

has a heart heavy with hurt. Among the fallen were also teachers, men and women who devoted their lives to helping our children fulfill their dreams.

So our hearts are broken today. We grieve for the families of those we lost, and we keep in our prayers the parents of those who survived. Because, as blessed as they are to have their children home, they know that their child's innocence has been torn away far too early.

As a nation, we have endured far too many of these tragedies in the last few years: an elementary school in Newtown, a shopping mall in Oregon, a house of worship in Wisconsin, a movie theater in Colorado, countless street corners in places like Chicago and Philadelphia. Any of these neighborhoods could be our own. So we have to come together, and we're going to have to take meaningful action to prevent more tragedies like this from happening, regardless of politics.

This weekend, Michelle and I are doing what I know every parent is doing: holding our

children as close as we can and reminding them how much we love them.

There are families in Connecticut who can't do that today. And they need all of us right now. Because while nothing can take the place of a lost child or loved one, all of us can extend a hand to those in need to remind them that we are there for them; that we are praying for them; and that the love they felt for those they lost endures not just in their own memories, but also in their communities and in their country.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on December 14 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 15. In the address, the President referred to Adam Lanza, suspected gunman in the December 14 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 15.

## Statement on the Elections in Japan *December 16, 2012*

I congratulate Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe on his party's success in the elections in Japan today. The U.S.-Japan alliance serves as the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific, and I look forward to working

closely with the next Government and the people of Japan on a range of important bilateral, regional, and global issues. I also extend my appreciation to Prime Minister Noda for his many contributions to U.S.-Japan relations.

## Remarks at the Sandy Hook Interfaith Prayer Vigil in Newtown, Connecticut *December 16, 2012*

Thank you, Governor. To all the families, first-responders; to the community of Newtown, clergy, guests—Scripture tells us: "Do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God,

an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands."

We gather here in memory of 20 beautiful children and 6 remarkable adults. They lost their lives in a school that could have been any school, in a quiet town full of good and decent people that could be any town in America.

Here in Newtown, I come to offer the love and prayers of a nation. I am very mindful that mere words cannot match the depths of your sorrow, nor can they heal your wounded hearts. I can only hope it helps for you to know