

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Gubernatorial Candidate R. Creigh Deeds in McLean, Virginia

August 6, 2009

Hello, Virginia. It is good to be in Virginia. It's not that far away, but—[laughter]—it's still just good to be here. I still get a good vibe from Virginia. And I just want to begin by telling you, one of the reasons I love Virginia is because early in my campaign, January of 2007—[laughter]—I'm trying to remember it; it's all a blur—[laughter]—right after I announced, I called up the new Governor of Virginia, and obviously, he was new, not very experienced—[laughter]—because he decided he was going to endorse my candidacy at a time when nobody could pronounce my name. [Laughter] And he has been at my side ever since, and he's been on the side of the people of Virginia every since. Give it up for Tim Kaine.

Now, there's a pattern that's emerged in Virginia. You had a guy named Mark Warner who recognized that the old tired politics of division and slash-and-burn weren't serving the American people and the people of Virginia anymore. So he came in with a different message. He said, "I'm going to figure out what works. I'm going to figure out how we can get parties to work together, to invest in education and make sure that every child in Virginia can get a great education. I'm going to figure out how we can start making the long-term investments that will make Virginia competitive in a global economy." And working together with a whole bunch of folks, he was able to put Virginia on the path of extraordinary growth.

Then, Tim Kaine comes in and builds on that legacy, and even in tough times has continued to keep Virginia on an upward trajectory where it has been able to survive tough times better than most because of the long-term investments, the vision that Tim Kaine has maintained as Governor of Virginia. He hasn't been distracted by the petty politics and the trivial politics and the game-playing. He constantly asks himself each and every day, what do I need to do to make life a little bit better for the people of Virginia?

So now this great Commonwealth of Virginia has the opportunity to continue that tradition with somebody who has that same spirit of pragmatism, of cooperation, of listening to people even when other people don't agree with him, of civility, an ability to focus not on the short-term politics of an issue but the long term that will make a difference, and that is Creigh Deeds. And I know that the people of Virginia are going to continue that tradition.

Now, I'll admit I'm a little biased—[laughter]—because I was a State senator for 8 years, and lo and behold, Creigh Deeds has been a Senator for 8 years. He has some wonderful daughters; I've got wonderful daughters. He's got kind of a funny name—[laughter]—I've got kind of a funny name. [Laughter] So there's some things that just create a bond between the two of us. [Laughter]

But the reason I'm standing here is because when I look at his record as a prosecutor, when I look at the way that he was able to marshal support for things like Megan's Law and AMBER Alerts that have practical consequences in making sure that our children are safe, when I think about the way he was able to partner with Mark Warner and Tim Kaine in order to create strong investments in education even when they were confronting a fiscal crisis, doing it in a responsible way that didn't undermine the long-term growth of Virginia, when I look at the way he conducts himself in his campaign, speaking truth to power, but always doing it in a way that reminds us that we have to bring people together instead of driving them apart, I know he is the right person for Virginia. And you know it too; that's why you're supporting him.

But look, let's be honest. This is going to be a tough race. This is not going to be easy. Now, Tim and I, as we were walking in, we said, we don't like doing easy—we never—we don't do things easy. [Laughter] We like kind of squeaking it out to create more excitement, enthusiasm, and give reporters something

better to write about. [*Laughter*] We don't believe in blowout victories. [*Laughter*]

But this is going to be a tough race. It's going to be a tough race because Virginia, although it has been moving in the right direction, is still a purple State. It still has traditions that make a lot of people independent, a lot of people suspicious of ideologies on other side—either side. That's part of what's going to make this tough. And it's also going to be tough because the economic environment is tough. I don't think any of us can deny it. Virginia has weathered this economic storm better than most States, but unemployment is still high, people are still losing their homes, folks are still looking at their 401(k) and wondering whether it's going to bounce back.

And so in that kind of environment, wherever the incumbent party is, it's always going to have some challenges. Even if people, when they really stop to think about it, recognize that this is mostly a mess that was inherited, people are still going to, rightly, hold the party in power responsible. What's your plan? What's your agenda? How are you going to move this State forward? And that's right and proper, because we can't spend all our time looking backwards or making excuses. Our job is to look forward and to determine how are we going to—regardless of what cards we're dealt—how are we going to make sure that families here in Virginia and all across America are able to succeed.

Now, I think that we have the best case to make that having brought this economy back from the brink, having inherited an unprecedented crisis, still we are now on the path where markets have stabilized, the banks are no longer in meltdown mode; we're starting to see housing for the first time increase in prices in 3 years; that we're starting to see a kind of resurgence of optimism that in this environment, if we are willing to make the investments in the new foundation for long-term growth, then we're going to succeed.

And the kinds of things that we need for that new foundation are exactly the kinds of things that Creigh is talking about: making sure that

we continue to invest in early childhood education and everything that's necessary for our children to succeed in math and science; making sure that they can finance their college educations, because we know that whoever trains their children best today, that's going to be the country that's able to compete tomorrow; making sure that we are tapping into a new clean energy economy that is focused on harnessing the innovation and the dynamism of the American people, and making sure that we're creating a business environment in which small businesses and large businesses are rewarded for success; making sure that we've got a transportation infrastructure that works for people to get to and fro from work, but also allows businesses to succeed.

Those are the kinds of measures and steps that Creigh has stood for since he first entered into politics. That's what's going to help guide this economy into the future, into the 21st century. So the key right now for all of us is making sure that we fight through the doubts, we fight through the cynicism, we hit the ground. I want to make sure that everybody who was as activated around my campaign just a few months ago is not sitting back and suddenly saying their work is done. I need everybody who was in Virginia and helped give us a big win during the primary and helped give us a historic win in the general election—that everybody is working just as hard, knocking on doors, making phone calls, talking to their friends, talking to their neighbors.

We have just started to change this country, and we need a partner like Creigh Deeds to finish the work that we just began.

Thank you very much, Virginia. Love you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:25 p.m. at the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Mark R. Warner; and Amanda, Rebecca, and Susannah Deeds, daughters of Virginia State Sen. R. Creigh Deeds. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 7.

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The President. Hello, Virginia. Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? It is good to be in Virginia, a place that has been good to me. First of all, it's just good to be next to a guy who spends every single day thinking about your future, thinking about your children's future, and the future of this Commonwealth, one of my best friends, somebody who is dedicated to the kind of public service that I so deeply believe in, please give it up for your Governor, Tim Kaine.

I think some of you know that Tim was the first statewide official outside of Illinois to endorse me, in Richmond, Virginia. I called him up just a few weeks after I'd announced, and he was kind of new so he didn't know any better. *[Laughter]* So he said, "Yeah, sure, I'll endorse you." *[Laughter]* I think his wife Anne had something to do with it also. And he has stood with me ever since, on every tough battle that we've had. And so I am just grateful for him. He was there when people couldn't even pronounce my name. *[Laughter]* So we're grateful.

Now, part of the reason that I like being in Virginia is because there is a tradition here that has been developing, starting with your former Governor and now outstanding Senator, Mark Warner. A tradition that—it starts off with the basic idea that we're all in this together. Mark Warner came in at a time when the fashionable politics was the nasty kind of politics, the slash-and-burn politics, the arguing and arguing without everything—ever getting anything done kind of politics. And Mark Warner said, "You know what, we can try something different. What we're going to do is we're going to be pragmatic instead of ideological. We are going to try to bring people together rather than push them apart. We are going to make sure that we listen to other people's ideas. We're going to bring labor and business together. We're going to make sure that we don't have a southern Virginia and a northern Virginia. We've got one Commonwealth of Virginia."

And so what he was able to do was to shape a kind of politics here in the Commonwealth that has resulted in one of the best-managed States in the country, a State that was able to make investments in education even as it was dealing with a fiscal crisis, a State that has now been able to navigate some of the toughest economic times that we've seen in the history of the country, because of that foundation of civility and practicality and hard work.

Tim Kaine embodied that tradition, and he has now continued it during his term in office. That's not just a stroke of good luck here in the State of Virginia. It's because you stood up and chose that kind of politics. You decided to take the better way, and now you've got the chance to keep moving forward by electing somebody who is cut from the same cloth, somebody who has that same vision for the Commonwealth, Creigh Deeds.

Now, I admit I'm a little biased here. I'm a little biased. First of all, Creigh Deeds and I both have some wonderful daughters. Creigh Deeds and I both served in the State senate. I served for 8 years, and he's now served for 8 years. Creigh Deeds and I both have—let's face it—sort of funny names. *[Laughter]* Still trying to figure out the spelling of "Creigh"—*[laughter]*—but that's not the reason I'm here tonight. It's not just because of my personal bias.

This is a man who's spent his life working to do right by his family, and the last two decades working to do right by the people of Virginia. As a prosecutor, as a delegate, as a State senator, he has worked tirelessly to advance this Commonwealth that he's loved his whole life.

He wrote Megan's Law, advocated for the AMBER Alert program to protect our children. He worked to preserve open space and protect the environment. When Virginia faced that financial crisis a few years back, he was on Mark Warner's team to make sure that you reformed the budget and controlled spending, and even in the face of that crisis, record investments in education, laying a foundation for Virginia's growth.