

Obama introduces new Democratic party chief as a 'pragmatic progressive'

President-elect Barack Obama met the press today with Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, the man he's picked as the new head of the Democratic National Committee. It was advertised as a press conference, but they didn't take any questions -- a rule reporters learned about just a few minutes before the event began. Obama said he and Kaine share "a pragmatic, progressive philosophy that was at the heart of my campaign and will be at the heart of this administration." He said they are both less interested in ideology than in ideas that practice work.

Both men paid tribute to current chairman Howard Dean, the former Vermont governor and presidential candidate, who instituted a 50-state strategy to expand the party's appeal in once "red" Republican states like Virginia. "I've got huge shoes to fill," Kaine said. Kaine wore a red-and-blue striped tie that might have been symbolic; he didn't answer a shouted question. Alluding to reports he had been reluctant to take the job while still governor, he said Obama had proved to him what he had proved to voters -- "you are a very persuasive individual."