

Floor Statement of Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
H. Res. 306
A Resolution Offering heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families regarding the
horrific violence at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia
In the U.S. House of Representatives
Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to offer my deepest sympathies to the victims and their families who suffered the horrific shooting tragedy at Virginia Tech on Monday morning. My thoughts and prayers go out to them, the students, faculty, and staff of the University.

Virginia Tech is one of the largest schools in Virginia, providing higher education for more than 28,000 students. The effects of this tragedy can be felt all across the Commonwealth of Virginia, in the halls of Congress, and in every corner of this nation. I represent hundreds of Virginia Tech families, perhaps thousands of alumni, and members of my staff have friends and family who currently attend Virginia Tech.

Schools are meant to be sanctuaries of learning and, most importantly, sanctuaries for safety. Parents who send their children off to college with all the potential that a college education represents should be content that their children will be safe.

As we mourn with the Virginia Tech community, this Congress must explore every possible avenue towards determining what can be done to prevent this kind of tragedy in the future, whether in our high schools or college campuses or on business premises or other places where people may congregate. Yet we must be realistic. From what we are hearing regarding this tragic incident, it is not clear that any law would be effective in deterring the kind of senseless acts that occurred. Anyone willing to indiscriminately shoot down innocent people and then kill themselves afterwards is not likely to be deterred by any law. Nonetheless, we must work with our colleges and universities on developing ways to anticipate, identify, and prevent any such threats that we can. Some evidence is emerging that indicates there were signs of severe mental disturbances in the alleged shooter, and this may suggest information which could lead to things to look at to avoid these tragedies in the future.

Mr. Speaker, today we stand together to wish a speedy recovery for the injured and to mourn with the families of the victims who died in this horrific tragedy. Virginia Tech is and will remain one of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s finest institutions of higher learning, and its proud traditions will carry on beyond its darkest hour. This event will be with the students and staff of Virginia Tech for the rest of their lives, but we must not let tragedies like this stop people from living their dreams. I hope that some day all members of the Virginia Tech family and community will be able to celebrate life and learning on the campus again.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask unanimous consent to introduce into the record the powerful statement presented at the service yesterday at Virginia Tech by Nikki Giovanni. That service was attended by nine of the eleven members of the Virginia delegation to Congress

and both of our U.S. Senators. So I would ask unanimous consent that the statement be entered into the record.

I reserve the balance of my time.