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Draft 05/18/99 6:15pm

Jeff Shesol

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS TO STUDENTS OF COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL
DAKOTA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO
May 20, 1999**

✓ Acknowledgments: the First Lady; Jon DeStefano, Jefferson County School Board Pres., Dr. Jane Hammond, Superintendent; Frank DeAngelis, Principal of Columbine H.S.; Heather Dinkle, Student Body Pres., Columbine H.S.; student council reps. from Chatfield H.S. & Dakota Ridge H.S.; emergency workers; all the students & faculty of Columbine; the families of those killed and injured.

✓ I want to thank everyone here for inviting Hillary and me to join you here in Jefferson County, to talk and to listen and to spend time with you. I particularly want to thank the families we met with earlier today at the Light of the World Catholic Church.

✓ This has been a long, difficult month for them, for all of you and for all America. You have suffered losses of the most terrible kind. You've lost friends, and family, and a certain kind of innocence that no young person should have to part with so soon or so suddenly. And what you're left with is a lot of unanswered questions. There may be some truth to some of the easy answers, but ultimately, we don't really understand much beyond how badly we feel. It makes me think of an old hymn I used to hear in Arkansas. It goes: "Further along we know all about it. Further along we'll understand why. Rise up, my brothers, and walk in the sunshine. Further along we'll understand why."

more explicitly religious
** carrying on*
concrete stuff
You've heard a lot of condolences in the past month, and there's little I can add to the many thoughts and prayers that, I hope, have reached you from around the world. But I have come to Colorado because I want you to know how much I care about you, and how much America cares, and how very much we have to learn from all of you. This kind of incident is like a flash of lightning: it can blind us, but it can also illuminate. What we have seen is a community that looks, for so many of us, like our own. We have seen a community that is sound, and strong; a community that, as you have made clear in recent weeks, is on the road to recovery.

faith
what you've done has
I think what has impressed us the most is that you have never, ever lost faith. I am moved by the power of your faith and by the profound lesson you have taught every one of us: that even when the worst happens, we can reach within and summon what is best. That is what the students of Columbine have shown the world, and I am so very proud of you. *redund*

Your inner strength is something all Americans can draw upon, and something we can all see, in the signs of hope and health and healing all around you in this community. That doesn't happen on its own, one month after a tragedy like this. It happens because you make it happen.

You've returned to school; returned to sports, like the remarkable Girls' Soccer team I'm hearing so much about; and you're looking ahead, toward commencement and even beyond. These are ordinary things, the stuff of life; but when they require the sort of courage and compassion that you have shown every day, then they are truly extraordinary.

It is not too soon, I think, for us all to draw some lessons from your experience, or to be enriched by your example. By coming together as you have in recent weeks, you have shown us that no divisions are so wide that they cannot be bridged. By reaching out, you have shown how much we have in common with people we might have thought were so different. And by reaffirming your faith, by elevating a culture of values above the culture of violence, you have shown above all that the best way to transcend tragedy, the best way to honor the lives we have lost, is to move ahead and build a better future.

That is what we have seen here in Colorado. ~~The blue-and-silver ribbons~~ I have seen everywhere are a telling symbol that everyone is pitching in, providing for the wounded, creating scholarships, investing in your future.

you've been busy but elsewhere, everything's changed — this is epicente
And that is what we have seen across America, where the lessons of Columbine are being *of mass mvt.* heard and heeded: in Hernando County, Florida, where a seventh-grader has started a group called Students Against Violence Everywhere. . . In Leonia, New Jersey, where the community has come together to create a new, more nurturing environment for its children. . . In Westfield, Indiana, where students are signing pledges, committing themselves to non-violence. Across our country, the message of the American people have heard your voices, and our response is clear: we say, Columbine, you have touched our hearts, you have shaken us from slumber, you have stirred us to action. *we cd use this moment for real change*

Many of you are familiar with the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; Where there is despair, hope; where there is sadness, joy; where there is darkness, light." There has been too much darkness in Jefferson County, and in too many other communities. But today, there are signs of light; so I ask all of you to keep illuminating our way along this difficult road, and to keep standing for peace, and love, and hope, and joy. That is the best thing you can do for your school, for your community, and for your country.

Thank you and God bless you.

Need sense of mag. of impact on Am. psyche
self-exam - degree of g'ing + resolve for action
embrace - adoring them to channel their energy to turn into consciousness

*Ultimate: we can move more import: we can learn + act.
best way to honor + find some solace — live our lives, ways they wd;*

*You know I ~~would~~ wanted to be w/ you last mo.
rooting + needs of st.
I was exp. plsd to learn mass cards quoted one of most resonant* *my favorite*

too rhetorical
specific pt. in each H - need more
transparent structure
too up
Do mothers of bikers work:

Draft 05/18/99 1:00pm

Jeff Shesol

Q

- need to lead more
clearly to lessons

1) condolence

2) here b/c...

want you to understand
how very much touched

- hope it's given new impetus

- want all Am. to see ~~what~~ way comm. shines even in darkest moment

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

REMARKS TO STUDENTS OF COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL

DAKOTA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

May 20, 1999

Acknowledgments: the First Lady; Jon DeStefano, Jefferson County School Board Pres., Dr. Jane Hammond, Superintendent; Frank DeAngelis, Principal of Columbine H.S.; Heather Dinkle, Student Body Pres., Columbine H.S.; student council reps. from Chatfield H.S. & Dakota Ridge H.S.; emergency workers; all the students & faculty of Columbine; the families of those killed and injured.

A month of questions still → unanswered ?'s. Why? Why God spare me? ~~[But]~~ further on

I want to thank everyone here for inviting Hillary and me to join you here in Jefferson County, to talk and to listen and to spend time with you. I particularly want to thank the families we met with earlier today at the [Light of the World Catholic] Church.

This has been a long, difficult month for them, for all of you and for all America. You have suffered losses of the most terrible kind. Losses of friends and of family, and of a certain kind of innocence that no young person should have to part with so soon or so suddenly. But through it all, you have never lost faith. I can see that today. Looking out at all of you, at more than two thousand bright, young faces, I can feel the power of your faith, and the promise of your future; and I am moved by the profound lesson you have taught us all: that even when the worst happens to us, we can reach within and draw upon what is best in us. That is what the students of Columbine have done, and I am so very proud of you.

Only a month has passed, but the signs of hope and health and healing are all around us. That's not something that just happens on its own. You're making it happen, by returning to school; returning to sports, like the remarkable Girls' Soccer team I'm hearing so much about; by looking ahead, toward commencement, and even beyond. This is the normal stuff of life; but they are hardly normal, the circumstances you've had to endure. And so it is one of those times when uncommon courage and compassion are required. You've shown plenty of both.

Concentric circles - be more direct

I want all America to know what Columbine is doing -- the ways you're coming together; the ways you're reaching out, finding things in common with people you might have thought were so very different; and the ways you've resolved to become better sons, daughters, classmates and friends as a result of what you've endured together.

And I want all America to know what Colorado is doing. I've been so impressed by the ways your neighbors are responding. It seems as if everyone, from the United Way to the Broncos, and from Safeway to Foley's, is pitching in, caring for the wounded, creating scholarships, investing in your future. The blue-and-silver ribbons so many people are wearing symbolize not only the spirit of Columbine, but a new spirit of solidarity.

1) Cal.

2) community

3) country

transformed by horror
but mesmerized by what we saw after - all Am. knows

Am here
b/c I want
you to
know how
much we
care &
over to
learn from
your
example.
We often
said this
kind of
incident
can illum.
a lot -
to me,
it's
shown
this is
stronger
comm.

heard a lot
of condesc.
not much on
beyond
our poor
power to
add &
detract
from what
they do
here

life in them is
strong -
reclaiming
it - a goal that
is going to see
game - by having
comm.

more
spiky,
less
rhetoric

End

Too many tragedies

I see all of you comrades in
everyday lives — say it
matters each out in everyday
lives

* Declarative but not narrative
[Psalms]
Let's work to build new work.

these are ordinary things; stuff of life
but why
and that makes it extraordinary

all can sing "lol, friend..."

What we were moved by —

All Am looks at this & says can't happen here

something you'd have thought it if hadn't happened here.

But what we do see are bonds of

MW

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Healing

Drawing real lessons, not banal

↳ why is it only in these moments
that we come together?

school newspaper ed.?

key is simplicity, clean lines
- don't overdo it - it's a month later

HRC?

try to reach
Campolo

weeping...
? endures through
the night...
but you will come in
the morning

- praise faith - students all went to church
- What's going on outside community
let me tell you how it's resonant outside
this community
- I want all America to know what
you've been doing
- How do we honor them by what we do?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

- We in Wash are having to re-examine
our long-held beliefs on guns, etc.

- Nat'l Campaign:

~~know as well~~

you shd know there's going to be a nat'l
mvt — not much consolation but...

- out of pain you're had here, good will
come

1 1/2 pgs. long

Columbine flower

Need humility

we don't understand

lot of easy answers — some truth

but ultimately we don't understand

* Commencement
determination to go fwd — to go to school
— commence, college

- we can't understand what happened

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

- we need to draw on what happened here
to change
- you need to keep on going

REVISED

Revised Draft 05/19/99 4:00pm

Jeff Shesol

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS TO STUDENTS OF
COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL
DAKOTA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

May 20, 1999

- Patrick Meland
- SEAN GRAVES

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

5-20-99

cc: Josh
Gottheimer

- DAKOTA RIDGE HS JAZZ BAND

Acknowledgments: the First Lady; Gov. Bill Owens;

AG KEN SALAZAR

[REDACTED];

St. Louis, City Com

Jon DeStefano, Jefferson County School Board Pres., Dr.

Bob [REDACTED]

Jane Hammond, Superintendent; Frank DeAngelis,

Principal of Columbine H.S.; Heather Dinkle, Student

Body Pres., Columbine H.S.; student ~~council~~ reps. from

Chatfield H.S. & Dakota Ridge H.S.; ~~emergency workers~~; ^{support to Sen. [REDACTED]}

all the students & faculty of Columbine; ~~the families of~~

~~those killed and injured.~~

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

5-20-99

I want to thank everyone here for inviting Hillary and

me to join you here in Jefferson County, ~~to talk and to~~

~~listen and to spend time with you.~~ I particularly want to

thank the families ^{who lost their loved ones for meeting w/ us} ~~we met with~~ earlier ~~today~~ at the Light

of the World Catholic Church, and the young people who
are still hospitalized w/ whom I spoke yesterday - some are well
today - Potter [REDACTED] / Sean [REDACTED]

This has been a long, difficult month ~~for them~~, for all
of you and for all America. You ~~have suffered losses of~~
~~in the darkest, darkest hours of our history~~
~~the most terrible kind. You've lost friends, and family,~~

~~and a certain kind of innocence that no young person~~

~~should have to part with so soon or so suddenly. And~~

~~what you're left with~~ ^{All of ~~are~~ ~~meaningless~~ ~~and~~ ~~have~~, and} ~~is a lot of~~ ^{unanswered questions that we think}
^{must be heard, answered, or}
^{dealt with as best you can.}

~~There may be some truth to some of the easy answers, but~~

~~ultimately, we don't really understand much beyond how~~

~~badly we feel. Lately I've been thinking of an old hymn I~~

~~used to hear in Arkansas. It goes. "Further along we~~

~~know all about it. Further along we'll understand why.~~

~~Rise up, my brothers, and walk in the sunshine. Further~~

~~along we'll understand why."~~

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

5-20-99

~~You've heard a lot of condolences in the past month,~~
~~in the past month~~ *to the past month & hope you have been comforted by*
~~and there's little I can add to the many thoughts and~~
~~prayers that, I hope, have reached you from around the~~
extended to you from your neighbors, from all across our country and
~~world. But I have come to Colorado because I want you~~
to know how much America cares about you; and how
loved to you with affection and admiration.
~~very much~~ We have learned from all of you. This kind of
incident is like a flash of lightning: it can blind us, but it
can also illuminate. When we look at Jefferson County,
many of us see a community that looks like our own; and
we know that ~~if acts of evil~~ *this* ~~they~~ *it* can
happen elsewhere. But we also see a community that is
fundamentally sound and strong. I think most Americans
would hope that if they had to face the terrible trials you
have faced, they would respond with the same
compassion and courage.

THE PRESIDENT HAS
5-20-99

~~Like the hymn says:~~ you are rising up, walking in the
sunshine, moving forward. You've returned to school.

You've returned to sports, like the remarkable Girls'

Soccer team I've heard so much about. Even though you

didn't win the championship, the important thing is that

~~I am proud of~~ ^{who} you were out there playing. [^] All of you, in your own

ways, are looking toward the future, ~~whether it's~~

commencement ^{or} ~~and~~ college ~~or, right now, just~~ a summer

job. ^{or just getting back to the} ~~These may sound like~~ ordinary things, the stuff of

life, ~~and that's what they are;~~ ^{these} but under ~~the~~ circumstances,

^{that} ~~they~~ take ³ an effort that is truly extraordinary. ~~Even~~

~~though the worst has happened, you have reached within~~

~~yourself and summoned what is best. I am proud of~~

~~you -- and you should be proud of what you've done.~~

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

5-20-99

~~I think~~ What has impressed me the most these past weeks is the way you have held fast to your faith. ~~It is a remarkable thing. Just watching these events on television, or reading about them in the papers, a lot of people have been shaken to their foundations. And still--- despite all you've endured--- you still believe in the~~

goodness and grace of a loving God. The rest of us can

15 years ago, I graduated at the Memorial Service of ^{Young College} ~~Simon~~ who lost his life in an ~~unbelievable~~ accident. He came home ~~as a~~ ^{an} ~~for~~ his family see how your faith anchors you. It strengthens and ~~clearly makes known~~ ~~made a perfect man on his college branch~~ ~~about to die when he was 18, played football, loved the lady who was a ~~powerful~~ ~~scholarship~~~~ ~~the father who pastored a small church, said then that he believed~~ sustains you. It is a powerful thing, and a powerful thing in a God took him to be cruel, too with him to be whole, & he was ~~in the~~ ~~was~~ ~~come to understand~~ ~~been~~ ~~by~~ ~~by~~ → St Paul says ~~at this life we will always~~ to behold. ~~see things a year later~~ — Therefore we must walk by faith not by sight, that our faith ~~move~~ ~~shall~~ ~~not~~ ~~in the~~ ~~wisdom~~ ~~of~~ ~~man~~ ~~but~~ ~~in the~~ ~~power~~ ~~of~~ ~~God~~ —

Still, in your grief & mourning, there is something I know many of you are still hurting. You are in you can do — for yourselves & for the friends you have mourning, and that's going to hurt for a long time. But ~~lost~~ — You can / and you ~~must~~ / make sure they are remembered while we mourn, we can also learn.

as of those so young
thanking ~~showing~~
as wonderful ~~work~~
on ~~children~~

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
5-20-99

You know your tragedy — this unique in its magnitude
We can learn and -- more important -- we can act. There
— is not an isolated event. Today, as you know, there
is no better way to transcend this tragedy, or to honor the
was another shooting in Atlanta. We thank God for ^{your} lives
you have lost, than to use what you have learned to
to the students do not appear to be life threatening. Last year,
create a better future. A future where hatred and distrust
There were several incidents which did claim lives all across our country.
no longer distort the mind or ^{harden} ~~corrupt~~ the ^{heart} ~~soul~~. A future

But what happened here, to you, has pierced the very soul
where what we have in common is more important than
of our nation, and gives us a chance, a chance to strain a different
what drives us apart. A future worthy of our full potential
future for our children — a future when parents and children
as individuals, as communities, and as a nation. If you
are more fully involved in each other's lives, bound together by
build that future, it would be the most powerful
love, respect, and a clear sense of right & wrong — a future
monument you could make to the lives you've lost.

When students respect each other, no matter what their differences,
and try to lift each other up — a future when schools, ~~communities~~,
~~and families~~ ^{house & workplace} communities connect to
all children, a future when the larger society guards children

Across America, we've already started building that
against violent influences and weapons that ~~can~~ ^{can} break
better future. You've had a lot to do with that. I'm not
the claim of decency and humanity within our nation.
sure if you know how true that is. ^{valuable children}

~~Because of what you have endured, you can help~~
~~You're at the epicenter of an enormous shockwave, and~~
~~us build that future → across all the political, religious~~
~~it's changing a lot of the American landscape -- the way~~
~~racial & cultural lines that divide us.~~

~~we think about our schools, our families, ourselves.~~

~~Already~~
~~You've~~ touched our hearts and ~~stirred~~ ^{moved} us to action. ~~We've~~ ^{launched}

~~We've~~ ^{even} set up a national campaign to ~~make sure we seize~~ ^{fight}
~~violence vs children, to do what we can as a nation~~
~~this moment and make it a time of real and lasting change.~~

~~I know that after meeting all of you, I'll return to~~

~~Washington even more convinced that there is more we~~

~~must do~~ to replace ^a ~~the~~ culture of violence with a culture of

values; ~~more we must do~~ to keep guns out of the wrong

hands; ~~and more we must do~~ to ^{all} ensure that ~~every~~

^{run on}
vulnerable child ~~is~~ identified early, and get ^{the} help they
need.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

5-20-99

Two days from now is Columbine's commencement.

I know it will be bittersweet -- not everything you hoped

it would be when you first walked through those doors as

~~freshmen. For one thing, you couldn't have imagined that~~

~~your rivals at Chatfield would be cheering you on. Even~~

~~for those of you who have another year or two -- or three -~~
~~of all Americans, cheering you on -- and advising~~

~~- to go, I urge you to think of graduation day as another~~
~~important step you take together, walking in that~~

~~sunshine, moving forward through life's journey. In the~~

~~Book of Isaiah, it says: "Your sun shall set no more, and~~

~~your moon no more withdraw; for the Lord shall be a light~~

~~to you forever, and your days of mourning shall be~~

~~ended."~~ Thank you and God bless you.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
5-20-99

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Littleton, Colorado)

For Immediate Release

May 20, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
TO THE COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Dakota Ridge High School
Littleton, Colorado

4:37 P.M. MDT

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you, Heather. Thank you, Dr. Hammond. Thank you, Mr. DeAngelis. And most of all, thank you, the students of Columbine.

You know, when we walked in, I saw the cheer that was going from one side to the other side, and the chant, "We are Columbine!" that went back and forth, and the enthusiasm and the energy that was behind that cheer. But to me, it was more than that. It was a real statement about who you are and, indeed, who we all are. Because in a very real way, what happened here at Columbine has so deeply affected the rest of our country, that we are all Columbine.

We have suffered and wept and prayed and hoped, and yes, cheered, as lives have been mourned, as those who are injured have healed, as parents and citizens have come together to ask, "where do we go from here?" -- and as all of you who are the students of Columbine have shown us over this last month, your courage and your grace, your kindness and your love.

We have just spent time with the families of those who lost someone they loved. It's not the first time that my husband and I have done that. We've listened to and looked into the eyes and held the hands and felt the hugs of men and women and children who have suffered the evil and the tragedy that intervenes unexpectedly -- a bombing of an embassy, a shooting down of a plane or an accident that lost lives. And we've always been moved by and felt deeply the pain that others were suffering.

And no tragedy is ever like any other tragedy, because

every person is unique, and everyone who is lost was a gift of God that should have been cherished and who has to be remembered. But what happened here at Columbine a month ago has had an impact unlike any that I have ever seen or felt. It has pierced the heart of America. And what we are all looking for and what I always hope we can find from a tragedy like this, is how we move forward together, to do what we can to help prevent this ever happening again.

Now, of course, even today, yet another school was terrorized by a shooting. Thankfully, no one was killed -- but it should never have happened.

So as we meet here, as we imagine, as hard as it must be, what this past month must have been for you -- the losses, the questions, the glare of the world's spotlight -- I think we all know that there are no words that are adequate to your experience. But I hope you know that the way you've conducted yourselves, and your story and the stories of those killed and injured have been an inspiration and a motivation for many people whom you'll never meet.

We're inspired by the strength of the students and the teachers; by your determination to return to school to finish out your year with your friends and your classmates. We're inspired by your refusal to let violence and hatred win.

We're inspired by the courage of the families, who have faced a moment that every parent prays will never happen. We're inspired by the words we heard today, as well as what we've heard in the past month as to how so many of you are looking for opportunities to reach out to make sure that here in this community and as far as the ripples can go, the messages that you feel you want to communicate to each other will be heard.

We heard those messages today, listening to parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, a wife, children. And the message had many different sounds to it, coming from different voices. But what struck me was how clearly those who have been most wounded want to turn this into something positive for others. That is what we have seen from the Columbine community.

And it has inspired reactions literally around the world. One family told us of receiving a letter from France, written completely in French -- they couldn't read it, but they knew what it said. I know of the young boys and girls around the country who have been writing letters and drawing pictures to share their feelings. And I know here, in Jefferson County, the services that have been offered, and the way people have been trying to knit together more help.

Many of you will be graduating -- and I congratulate

MORE

you. It wasn't so long ago that our daughter graduated, and I remember the conversations around our kitchen table and listening to her friends as they were planning their summer plans, or thinking about college, or going to work. And I know you're thinking about all of that as well.

But perhaps more than others, you may also be thinking about what kind of community, and country, you want to raise your own children in someday -- and how we will take what happened in Columbine, and not only never forget it, but use it to make more opportunities for others to live the kind of lives we would have wished for those who were lost.

Imagine what our country could accomplish if everyone acted as your principal described you, as a family -- members of the human family, as well as the Columbine family; the American family -- members of a community and a nation that was really committed to making sure that we helped each other, we cared about each other, we reached out to one another.

Imagine, as we heard from your principal, what it would mean if more parents, in this community and around our country, thought about what more they could do to spend time with their own children, to listen to your concerns, your dreams, your fears, your aspirations.

And imagine what could happen if more young people talked more openly with one another, as well as with their parents and other adults, looking for ways to heal the wounds that all of us carry just from life's everyday experiences. And imagine if every adult in America began looking at his or her personal life, professional life and public life with the view toward making sure that whatever we do is good for children.

There is no more fitting monument or tribute to those who died than to promise ourselves that we will do everything we can to prevent it from happening anywhere else -- but more than just preventing something bad from happening, that we will commit ourselves to try to make positive differences in the lives of those around us.

We cannot roll back the clock and undo the tragic events of a month ago. But we can fight the bitterness and hopelessness that weaken our resolve to remain part of one community. We can reach out, where children are taught to care and not to hate. We can offer a kind word to people. We can try to bridge the differences that too often come between us. And we can look for ways at all levels of society to make the changes we

MORE

know we have to make.

I hope that we'll be able to reach a better understanding of what we need to do to care for our young people. And I hope that if we all feel that we are Columbine, as the cheer goes, we won't give up until we do make it better for everyone.

I want to introduce now someone I know is resolved to do what he can, who has spoken out consistently on behalf of the needs of young people and families, who has tried to speak out against hatred and talk about how we need to reach out and help each other. And as I do, I want to just leave you with the words of a poet who means a lot to my husband and me -- the Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney.

In one of our favorite poems, coming out of the terrible Troubles that he's written about and experienced in Northern Ireland, where bombs and guns have been too much the experience of children, he writes: "So hope for a greater sea change on the far side of revenge. Believe that a further shore is reachable from here. Believe in miracle and cures and healing well."

I believe in miracles and cures and healing well. I believe that each of us has the responsibility to do what we can to reach that farther shore. And I introduce now someone who believes that with all of his heart -- the President of the United States. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Do that cheer for me one more time.

STUDENTS: We are Columbine! We are Columbine! We are Columbine! We are Columbine! (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Doctor Hammond; Mr. DeAngelis; President DeStefano and the state legislators, county commissioners; Attorney General Salazar; especially Governor Owens, thank you for being here. To all the officials who are here; most especially to the students of Columbine and the students who are here from Chatfield and Dakota Ridge. And Heather Dinkel, thank you for standing up here in front of this big crowd and making a fine talk. Weren't you proud of her? She did a good job representing you today. (Cheers and applause.)

MORE

I want to say a special word of thanks to the families who met with Hillary and me before we came over here for telling us the stories and showing us the booklets commemorating the lives of their very special children. I also want to thank the fine young people who still are hospitalized with whom I spoke by telephone yesterday -- two of them, Patrick Ireland and Sean Graves, are here today. They left the hospital to be here. (Applause.)

I know there are some other people here who are also still injured who have come. I thank all of you for coming. This has been a long, hard month for all of you, and as Hillary said, it's been a hard month for America.

You heard her say that part of our job in these last six years, more than we ever could have imagined when we moved to Washington after the election in 1992, has been to be with grieving people -- after the Oklahoma City building was blown up, and the embassies were blown up, and our airmen were killed in the bombing in Saudi Arabia, and so many other occasions; several times after violence in schools. But something profound has happened to your country because of this. I want you all to understand that. I'm not even sure I can explain it to you.

One of the incidents of school killing last year occurred in my home state. It's a small state. I was governor there 12 years. I knew the people involved; it was heartbreaking. One of the mothers of one of the children who was killed still works with us for safer schools and safer childhoods. And all America grieved. But I think they thought, oh, this is terrible, I wish somebody would do something about this.

But somehow, when this happened here -- maybe because of the scope of it, and I think mostly because of you -- how you reacted, all of you, the relief workers, the law enforcement people, the family members who were brave enough to speak -- there was a different reaction. People thought, this has happened in my neighborhood; what can I do?

I say that because you have a unique chance -- a chance -- to make sure that the children of Columbine are never forgotten. (Applause.)

But, first, you have to deal with you and your lives. You're all left with searing memories and scars and unanswered questions. There has to be healing, there have to be answers. And for those things that will not heal or cannot be answered,

MORE

you have to learn to go on with your lives.

I hope you have been comforted by the caring not only of your neighbors, but of your country and people from all around the world. All America has looked and listened with shared grief and enormous affection and admiration for you. We have been learning along with you, a lot about ourselves and our responsibilities as parents and citizens.

When America looks at Jefferson County, many of us see a community not very different from our own. We know if this can happen here, it can happen anywhere. And we see with admiration the fundamentally strong values and character of the people here, from the students to the school officials, to the community leaders, to the parents.

I think most Americans have looked at you and thought that, among other things, that, God forbid, if something like this should ever happen to us, I hope we would behave as well. I hope we would also hold on to our faith as well.

I am impressed that you are moving forward. Most of the children have returned to school, even returned to sports and other activities. I am proud of all of you who are, in your own way, going back to living your lives, looking toward the future, to commencement or college, or a summer job, or just getting back to the ordinary business of life, which takes an extraordinary effort now. But I have to say, I think what's impressed me most is the way, in the midst of this, you have held on to your faith.

One of the greatest moments of grief in my life occurred 15 years ago, when Hillary and I had to go to the memorial service for a young man who was a senior at Yale University -- a Rhodes Scholar, on the football team, the editor of the newspaper, the leader of his class academically. This young man happened to come from an African American family in our hometown, and a poor family at that. His father was a minister in a very small church. And we had the service in the high school auditorium.

His father was lame and he walked with a pronounced limp. And he gave his son's eulogy, walking down in front of us with his limp, saying, his mother and I do not understand this. But we believe in a God too kind ever to be cruel, too wise ever to do wrong, so we know we will come to understand it by and by.

In the Scriptures, St. Paul says that all of us in this life see through a glass darkly. So we must walk by faith, not

MORE

by sight. We cannot lean on our own wisdom. None of this can be fully, satisfactorily explained to any of you. But you cannot lose your faith.

The only other thing I really want to say to you is that throughout all your grief and mourning, and even in your cheers and your renewal and your determination to get on with your life and get this school back together and show people what you are, there is something else you can do, and something I believe that you should do -- for yourselves and your friends, to make sure they will be remembered. Every special one of them.

Your tragedy, though it is unique in its magnitude, is, as you know so well, not an isolated event. Hillary mentioned there was another school shooting in Atlanta today. Thankfully, the injuries to the students don't seem to be life-threatening. But there were several last year which did claim lives.

We know somehow that what happened to you has pierced the soul of America. And it gives you a chance to be heard in a way no one else can be heard -- by the President and by ordinary people in every community in this country. You can help us to build a better future for all our children, a future where hatred and distrust no longer distort the mind or harden the heart. A future where what we have in common is far more important than what divides us. A future where parents and children are more fully involved in each other's lives; in which they share hopes and dreams, love and respect, a strong sense of right and wrong. A future where students respect each other even if they all belong to different groups, or come from different faiths, or races, or backgrounds. A future where schools and houses of worship, and communities, are literally connected to all our children. A future where society guards our children better against violent influences and weapons that can break the dam of decency and humanity in the most vulnerable of children.

One thing I would like to share with you that I personally believe very much: these dark forces that take over people and make them murder are the extreme manifestation of fear and rage with which every human being has to do combat. The older you get, the more you'll know that a great deal of life is the struggle against every person's own smallness and fear and anger -- and a continuing effort not to blame other people for our own shortcomings or our fears.

We cannot do what we need to do in America unless every person is committed to doing something better and different in every walk of life, beginning with parents and students and going

MORE

all the way to the White House. For the struggle to be human is something that must be a daily source of joy to you, so you can get rid of your fears and let go of your rage, and minimize the chance that something like this will happen again.

Because of what you have endured, you can help us build that kind of future, as virtually no one else can. You can reach across all the political and religious and racial and cultural lines that divide us. You have already touched our hearts. You have provoked Hillary and me and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore to reach out across America to launch a national grass-roots campaign against violence directed against young people. You can be a part of that.

You can give us a culture of values instead of a culture of violence. You can help us to keep guns out of the wrong hands. You can help us to make sure kids who are in trouble -- and there will always be some -- are identified early and reached and helped. You can help us do this.

Two days from now, you're going to have your commencement. It will be bittersweet. It will certainly be different for those of you who are graduating than you thought it was going to be when you were freshmen. But, as I understand it, there will be some compensations. Even your arch-rivals at Chatfield will be cheering you on. When you hear those people cheer for you, I want you to hear the voice of America, because America will be cheering you on. And remember that a commencement is not an end; it is a beginning.

You've got to help us here. Take care of yourselves and your families first. Take care of the school next. But remember, you can help America heal, and in so doing you will speed the process of healing for yourselves.

This is a very great country. It is embodied in this very great community, in this very great school, with these wonderful teachers and children and parents. But the problem which came to the awful conclusion you faced here is a demon we have to do more to fight. And what I want to tell you is, we can -- together.

I close here with this story. My wife and I and our daughter have been blessed to know many magnificent people because the American people gave us a chance to serve in the White House. But I think the person who's had the biggest influence on me is the man who is about to retire as the President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

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He is 80 years old, he served 27 years in prison. For 14 years, he never had a bed to sleep on. He spent most of his years breaking rocks every day. And he told me once about his experience. And I asked him: How did you let go of your hatred? How did you learn to influence other people? How did you embrace all the differences in, literally, the centuries of oppression and discord in your country and let a lot of it go away? How did you get over that in prison? Didn't you really hate them?

And he said: I did hate them for quite a long while. After all, look what they took from me -- 27 years of my life. I was abused physically and emotionally. They separated me from my wife and it eventually destroyed my marriage. They took me away from my children and I could not even see them grow up. And I was full of hatred and anger.

And he said: One day I was breaking rocks and I realized they had taken so much. And they could take everything from me except my mind and my heart. Those things I would have to give away. I decided not to give them away.

I see here today that you have decided not to give your mind and your heart away. I ask you now to share it with all your fellow Americans.

We love you, and we need you.

Thank you, and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

5:08 P.M. MDT

INSERT ON SCHOOL SHOOTING

I have just met with my foreign policy team. But before I speak about the situation in Kosovo, I want to say a few words about school violence. As you know, in a few moments I am leaving for Littleton, Colorado to meet with the students and families of Columbine High School. The news this morning of a school shooting, this one in Rockdale County, in suburban Atlanta, is deeply troubling to me and to all Americans. We thank God that the injuries to the students do not appear to be life-threatening. This incident should underscore how important it is that all Americans come together in the face of these events to protect our young people from violence.

From: Julia M. Payne on 05/20/99 12:08:02 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Remarks by the President upon departure for Littleton, CO

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 20, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
UPON DEPARTURE FOR LITTLETON, COLORADO

The Rose Garden

10:45 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I have just met with my foreign policy team, but before I speak on the situation in Kosovo, I want to say a few words about school violence. As all of you know, in a few moments I am leaving for Littleton, Colorado where Hillary and I will meet with students and families from Columbine High School.

The news this morning of another school shooting, this one in Rockdale County in suburban Atlanta, is deeply troubling to me, as it is to all Americans.

We thank God that the injuries to the students do not seem to be life threatening. This incident, again, should underscore how profoundly important it is that all Americans come together in the face of these events to protect all of our children from violence.

There is debate going on in the Senate today relevant to that, and we must press ahead aggressively with the national campaign that we met about here a week ago Monday. We have got to do this.

The national security team has just briefed me on what has been accomplished to date in Kosovo by the air campaign, on the progress of our diplomacy with our allies in Russia, on the

humanitarian situation on the ground. I want to speak about some of the recent developments, but first I want to say a word about one person who has been critical to our efforts in Kosovo, and indeed, to our entire national security program. I am pleased to announce that I have nominated General Hugh Shelton to a second term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Over the last two years he has provided extraordinary leadership, unwavering dedication to our men and women in uniform, unstinting efforts on behalf of military readiness and modernization. Our nation is fortunate that this critical post will continue to be filled by someone of his experience, ability and character.

Now he also has, as all of you have noticed, great stature. We were joking in there a few moments ago, in a situation that is not really funny, that we had a vote about whether I should renominate General Shelton; and Secretary Cohen, Secretary Albright, Mr. Berger and I voted for it and he voted against it. But we overruled him and he's going to serve another term.

Let me say that our effort in Kosovo was strengthened by the vote in the House of Representatives to approve the supplemental funding we requested last month. It is absolutely imperative that the Senate follow suit without delay. The measure will allow us to keep bringing aid to the refugees until they go home, to help the neighboring countries feeling the brunt of the crisis. Most important, it will give our military what it needs to see its mission through while maintaining the readiness of our forces around the world.

As all of you know, there are some things in the bill that I did not support, but it is terribly important that this aid be released as soon as possible to those other countries and to the refugees, and that we get the support for the military. I will sign the bill as soon as it gets here, and it is important that it be passed without delay.

Now, let me again say what we are doing. The refugees must go home with security and self government. The Serbian forces must leave Kosovo. An international security force with NATO at its core must deploy to protect people of every ethnicity and faith in Kosovo. On this, our country is speaking with a single voice, as we see by the strong bipartisan support for the measure.

From the beginning we have said that we believe that a peaceful resolution that meets these conditions would serve our interests, and we will continue to pursue one with our allies and with Russia. We will also continue our military campaign until the conditions are met. I believe the campaign is working. Each day we hear reports of desertions in the Serbian Army, dissension in Belgrade, unrest in Serbian communities. President Milosevic

should know that he cannot change the fundamental terms that we have outlined, because they are simply what is required for the Kosovars to go home and live in peace.

The question is not whether ethnic cleansing will be reversed, but how much of the military will be destroyed because of his intransigence along the way? How much damage will be done to Serbia because of his delays? NATO is united in our determination to persist as long as it takes to achieve these goals.

Let me just make one other point about Kosovo. In the last few days we have seen more disturbing evidence of the atrocities committed against innocent Kosovars, including some of the first photographic proof of massacres of unarmed people. In trying to divert attention from these crimes Serbian forces are only committing more by placing civilians around military targets. It's like pushing someone in front of an on-coming train, and then trying to blame the train for running them over. We will not allow this cruel tactic to deceive or divert us from our goal. We need to stay focused and patient in pursuit of our simple objective, to defend the right of a people to exist on their land without being subject to mass expulsion and mass murder.

With continued support from Congress and the American people that is exactly what we intend to do. Thank you very much.

-END-

10:55 A.M. EDT

Message Sent To: _____

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Final 05/20/99 1:45pm

Jeff Shesol

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS TO STUDENTS OF
COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL
DAKOTA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

May 20, 1999

Acknowledgments: the First Lady; Jon DeStefano, Jefferson County School Board Pres., Dr. Jane Hammond, Superintendent; Frank DeAngelis, Principal of Columbine H.S.; Heather Dinkle, Student Body Pres., Columbine H.S.; student council reps. from Chatfield H.S. & Dakota Ridge H.S.; emergency workers; all the students & faculty of Columbine; the families of those killed and injured.

I want to thank everyone here for inviting Hillary and me to join you here in Jefferson County, to talk and to listen and to spend time with you. I particularly want to thank the families we met with earlier today at the Light of the World Catholic Church.

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You have suffered losses of the most terrible kind. You've lost friends, and family, and a certain kind of innocence that no young person should have to part with so soon or so suddenly. And what you're left with is a lot of unanswered questions. There may be some truth to some of the easy answers, but ultimately, we don't really understand much beyond how badly we feel.

Lately I've been thinking of an old hymn I used to hear in Arkansas. It goes: "Further along we know all about it. Further along we'll understand why. Rise up, my brothers, and walk in the sunshine. Further along we'll understand why."

You've heard a lot of condolences in the past month, and there's little I can add to the many thoughts and prayers that, I hope, have reached you from around the world. But I have come to Colorado because I want you to know how much America cares about you, and how very much we have learned from all of you. This kind of incident is like a flash of lightning: it can blind us, but it can also illuminate.

When we look at Jefferson County, many of us see a community that looks like our own; and we know that if acts of evil can happen here, they can happen elsewhere. But we also see a community that is fundamentally sound and strong. I think most Americans would hope that if they had to face the terrible trials you have faced, they would respond with the same compassion and courage.

Like the hymn says: you are rising up, walking in the sunshine, moving forward. You've returned to school. You've returned to sports, like the remarkable Girls' Soccer team I've heard so much about. Even though you didn't win the championship, the important thing is that you were out there playing.

All of you, in your own ways, are looking toward the future, whether it's commencement and college or, right now, just a summer job. These may sound like ordinary things, the stuff of life, and that's what they are; but under the circumstances, they take an effort that is truly extraordinary. Even though the worst has happened, you have reached within yourselves and summoned what is best. I am proud of you -- and you should be proud of what you've done.

I think what has impressed me the most these past weeks is the way you have held fast to your faith. It is a remarkable thing.

Just watching these events on television, or reading about them in the papers, a lot of people have been shaken to their foundations. And still -- despite all you've endured -- you still believe in the goodness and grace of a loving God. The rest of us can see how your faith anchors you. It strengthens and sustains you. It is a powerful thing, and a powerful thing to behold.

I know many of you are still hurting. You are in mourning, and that's going to hurt for a long time. But while we mourn, we can also learn. We can learn and -- more important -- we can act.

There is no better way to transcend this tragedy, or to honor the lives you have lost, than to use what you have learned to create a better future. A future where hatred and distrust no longer distort the mind or corrupt the soul. A future where what we have in common is more important than what drives us apart. A future worthy of our full potential as individuals, as communities, and as a nation. If you build that future, it would be the most powerful monument you could make to the lives you've lost.

Across America, we've already started building that better future. You've had a lot to do with that. I'm not sure if you know how true that is.

You're at the epicenter of an enormous shockwave, and it's changing a lot of the American landscape -- the way we think about our schools, our families, ourselves.

You've touched our hearts and stirred us to action.

We've even set up a national campaign to make sure we seize this moment and make it a time of real and lasting change. I know that after meeting all of you, I'll return to Washington even more convinced that there is more we must do to replace the culture of violence with a culture of values; more we must do to keep guns out of the wrong hands; and more we must do to ensure that every vulnerable child is identified early, and gets the help they need.

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come from hospital

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Revised Draft 05/19/99 4:00pm

Jeff Shesol

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

REMARKS TO STUDENTS OF

COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL

DAKOTA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

May 20, 1999

Acknowledgments: the First Lady; ~~Gov. Bill Owens;~~
~~Rep. Diana DeGette [de-GET]; Rep. Scott McInnis TBD;~~
Jon DeStefano, Jefferson County School Board Pres., Dr.
Jane Hammond, Superintendent; Frank DeAngelis,
Principal of Columbine H.S.; Heather Dinkle, Student
Body Pres., Columbine H.S.; student council reps. from
Chatfield H.S. & Dakota Ridge H.S.; emergency workers;
all the students & faculty of Columbine; the families of
those killed and injured.

I want to thank everyone here for inviting Hillary and
me to join you here in Jefferson County, to talk and to
listen and to spend time with you. I particularly want to
thank the families we met with earlier today at the Light
of the World Catholic Church.

~~This has been a long, difficult month for them, for all~~

~~of you and for all America.~~ You have suffered losses of

the most terrible kind. You've lost friends, and family,

and a certain kind of innocence that no young person

should have to part with so soon or so suddenly. And

what you're left with is a lot of unanswered questions.

There may be some truth to some of the easy answers, but

ultimately, we don't really understand much beyond how

badly we feel. Lately I've been thinking of an old hymn I

used to hear in Arkansas. It goes: "Further along we

know all about it. Further along we'll understand why.

Rise up, my brothers, and walk in the sunshine. Further

along we'll understand why."

You've heard a lot of condolences in the past month, and there's little I can add to the many thoughts and prayers that, I hope, have reached you from around the world. But I have come to Colorado because I want you to know how much America cares about you, and how very much we have learned from all of you. This kind of incident is like a flash of lightning: it can blind us, but it can also illuminate. When we look at Jefferson County, many of us see a community that looks like our own; and we know that if acts of evil can happen here, they can happen elsewhere. But we also see a community that is fundamentally sound and strong. I think most Americans would hope that if they had to face the terrible trials you have faced, they would respond with the same compassion and courage.

Like the hymn says: you are rising up, walking in the sunshine, moving forward. You've returned to school. You've returned to sports, like the remarkable Girls' Soccer team I've heard so much about. Even though you didn't win the championship, the important thing is that you were out there playing. All of you, in your own ways, are looking toward the future, whether it's commencement and college or, right now, just a summer job. These may sound like ordinary things, the stuff of life, and that's what they are; but under the circumstances, they take an effort that is truly extraordinary. Even though the worst has happened, you have reached within yourselves and summoned what is best. I am proud of you -- and you should be proud of what you've done.

I think what has impressed me the most these past weeks is the way you have held fast to your faith. It is a remarkable thing. Just watching these events on television, or reading about them in the papers, a lot of people have been shaken to their foundations. And still -- despite all you've endured -- you still believe in the goodness and grace of a loving God. The rest of us can see how your faith anchors you. It strengthens and sustains you. It is a powerful thing, and a powerful thing to behold.

I know many of you are still hurting. You are in mourning, and that's going to hurt for a long time. But while we mourn, we can also learn.

We can learn and -- more important -- we can act. There is no better way to transcend this tragedy, or to honor the lives you have lost, than to use what you have learned to create a better future. A future where hatred and distrust no longer distort the mind or corrupt the soul. A future where what we have in common is more important than what drives us apart. A future worthy of our full potential as individuals, as communities, and as a nation. If you build that future, it would be the most powerful monument you could make to the lives you've lost.

Across America, we've already started building that better future. You've had a lot to do with that. I'm not sure if you know how true that is.

You're at the epicenter of an enormous shockwave, and it's changing a lot of the American landscape -- the way we think about our schools, our families, ourselves.

You've touched our hearts and stirred us to action. We've even set up a national campaign to make sure we seize this moment and make it a time of real and lasting change.

I know that after meeting all of you, I'll return to

Washington even more convinced that there is more we must do to replace the culture of violence with a culture of values; more we must do to keep guns out of the wrong hands; and more we must do to ensure that every vulnerable child is identified early, and gets the help they need.

Two days from now is Columbine's commencement. I know it will be bittersweet -- not everything you hoped it would be when you first walked through those doors as freshmen. For one thing, you couldn't have imagined that your rivals at Chatfield would be cheering you on. Even for those of you who have another year or two -- or three - - to go, I urge you to think of graduation day as another important step you take together, walking in that sunshine, moving forward through life's journey. In the Book of Isaiah, it says: "Your sun shall set no more, and your moon no more withdraw; for the Lord shall be a light to you forever, and your days of mourning shall be ended." Thank you and God bless you.

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It was an incredible run you had, and even though you didn't take with full championship, the important thing is that you're out there playing.

and you're champions in my book.

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Across America, we've already started building that better future. You've had a lot to do with that. I'm not sure if you know how true that is. You're at the epicenter of an enormous shockwave, and it's changing a lot of the American landscape -- the way we think about our schools, our families, ourselves. You've touched our hearts, ~~shaken us from slumber~~ and stirred us to action. We've even set up a national campaign to make sure we seize this moment and make it a time of real and lasting change. I know that after visiting you, I'm going to return to Washington ~~fired by~~^{with} the conviction that there is more we must do to change the culture of violence; more we must do to keep guns out of the wrong hands; and more we must do to ensure that every vulnerable child is identified early, and gets the help they need.

In two days, I understand, is Columbine's commencement. I know it will be a bittersweet occasion -- not everything you hoped it would be when you first walked through those doors as freshmen. For one thing, you couldn't have imagined that your rivals at Chatfield would be cheering you on. Even for those of you who have another year or two -- or three -- to go, I urge you to think of graduation day as another important step you take together, walking in that sunshine, moving forward through life's journey. In the Book of Isaiah, it says: "Your sun shall set no more, and your moon no more withdraw; for the Lord shall be a light to you forever, and your days of mourning shall be ended."

Thank you and God bless you.

*reference kid on hill
talking about*

Draft 05/18/99 6:15pm

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I think what has impressed us the most is that you have never, ever lost faith. I am moved by the power of your faith and by the profound lesson you have taught every one of us: that even when the worst happens, we can reach within and summon what is best. That is what the students of Columbine have shown the world, and I am so very proud of you.

Your inner strength is something all Americans can draw upon, and something we can all see, in the signs of hope and health and healing all around you in this community. That doesn't happen on its own, one month after a tragedy like this. It happens because you make it happen.

You've returned to school; returned to sports, like the remarkable Girls' Soccer team I'm hearing so much about; and you're looking ahead, toward commencement and even beyond. These are ordinary things, the stuff of life; but when they require the sort of courage and compassion that you have shown every day, then they are truly extraordinary.

*Went there
B.C.G.
Dunkin'?*

It is not too soon, I think, for us all to draw some lessons from your experience, or to be enriched by your example. ~~By coming together as you have in recent weeks, you have shown us that no divisions are so wide that they cannot be bridged. By reaching out, you have shown how much we have in common with people we might have thought were so different. And by reaffirming your faith, by elevating a culture of values above the culture of violence, you have shown above all that the best way to transcend tragedy, the best way to honor the lives we have lost, is to move ahead and build a better future.~~

~~That is what we have seen here in Colorado. The blue-and-silver ribbons I have seen everywhere are a telling symbol that everyone is pitching in, providing for the wounded, creating scholarships, investing in your future.~~

And that is what we have seen across America, where the lessons of Columbine are being heard and heeded: in Hernando County, Florida, where a seventh-grader has started a group called Students Against Violence Everywhere. . . In Leonia, New Jersey, where the community has come together to create a new, more nurturing environment for its children. . . In Westfield, Indiana, where students are signing pledges, committing themselves to non-violence. Across our country, the message of the American people have heard your voices, and our response is clear: we say, Columbine, you have touched our hearts, you have shaken us from slumber, you have stirred us to action.

Many of you are familiar with the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; Where there is despair, hope; where there is sadness, joy; where there is darkness, light." There has been too much darkness in Jefferson County, and in too many other communities. But today, there are signs of light; so I ask all of you to keep illuminating our way along this difficult road, and to keep standing for peace, and love, and hope, and joy. That is the best thing you can do for your school, for your community, and for your country.

Thank you and God bless you.

*4/14
Don't
think
it's
dark.*