

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

The President's Weekly Address

March 23, 2013

It has now been 3 months since the tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut: 3 months since we lost 20 innocent children and 6 dedicated adults who had so much left to give; 3 months since we, as Americans, began asking ourselves if we're really doing enough to protect our communities and keep our children safe.

For the families who lost a loved one on that terrible day, 3 months doesn't even begin to ease the pain they're feeling right now. It doesn't come close to mending the wounds that may never fully heal.

But as a nation, the last 3 months have changed us. They forced us to answer some difficult questions about what we can do—what we must do—to prevent the kinds of massacres we've seen in Newtown and Aurora and Oak Creek, as well as the everyday tragedies that happen far too often in big cities and small towns all across America.

Today, there's still genuine disagreement among well-meaning people about what steps we should take to reduce the epidemic of gun violence in this country. But you, the American people, have spoken. You've made it clear that it's time to do something. And over the last few weeks, Senators here in Washington have listened and taken some big steps forward.

Two weeks ago, the Senate advanced a bill that would make it harder for criminals and people with a severe mental illness from getting their hands on a gun, an idea supported by 9 out of 10 Americans, including a majority of gun owners. The Senate also made progress on a bill that would crack down on anyone who buys a gun as part of a scheme to funnel it to criminals, reducing violent crime and protecting our law enforcement officers. Finally, the Senate took steps to reinstate and strengthen a ban on the sale of military-style assault weapons, set a 10-round limit for magazines, and make our schools safer places for kids to learn and grow.

These ideas shouldn't be controversial. They're common sense. They're supported by a majority of the American people. And I urge the Senate and the House to give each of them a vote.

As I've said before, we may not be able to prevent every act of violence in this country. But together, we have an obligation to try. We have an obligation to do what we can.

Right now we have a real chance to reduce gun violence in America and prevent the very worst violence. We have a unique opportunity to reaffirm our tradition of responsible gun ownership and also do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals or people with a severe mental illness.

We've made progress over the last 3 months, but we're not there yet. And in the weeks ahead, I hope Members of Congress will join me in finishing the job: for our communities and, most importantly, for our kids. Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:05 p.m. on March 19 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 23. The transcript was made available by the

Office of the Press Secretary on March 22, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 23.

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