

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Remarks to First Responders and Volunteers in Boston, Massachusetts
April 18, 2013

Thank you, everybody. Well, listen, we just had a wonderful interfaith service, and I want to thank Governor Patrick for helping to organize that. I want to thank both the Governor and your extraordinary mayor, Tom Menino, for the incredible leadership and cool under pressure, the organization, the mobilization, and the courage that they have shown, reflective of this great city and reflective of this great Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Now, I'm not going to speak long. I just—he started calling me Reverend Obama, so I know—[laughter]—I know I was—I don't want to go on any longer than I need to. The main message, in addition to just giving—having a chance to shake some hands and give some hugs, is just to say how proud the whole country is of you, how grateful we are that in the face of chaos and to tragedy, all of you displayed the very best of the American spirit.

You displayed grit. You displayed compassion. You displayed civic duty. You displayed courage. And when we see that kind of spirit, there's something about that that's infectious. It makes us all want to be better people. You've inspired the entire country. You've inspired the world. And for that, you should be profoundly proud.

But as Deval and I were talking as we were driving in from the airport, the key is that we hang on to a little bit of that, because it's right there under the surface every day. And it expresses itself obviously in the Marathon. It expresses itself in Patriot's Day. It expresses itself in all the small interactions, the gestures of kindness and generosity and tolerance and compassion that make up the fabric of our lives. And we don't always pay attention to it, and we don't always celebrate it, and it's certainly not usually on a television screen; it's not always reported on. But that's who we are.

And if there's anything that was a theme in that interfaith service, it's that out of these ashes, to out of the blood that's spilled and the injuries borne, out of that, we get a chance to see and highlight and appreciate that spirit. And we've got to sustain it, because in all of our lives at some point, there are going to be some troubles, and there's evil in the world, and there's hardship. But if that spirit is evident and manifest, and that's what we're teaching our kids and that's what we're embodying in our own lives, then who can stop us? Who can touch us?

So thank you, everybody. I'm proud of you. I'm proud of Boston. And I just said, I'm looking forward to the 118th Boston Marathon. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at Cathedral High School.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : First responders and volunteers in Boston, MA.

Locations: Boston, MA.

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