall tearlessly, we are brave enough to bend to cry, and we are sad enough to know that we must laugh again.

We are Virginia Tech.

We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but neither does a child in Africa dying of AIDS, neither do the invisible children walking the night away to avoid being captured by the rogue army, neither does the baby elephant watching his community being devastated for ivory, neither does the Mexican child looking for fresh water, neither does the Appalachian infant killed in the middle of the night in his crib in the home his father built with his own hands being run over by a boulder because the land was destabilized. No one deserves a tragedy.

We are Virginia Tech.

The Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hands to those who offer their hearts and minds. We are strong, and brave, and innocent, and unafraid. We are better than we think and not quite what we want to be. We are alive to the imaginations and the possibilities. We will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears and through all our sadness.

We are the Hokies.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We are Virginia Tech.

Mr. Speaker, we will prevail against senseless acts of violence. We will prevail against uncontrolled rage and anger. We will prevail against hatred and intolerance.

Today we are all members of the Hokie Nation. We are Virginia Tech.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to lament the tragedy that has held our attention and broken our hearts nationwide as we hear more and more about the massacre at Virginia Tech this week . . . And I thank my friend the gentleman from Virginia for bringing this resolution to the floor today.

Sometimes a child of this nation is pathologically disturbed beyond control or even hope of understanding that murderous pathology . . . but in the events that follow horror—Columbine, or 9–11, or the massacre at Virginia Tech . . . or standing on a faraway battlefield . . . or even the spectacle of being the object of nation ridicule . . . our children have inspired us with their guts and their fast reactions in the face of numbing shock.

They reacted well to events that defied understanding, and touched our hearts and gave us a glimpse of our future. Our nation is in the hands of these extraordinary young people, all over the nation . . . those almost too young to remember Columbine, tempered by their early teenage prism of 9–11. This nation should find our comfort in the lessons from our children: adversity brings hope and when the worst of humanity shows itself, the best of humanity raises up to heal together.

Just now, there are thousands of facts still unknown about the Virginia Tech massacre . . . thousands of second guesses about all manner of the university response . . . and certainly thousands of questions and many more stories to come.

Today, I join parents from South Texas and around the nation as we pray for the students that were lost in Blacksburg, for their families . . . and for the millions of students and parents now psychologically wounded by the reality that students in college are hardly safe from dangerous minds and wounded souls.

To the families of those who lost loved ones, whose loved ones were wounded, and for the families of those students at Virginia Tech mourning their friends . . . know that this House—and the larger American family—are praying for them and standing with them at this most difficult moment. We are also praying for the family of the gunman; and we urge that there be no retaliation for these hideous acts.

When a parent sends a child to college, we are so proud. We are also worried about the choices they will make as they leave the safe harbor of our homes and neighborhoods . . . but today, there's a whole new horror to contend with.

As we learn more in the coming weeks, my colleagues and I are committed to finding new solutions to the monumental problems our schools and colleges face in protecting the safety of our children. And we will remain forever sobered by the fact that nothing can ever completely protect us—or our children—from a madman intent on killing.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in shock and dismay over the events that unfolded on the campus of Virginia Technical Institute on Monday this week.

My community is fortunate that none of our students there were injured or killed, but our grief remains at the loss of the 31 students and teachers who were killed, and the obviously disturbed young man who orchestrated this horrible tragedy.

When we send our children off to College, we do so with anxiety just because they are leaving the "nest". They are growing up and the relationship between us is changing. Never in our wildest imagination or fears do we think that we are sending them into harms way. All of that changed on Monday!

And so I sadly join my colleagues in support of H. Res. 306 to offer the heartfelt condolences on behalf of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands to the victims, their families, their fellow students and faculty.

In doing so I take this opportunity to also remember the losses suffered at Kent state, I have a dear friend, Corinne Forbes Plaskett who was a student there at the time. She has never forgotten the horror of that experience and I am sure the events of Monday have re-awakened memories for her and others who were there at that time in Ohio.

May God bless all who were affected by both events, and may He bless us all!

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 306, expressing our condolences to the victims and the families involved in the tragedy which occurred this week at Virginia Tech University.

April 16 brought terrible loss to all Americans and particularly to those who are part of a college or university. The nearly 30 years I spent working on a college campus were some of the most fulfilling of my life. I know how much a campus can become a community and the people within it, a family. In some ways, a campus is a haven—of learning and growth—in which students feel safe and free to pursue their dreams and aspirations. To young Americans, a campus is among the last places where such horrific fears could be realized.

When we look back on what occurred this week at Virginia Tech, we will honor those whose lives were taken and those who gave their lives to protect others. We will remember that we can never safeguard against every threat. Still, we can take steps to protect the precious communities in which we live. We must do more to ensure that lethal weapons do not fall into the wrong hands. We must equip campuses and cities with adequate emergency communication systems, so that critical information gets out in time.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we stand with the friends and family members around the world who lost loved ones on that tragic April morning in Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 306.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

COMMENDING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 300) commending the achievements of the Rutgers University women's basketball team and applauding the character and integrity of their student-athletes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 300

Whereas under head coach C. Vivian Stringer the Rutgers University Scarlet Knights women's basketball team finished their extraordinary 2006-2007 season with a 27-9 record;

Whereas after losing four of their first six games the Lady Knights refused to give up and spent their Winter Break in the gym honing their skills and working to become a better team for the rest the season;

Whereas on March 6, 2007, Rutgers upset top-seeded University of Connecticut for their first-ever Big East Championship title;

Whereas the young women displayed great talent in their run to the Final Four of the women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament;

Whereas five freshmen played an integral role in the team's march to the championship game;

Whereas the Lady Knights showed enormous composure with tournament wins against teams playing in their home States;

Whereas through hard work and determination this young team fought through improbable odds to reach the NCAA title game;

Whereas the team was just the 3d number 4 seed in history to reach the championship;

Whereas the Lady Knights made school history as the first athletic team from Rutgers to play for any national championship;

Whereas during those 3 weeks, the Scarlet Knights brought excitement to the NCAA tournament and captured the hearts of basketball fans throughout New Jersey and across the Nation;

Whereas Rutgers students, alumni, faculty, and staff, along with countless New Jerseyans are immensely proud of what the team accomplished this past season;

Whereas the members of the team are excellent representatives of Rutgers University and of the State of New Jersey;

Whereas these young women are outstanding individuals who are striving to reach lifetime goals both on and off the basketball court;

Whereas the Lady Knights epitomize the term student-athlete with a combined B+ grade point average;

Whereas by excelling in academics, music, and community service, Katie Adams, Matee Ajavon, Essence Carson, Dee Dee Jernigan, Rashidat Junaid, Myia McCurdy, Epiphanny Prince, Judith Brittany Ray, Kia Vaughn, and Heather Zurich are great role models for young women across the Nation; and

Whereas the Lady Knights embody integrity, leadership and class: Now therefore be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the amazing performance of Rutgers University women's basketball team in the NCAA tournament; and

(2) expresses its admiration for the achievements and character of this team of remarkable young women;

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H.R. 300 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, as a representative from New Jersey, I am pleased to rise here in the United States House of Representatives to praise the remarkable young women of Rutgers University, the Rutgers women's basketball team, the Scarlet Knights, and their inspiration, Coach C. Vivian Stringer. They are true champions, not only for their academic and athletic achievement, but for the dignity, strength and class they have shown during this ordeal.

These 10 young women overcame disappointing losses early in the season to advance amazingly to the Final Four. They lost four out of their first seven games. But around the Nation, fans watched as the Scarlet Knights of Rutgers, who lost four of their first seven games, defeated Duke's Blue Devils in the last seconds in an exciting 53-52 upset, the same team that had lost to Duke by 20 points earlier in the season. This victory followed a lopsided defeat of the very strong LSU women's team by a 59-35 score.

When the ugly incident with Don Imus on his morning show cast a shadow over their success, these young women showed what they are made of. In standing up for themselves and their school, they also made a stand on behalf of all young women who insist on being treated with respect and refused to be insulted, as Don Imus did to them, and stereotyped, as he used these disparaging words to describe these wonderful young women.

□ 1130

Don Imus and those of his ilk vastly underestimated New Jersey's strong and proud Scarlet Knights. He underestimated the pride we in New Jersey feel in the remarkable women of this remarkable team. As a matter of fact, during the 13 original States, New Jersey had a theme, and it just said: Do not tread on us. And that meant we are a proud, small State, but do not mess with us. Don Imus did not know the history of New Jersey.

Don Imus may have had a microphone, but he was no match for these young women and their coach who so eloquently spoke up for what is right and what is fair. I am so proud that through their action they were able to persuade two major networks, MSNBC and CBS, as well as numerous advertisers that the days of using the public airwaves to ridicule and debase anyone they choose are over. He did not realize that these women, as I said, at that initial press conference, that they had, with the 10 of them, all underclass persons, dressed in their uniforms, sitting up proud, people who will be future