Reaction ranges widely on Vice President Quayle’s Gettysburg visit

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Reaction to Vice President Dan Quayle’s weekend visit to Gettysburg ranged between total agreement and total disagreement among college students, pro-choice activists, firefighters and a movie actor.

"I think his visit was good," said Gettysburg College student Kerri Naughton. "He seemed friendly and casual, but the hecklers were annoying." Naughton was one of more than 600 people who filled the Gettysburg Fire Department’s new North Straton Street fire station to hear the vice president address the Firemen’s Association of Pennsylvania Saturday. The event was held to honor volunteer firefighters across the state. It would serve as a springboard for volunteer recognition which culminated Saturday in an afternoon parade of more than 300 fire trucks, bands, celebrities and groups.

Looking at the Bush-Quayle advocates and Democrats, Naughton said she was pleased with the attendance of both supporters.

"I think it’s good that both supporters are here. It’s good to have opposition and to raise questions. College students are here to encourage voting...and I think that’s good."

Naughton estimated the number of college students to be at 200. Kristina Johnson, a senior master of divinity student at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, attended the event as a protestor. She waved a poster which read: "Pro-Family, Pro-Choice, Pro-Clinton."

Before Quayle arrived to speak, she described the Bush-Quayle ticket as being divisive.

"I just want to make my opinions known. I’m exercising my rights of freedom of speech," she said, adding, "As a Christian, I believe in inclinivity."

The lack of it, she said, is a major problem with the country as well as with the Bush-Quayle platform. Firefighter Tom Young, on the other hand, acknowledged strong support for the vice president.

"It was a political speech," he said. "But I’m supporting him. I don’t think much of Gore and Clinton."

A federal employee attending the event echoed similar comments. Asking not to be identified, he said, “I respect the vice president. He is a good engineer. Before the campaigns started we heard nothing about family values. Now that’s all we hear. Sometimes exaggeration is a way of making change.”

Disagreeing with this view was a Hollywood actor with the TNT movie "The Killer Angels." Mark Moses, who will portray Sgt. Owens in the Union Army, said that he did not understand the vice president’s tendency to “bash Hollywood” with regards to family values.

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