



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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**ICYMI: Governors Shapiro and Cox Come Together at National Cathedral to Address Accelerating Trend of Political Violence, Call for Unity and Moral Clarity**

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*"I think politicians would do well to take cues from the people that they represent, to listen more to them, to see our shared humanity and our common bonds."*

*"The answers to so much of the darkness that we see in America today is the light that ordinary Americans bring each day, oftentimes grounded in faith and in our shared humanity."*

Watch the Today Show clip [here](#).



Washington, D.C. – Last night, **Governor Josh Shapiro** sat down alongside **Utah Governor Spencer Cox** for a [conversation moderated](#) by **TODAY** co-anchor and **NBC News Chief Legal Correspondent Savannah Guthrie** at the Washington National Cathedral, discussed the accelerating trend of political violence across the country called for greater unity among all Americans to condemn all forms of political violence. The event, ***Choosing a Better Way: Restoring Healthy Political Discourse in America***, brought the governors together for a [timely discussion](#) on rebuilding trust and strengthening faith in our institutions.

Governor Shapiro — who has confronted incidents of political violence in Pennsylvania, including the attempted assassination on his own life during the arson attack at the Governor's Residence in April — spoke about the urgent need to address the increasing disillusionment with American politics, restore faith in our institutions, and create opportunity for all Americans. He emphasized that those in public life must condemn political violence in all its forms, defend democratic principles, and work to lower the temperature of the national discourse. Governor Cox, who has also navigated high-profile acts of violence in his state, reflected on the importance of steady leadership in

moments of crisis and noted that he and Governor Shapiro have often leaned on one another throughout these challenges.

The event brought together two governors from opposite political parties for a substantive discussion about the responsibilities of leadership in moments of crisis, the rising threat of political violence, and the work required to rebuild a civic culture rooted in dignity, safety, and hope. Governor Shapiro underscored the need for leaders to speak and act with moral clarity, condemn political violence in all its forms, and help lower the temperature of our national discourse.

The event was presented in partnership with Disagree Better, the Wheatley Institute at Brigham Young University, and the National Institute for Civil Discourse — organizations focused on strengthening democratic norms, promoting civic dialogue, and reducing political division.

**Watch the full interview [here](#) or see key excerpts from Governor Shapiro below.**

**ON THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SCARS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE:**

(video mark 7:08)

*“We have seen victims of political violence deal with very real physical effects of it, extreme of that, of course, Charlie Kirk, in your state. We see the effects of that physically on people like Congresswoman Gabby Giffords or Congressman Scalise. But there are also scars that come that are not physical, that are emotional. And I think our family has grappled with that.*

*“I think in these jobs, you recognize that there are people out there that want to do harm to you, and for me, that was always quite theoretical. I have the privilege of serving in this role and being surrounded by the Pennsylvania State Police, whose job it is to keep me safe. And I felt somewhat insulated from that. And that bubble was burst, and that insulation was gone on that April night.*

*“That has led me to feel extraordinary guilt as a dad, that doing this job, that I love, that I so believe in, put my kids' lives at risk, put my wife's life at risk, put our family's lives at risk. And that's a hard thing to grapple with. It's a hard thing to work through. But as a family, we also understand that you can't allow that violence to force you off stage and to force you out of doing this work that is so unbelievably important right now, to stand up and to do this work at a time where the nation really needs us to find ways to come together and drown out those voices of hate and drown out that violence, and instead focus on our common humanity. I would say that I've been helped in this healing, certainly by my best friend in the world since the ninth grade, the First Lady of Pennsylvania, my wife, Lori...but we've also been lifted up by the people of Pennsylvania.*

*“I'm a very prayerful person. I'm a person of faith and I pray every day, and I have throughout my life, but I have never felt the power of the prayers of others until the hours and days and weeks after the attack on our family. That's an extraordinary thing.*

*“And so through all of this, yes, there have been emotional scars, but the healing has come because of the goodness of the American people, the goodness of the people of Pennsylvania, and that's put us in a position to not only get through it, but to feel stronger as a result of it, and prepare us for these kinds of conversations and the important work that we need to do to move forward.”*

#### **ON CONDEMNING ALL POLITICAL VIOLENCE, NOT CHERRY-PICKING:**

(video mark 16:08)

*“We need to begin by saying that all leaders must condemn all political violence, not cherry pick which violence to condemn and which violence to accept.*

*“Leaders have a responsibility to speak and act with moral clarity and call it out wherever they see it, exactly the way Spencer Cox does.*

*“Here's what we cannot allow, for leaders that don't act with moral clarity, remain silent about certain violence, or give a pass to others, because that is insidious, that is gasoline on the fire, and that leads to greater violence.*

*“I'm going to say it, and I realize it may not be popular with some in this room, when you're a Governor, when you're a President of the United States, you are looked to for that moral clarity, and we have a President of the United States right now that fails that test on a daily basis.”*

#### **ON HOW FAITH TEACHES US THAT MORE UNITES US THAN DIVIDES US:**

(video mark 38:34)

*“I think faith is universal. We may worship differently. We may pray to different gods. Spencer and I are men of deep faith, he a Mormon, me a Jew. Each of our faiths has a commonality to it that we are both called to serve others. I'll share with you that I have seen my Commonwealth as I've been open about my faith, people of other faiths have been drawn in and shared with me their stories.*

*“I mentioned before about people praying for us and feeling the strength of the prayer. I'll leave you with this. In the wake of the attack on the Governor's Residence and our family, we wanted to immediately thank all of the firefighters who came to rescue us, who literally were running into our home as it was on fire, as we were being escorted out, and our kids thought it would be really nice to make them a meal...so we partnered with Robert Irvine, a wonderful celebrity chef who does amazing work for first responders and veterans, and about four days after the attack, we served them a lunch at the local firehouse in Harrisburg.*

*“All of the responding fire companies came, including the Penn Township Fire Department, a small volunteer fire department in south central Pennsylvania. We made a point to shake every firefighter's hands, and at the conclusion of that, an elderly man came walking over to us and introduced himself as John Wardle, Sr., the chaplain from the Penn Township Fire Department.*

*“He handed me a letter, and the letter on it was a beautiful note signed by each member of their volunteer fire department, and he asked me to turn it over. When I turned over this paper handed to me by a chaplain of 82 years old, registered from a different political party, from a different era, a different hometown than I, he had written his favorite prayer on the back. The prayer he wrote on the back is what I and Lori refer to as the Priestly Blessing, the blessing that we say over our children at night, a prayer of comfort and a prayer of peace and a prayer of protection. It was his favorite passage from the Old Testament that he wanted to give to us.*

*“There is a universality in our humanity and in our faith. There is more that binds us as Americans than divides us. The answers to so much of the darkness that we see in America today is the light that ordinary Americans bring each day, oftentimes grounded in faith and in our shared humanity.*

*“I think politicians would do well to take cues from the people that they represent, to listen more to them, to see our shared humanity and our common bonds. That is what this horrific experience that my family and I went through has taught us that there is goodness out there. The good ways in which people reacted to how Spencer Cox led Utah and really led America through that tragedy, that is what we should take inspiration from.*

*“I hope that as everyone leaves here tonight, you recognize Spencer Cox is doing a heck of a job in Utah, and I'm trying to hold my own in Pennsylvania, but that the best thing we have going for us as a nation right now, are not with people with titles next to their names, but like ordinary Americans who are doing extraordinary things every single day. And for that, I feel blessed to be an American and blessed to be the governor of Pennsylvania.”*

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