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Statement on the Shooting at East High School in Des Moines, Iowa

March 8, 2022

Yesterday afternoon, as the school day was coming to a close, three students were shot in a drive-by shooting outside East High School in Des Moines, Iowa. One young man—just 15 years old—was tragically killed. Jill and I pray for his family and for everyone impacted by yet another senseless act of gun violence.

A half dozen suspects have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the shooting, and we are grateful to Des Moines law enforcement and first responders for their quick work and professionalism.

But these swift arrests cannot obscure the reality that too many families have had to bury a piece of their soul after yet another tragic shooting. It comes less than a month after we marked 4 years since the shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and 3 months after the shooting at Oxford High School in Oakland County, Michigan. Between these tragedies are shootings that happen every day without making headlines.

Enough. Our young people should be safe in and around school, in their neighborhoods, and in their homes. Every American should be able to visit a house of worship, a grocery store, a night club, or any other place without fear of being gunned down. That too many cannot is a stain on our national character and an urgent call to action.

Last June, I put forward a comprehensive national strategy to reduce gun violence. In carrying out this strategy, I have taken more Executive action to reduce gun violence than any other President in their first year in office, more than a dozen necessary actions, from cracking down on gun trafficking and rogue gun dealers, to promoting safe firearm storage, to reining in the proliferation of hard-to-trace "ghost guns" that can be bought online and made at home. Now, Congress must do its job. As I reiterated in my State of the Union Address last week, it is up to Congress to pass proven measures to reduce gun violence, including universal background checks, a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, and a repeal of the liability shield protecting gun manufacturers who knowingly put weapons of war on our streets. These laws don't infringe on the Second Amendment, but they will save lives.

May God bless the lives that have been lost or forever altered.

NOTE: The statement referred to Jose David Lopez, an East High School student who was killed in the shooting; and Henry Valladares-Amaya, Octavio Lopez, Manuel Buezo, Romeo Perdomo, Alex Perdomo, and Nyang Chamdual, suspects in the shooting.

Categories: Statements by the President : Shooting at East High School in Des Moines, IA.

Locations: Des Moines, IA.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Buezo, Manuel; Chamdual, Nyang; Lopez, Jose David; Lopez, Octavio; Perdomo, Alex; Perdomo, Romero; Valladares-Amaya, Henry.

Subjects: Civil rights : Firearm rights; Florida : 2018 shooting in Parkland; Iowa : Shooting in Des Moines; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Law enforcement and crime : Gun violence, prevention efforts; Law enforcement and crime : Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Michigan : 2021 shooting in Oxford; Presidency, U.S. : State of the Union Address.

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