



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

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Governor Shapiro's Address on Political Violence in America as Prepared for Delivery

Pittsburgh, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** delivered a keynote address on political violence in America at the [2025 Eradicate Hate Global Summit](#) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Governor's remarks can be viewed [here](#).

See below for the Governor's remarks as prepared for delivery:

Thank you, Governor Corbett.

My family and I feel blessed to call the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg home.

I know you uniquely appreciate what an honor it is to be able to live there, not only as Governor but with your family and your kids and your dogs.

I believe, as Governors, we have a responsibility to take up the baton from those who came before us and carry it forward – to run a few more miles, make our mark, and leave this place a little better than how we found it.

To further William Penn's vision from the 1680s of a place that would be warm and welcoming to all – and a place grounded in freedom of religion and expression.

A place that – no matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, or who you pray to – you can call home.

The Residence is a physical embodiment of that commitment to carry the legacy of this great Commonwealth forward.

But on the night of April 13th, the Residence came under attack – as did my family.

I woke up to a bang on the door.

It was a state trooper, telling us there was a fire and we needed to evacuate immediately.

Just hours before, we had gathered for our Seder to celebrate the first night of Passover in the very room the arsonist broke in, launched Molotov cocktails and made his way through the house wielding a metal hammer he later said he was going to use to kill me.

Not only was my safety threatened, but my wife, our kids, and members of our extended family were put at risk.

I thank God everyday that we were all able to evacuate safely – that no one was physically injured or killed.

That all the staff, police, and first responders were OK.

But that doesn't mean that attack hasn't left emotional scars. I can attest to that.

Violence in all forms is unacceptable – and political violence is particularly dangerous.

Not only does it seek to injure, maim, or kill – it seeks to intimidate, terrorize, and silence.

I'm here to tell you that I will not be deterred in my work for you and I will not be silenced.

But political violence doesn't only affect those directly targeted and their loved ones, it affects all of us.

It tears at the fabric of American society, and the fundamental principles this nation was founded upon...

A nation where civil disagreement should be welcome, because that discourse can lead to progress.

We understand that when you hear speech you disagree with, the answer is more speech – not violence.

Our democracy is stronger when more Americans participate in it, and can make their voices heard.

But unfortunately, political violence – and the hate that fuels it – is becoming far too common in our society.

In just the last year or so, we saw it in a field in Butler with the attempted assassination of Donald Trump...

...We saw it on the streets of New York with the killing of the UnitedHealthcare C.E.O...

...We saw it in the middle of the night in suburban Minnesota when an assassin took the life of Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark...

...And we saw it last week at Utah Valley University, with the assassination of Charlie Kirk.

Different places.

Different people.

Different perspectives.

One common thread – people using violence to try to settle political differences.

Leaders have a responsibility to speak and act with moral clarity – and as I have made clear each and every time, this type of violence has no place in our society, regardless of what motivates it, who pulls the trigger, who throws the molotov cocktail, or who wields the weapon.

It doesn't matter if it's coming from one side or the other, directed at one party or another, or one person or another.

It is all wrong – and it makes us all less safe.

During moments like these, we must be clear and unequivocal and call out all forms of political violence as wrong.

That shouldn't be hard to do.

Unfortunately, some – from the dark corners of the internet all the way to the Oval Office – want to cherry pick which instances of political violence they want to condemn.

Doing so only further divides us and makes it harder to heal.

There are some who hear that selective condemnation and take it as permission to commit more violence, so long as it suits their narrative or only targets the other side.

Sadly, we've even seen some on the internet openly celebrate political violence – or issue calls for revenge in the wake of it.

Giving violence a pass, justifying it, or looking the other way only deepens the divide.

Let me be clear: violence is never okay, regardless of the motivation.

Violence is never the answer.

And we can't let violence be used as a pretext for more violence.

We must reject the rhetoric of vengeance, and instead focus on the work of healing.

We need to create more opportunities for peaceful and respectful dialogue – respecting each others' fundamental rights as Americans.

Censorship – using the long arm of government to silence people, businesses, and nonprofits and restrict their right to free speech – will not solve this problem.

Prosecuting constitutionally protected speech will only erode our freedoms and deepen mistrust.

That is unAmerican.

There is a better way.

In Pennsylvania, we have shown a path forward.

This gathering is an example of that.

After the attack on the Governor's Residence, our family was lifted up by the prayers, blessings and messages of support we received in the wake of that traumatic event.

Those prayers wrapped around us and protected us.

Every living former Governor and First Family reached out to express their horror... to check in on us... and to ask what they could do to help.

So the First Lady and I invited all of them to the Residence, to rededicate ourselves to upholding the Commonwealth's foundational values and pledge our shared commitment to the Residence's future as a place of community and resilience.

Governors Wolf, Corbett, Rendell, Schweiker, and Ridge were all there, together with the First Ladies.

As were members of the Thornburgh and Casey families.

And so was Laura Ellsworth, the co-founder of this Summit, who asked me that evening to be here with you.

More than half a century of Pennsylvania leadership was represented that day.

They are Democrats and Republicans.

Leaders of different generations – and from different sides of the Commonwealth.

But they were united in speaking and acting with moral clarity, making clear that hatred and violence has no place here.

Pennsylvania leaders, from different parties, speaking with one voice to reject the dark cycle of violence and instead, bring light.

We'll never know, but perhaps those words, that gathering even stopped other hate-filled actions and brought down the temperature.

In the words of William Penn, we were "an example for the nations" – one that I think would make Penn proud.

But it's not just former Governors and First Families who showed us the way. It's the people of Pennsylvania, too.

After the attack, my family and I wanted to say thank you to the brave firefighters who saved our lives.

So we decided to serve them a meal and invite all the fire companies who responded that night.

And as we were serving them lunch, an elderly man named John Wardle – the 82-year-old Christian chaplain from the Penn Township Volunteer Fire Department – came up to Lori and me and gave us a letter signed by every member of his department.

On the back of the letter, he had handwritten a prayer for our family, from Numbers 6:24-26:

*The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.*

I wept as I read that and embraced Chaplain Wardle.

It's a prayer of comfort, a prayer to make sure we are watched over by God, and a prayer known to us as the priestly blessing, as Rabbi Myers knows.

But what you may not know is that it's also a prayer we recite nightly over each of our four children and have since the day they were born.

יברכך יהוה וישמרך
יאר יהוה פניו אליך ויחנך
ישא יהוה פניו אליך וישם לך שלום

Those are words of healing, of hopefulness.

And they are also words that served as a reminder of our common humanity.

A recognition that there is far more that binds us together than divides us – no matter what those who stoke that division would have us believe.

Words are important but aren't enough. We also need action.

We need to make sure people are safe here in Pennsylvania and all across America.

Safe to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Whether they're debating on a college campus, praying at a synagogue or church, or spending time at home with loved ones.

We've done that work in my Administration, helping fund 1,500 more state troopers and local law enforcement officers, and driving out \$15 million to

churches, synagogues, mosques, and other nonprofits to help them keep their members safe.

Hiring more cops and securing buildings helps. But it's not the whole solution. We must do more.

We need to address the hate that's spreading online and give our children the tools to address it.

As parents, this is important to Lori and me.

In fact, Lori had the idea to ask the Pennsylvania Department of Education to create a digital literacy toolkit that teachers and parents can use to help our kids navigate online.

I don't care whether our kids take a position on the left or on the right... but I do care that they're able to discern fact from fiction. To debate constructively.

But despite that meaningful progress we are making here in Pennsylvania, there's a deeper issue at the root of this dangerous rise in political violence.

Too many people don't believe that our institutions and the people in them can solve problems.

They feel alone, ignored, and shut out by a government that isn't working for them.

This is particularly true of younger Americans.

They feel unseen and unheard in our elections, in the media, in our nonprofits and our businesses, in the law.

Frustrated by a lack of progress and consumed by a feeling of hopelessness, they find refuge, often in the dark corners of the internet where their righteous frustration is taken advantage of and used to foment hate.

It leads to a belief among some that the only way they can address those problems is through violence.

They find online those who glorify violence and urge it on. What starts with cowardly keystrokes too often ends with a trigger being pulled.

That is dangerous for our democracy, and we need to turn the tide.

This conference helps. And the work that flows from it matters.

I so appreciate people like Laura and my friend Chancellor Mark Nordenberg who do this work every day.

But it also requires us to make sure those institutions people feel failed by are responsive to the real problems and frustrations people feel, and do the work to solve those problems.

As leaders of this Commonwealth and this country, we've got to listen more, and act faster.

We must get stuff done and restore people's faith in their government.

That's what we're doing here in Pennsylvania.

Let me give you a few concrete examples:

We're processing permits and licenses faster.

We're getting you answers quicker.

We're making historic investments in education and delivering free breakfast, more mental health support, and access to vo-tech classes for our students.

We're creating economic opportunity on our main streets and in our farmlands.

We're building a government that works for Pennsylvanians, and gets stuff done.

That is the critical work we must do right now. To show it can work.

I realize a permit won't end violence. But maybe it causes someone to have a bit more faith that the system can work for them.

Think of it, the one time someone turns to government for help and gets it.

Maybe it's a part of helping turn this tide – of repairing our institutions and showing that they can still work.

That we can still get stuff done here in America.

We have to get stuff done. We have to be able to see our common humanity. We have to reject the forces that are trying to pull us apart.

We need to get back to something that I learned right here in Pittsburgh at the corner of Forbes and Murray the night after 11 beautiful souls were taken from us while they prayed on shabbat morning.

When I joined hundreds of our neighbors, coming together in a light mist – holding hands, locking arms, comforting each other.

Declaring with one voice that we would not allow hate and antisemitism to permeate and further infect this loving community.

Jew, Muslim, Christian...

Black, White, Asian, Latino...

A cross-section of the entire community was here. Grieving together. Finding strength in one another.

It was the people here on these streets in Pittsburgh who proclaimed that night we are stronger than hate.

And I believe in America that we truly are stronger than hate.

But I also believe in America this work doesn't fall to others – it starts with each of us.

It falls to each and every one of us to do our part.

My faith teaches me that no one is required to complete the task, but neither are we free to refrain from it.

To me, that means it's on all of us to get off the sidelines, get in the game, and do our part.

One of our neighbors in this community, Fred Rogers, once said to "look for the helpers."

I look around this room and I see all of you.

The ones who show up, who speak up, who stand up to hate.

You're showing the rest of us the way.

You are the helpers.

And you're going to help heal this nation and this world.

Thank you.

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