

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on the 12th Anniversary of the Shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut
December 14, 2024

Twelve years ago today, the community of Newtown, Connecticut, and the entire Nation were forever changed when 20 innocent children and 6 brave educators were gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School by a single individual armed with a weapon of war. Jill and I still grieve this unimaginable loss and continue to pray for the victims' families and others traumatized by this senseless violence.

Many individuals impacted by the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School have turned their pain into purpose. Some families established foundations to carry on their loved ones' memories; others chose to use their voices to fight for commonsense gun safety reform, hold the gun industry accountable with groundbreaking litigation, and fight back against those who spread misinformation and further victimize those impacted by gun violence. The elementary school children who survived the shooting are now young adults and many of them have also joined the effort to reduce gun violence and save lives.

The legacy of this tragedy is one of great loss, but also hope. Twelve years ago, moms sitting at their kitchen counters went online, expressed their outrage, and organized for commonsense gun safety legislation. Congresswoman Gabby Giffords decided enough was enough and started her own effort to combat gun violence. Gun violence prevention organizations that had been invested in the cause for decades reemerged with renewed strength. Today's gun violence prevention movement is stronger than ever before because of survivors and other Americans who saw the Sandy Hook shooting and said "enough."

With the strength of this emboldened movement by our side, we have made historic progress to reduce gun violence over the past 4 years. I signed into law the most significant piece of gun safety legislation in nearly 30 years. I announced dozens of executive actions to keep guns out of dangerous hands and get especially dangerous weapons off our streets. I established the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, overseen by Vice President Harris, to accelerate this work. After 4 years under my administration, homicides are down, crime is falling, and we are seeing fewer mass shootings. This progress is no accident.

Still, more must be done. Congress has an obligation to "do something" in order to protect our children and communities from this scourge of gun violence. We are the only nation experiencing this epidemic, and there are commonsense policies that the majority of Americans agree with and that Congress can easily take action on. We need universal background checks, "red flag" laws, safe storage requirements, and a ban on assault weapons like the one used at Sandy Hook. I remain hopeful that we will continue to make progress on these priorities. This hope is rooted in the history of what we have accomplished already and the strength of all the survivors of gun violence that I have had the privilege of working with during my career.

NOTE: The statement referred to former Rep. Gabrielle D. Giffords.

Categories: Statements by the President : Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, 12th anniversary of shooting.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Giffords, Gabrielle D.; Harris, Kamala D.

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