

you can do for yourself, but what you can do as a team. As one rider put it: "It's just like in the military. You ride for the warrior next to you."

So 9 years ago, Chris Carney told a reporter that the most daunting part of that first ride was being alone. He said he had only played team sports in the past, that he wasn't used to a solo effort. But what Chris and others discovered is that when it comes to supporting our returning heroes, there's no such thing as going it alone. We do this as a team. We get each other's backs.

Those who have served under our proud flag never lose that sense of service to one another or to country, and we saw that on Monday. When that first explosion went off, National Guardsmen, servicemembers, veterans in the area all did what warriors do: They ran into harm's way to protect their fellow Americans. They applied tourniquets. They went to hospitals; they donated blood. Doctors used experience they acquired in part overseas to help save lives here at home.

That's the strong stuff that our warriors are made out of, and that's why we're so proud and so grateful to the men and women and veterans of our armed forces. And that's why, as Commander in Chief, I'll keep doing everything in my power to make sure we serve you as well as you've served us. And that means making sure you get the care and the benefits you need. It means making sure you don't have to fight for a job when you get home. It means recognizing our military families and giving them the support that they deserve. And right now it means saying a big thank you to all of our riders.

So I'm asking every American out there and everyone who is along the route to get out and

show their support, wave a flag. Cheer for these outstanding men and women.

Good luck over the next 3 days. Have fun out there. And know that you've got a country and a Commander in Chief who appreciates you, who's proud of you and who will always have your back.

So thank you. God bless you. God bless America. And let's get this thing going. You can see that they're ready to go.

[At this point, the President was given an air horn by a member of his staff.]

*The President.* And this is my favorite part, using this little horn here. Are you ready?

*Audience member.* Oh, yeah.

*The President.* You guys, everybody ready here?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* All right. So you guys all ready?

*Audience member.* Ready.

*The President.* You sure?

*Audience member.* Positive!

*The President.* All right I just want to make sure. All right. So I'm going to say "on your mark, get set," and then I'm going to blow the horn. All right? On your mark. Get set.

[The President blew the horn, and the ride began.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:54 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki; and Chris Carney, founder, Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride.

## Remarks on Senate Action on Gun Control Legislation April 17, 2013

A few months ago, in response to too many tragedies, including the shootings of a United States Congresswoman, Gabby Giffords, who's here today, and the murder of 20 innocent schoolchildren and their teachers, this country took up the cause of pro-

tecting more of our people from gun violence.

Families that know unspeakable grief summoned the courage to petition their elected leaders, not just to honor the memory of their children, but to protect the lives of all of our

children. A few minutes ago, a minority in the United States Senate decided it wasn't worth it. They blocked commonsense gun reforms even while these families looked on from the Senate gallery.

By now, it's well known that 90-percent of the American people support universal background checks that make it harder for a dangerous person to buy a gun. We're talking about convicted felons, people convicted of domestic violence, people with a severe mental illness. Ninety percent of Americans support that idea. Most Americans think that's already the law.

And a few minutes ago, 90 percent of Democrats in the Senate voted for that idea. But it's not going to happen, because 90 percent of Republicans in the Senate just voted against that idea. A majority of Senators voted yes to protecting more of our citizens with smarter background checks. But by this continuing distortion of Senate rules, a minority was able to block it from moving forward.

Now, I'm going to speak plainly and honestly about what's happened here, because the American people are trying to figure out: How can something have 90 percent support and yet not happen? We had a Democrat and a Republican—both gun owners, both fierce defenders of our Second Amendment, with A grades from the NRA—come together and work together to write a commonsense compromise on background checks. And I want to thank Joe Manchin and Pat Toomey for their courage in doing that. That was not easy given their traditional strong support for Second Amendment rights.

As they said, nobody could honestly claim that the package they put together infringed on our Second Amendment rights. All it did was extend the same background check rules that already apply to guns purchased from a dealer to guns purchased at gun shows or over the Internet. So 60 percent of guns are already purchased through a background check system; this would have covered a lot of the guns that are currently outside that system.

Their legislation showed respect for gun owners, and it showed respect for the victims

of gun violence. And Gabby Giffords, by the way, is both; she's a gun owner and a victim of gun violence. She is a westerner and a moderate. And she supports these background checks.

In fact, even the NRA used to support expanded background checks. The current leader of the NRA used to support these background checks. So while this compromise didn't contain everything I wanted or everything that these families wanted, it did represent progress. It represented moderation and common sense. That's why 90 percent of the American people supported it.

But instead of supporting this compromise, the gun lobby and its allies willfully lied about the bill. They claimed that it would create some sort of Big Brother gun registry, even though the bill did the opposite. This legislation, in fact, outlawed any registry. Plain and simple, right there in the text. But that didn't matter.

And unfortunately, this pattern of spreading untruths about this legislation served a purpose, because those lies upset an intense minority of gun owners, and that in turn intimidated a lot of Senators. And I talked to several of these Senators over the past few weeks, and they're all good people. I know all of them were shocked by tragedies like Newtown. And I also understand that they come from States that are strongly pro-gun. And I have consistently said that there are regional differences when it comes to guns and that both sides have to listen to each other.

But the fact is, most of these Senators could not offer any good reason why we wouldn't want to make it harder for criminals and those with severe mental illnesses to buy a gun. There were no coherent arguments as to why we wouldn't do this. It came down to politics: the worry that that vocal minority of gun owners would come after them in future elections. They worried that the gun lobby would spend a lot of money and paint them as anti-Second Amendment.

And obviously, a lot of Republicans had that fear, but Democrats had that fear too. And so

they caved to the pressure, and they started looking for an excuse—any excuse—to vote no.

One common argument I heard was that this legislation wouldn't prevent all future massacres. And that's true. As I said from the start, no single piece of legislation can stop every act of violence and evil. We learned that tragically just 2 days ago. But if action by Congress could have saved one person, one child, a few hundred, a few thousand, if it could have prevented those people from losing their lives to gun violence in the future while preserving our Second Amendment rights, we had an obligation to try. And this legislation met that test. And too many Senators failed theirs.

I've heard some say that blocking this step would be a victory. And my question is, a victory for who? A victory for what? All that happened today was the preservation of the loophole that lets dangerous criminals buy guns without a background check. That didn't make our kids safer. Victory for not doing something that 90 percent of Americans, 80 percent of Republicans, the vast majority of your constituents wanted to get done? It begs the question, who are we here to represent?

I've heard folks say that having the families of victims lobby for this legislation was somehow misplaced. "A prop," somebody called them. "Emotional blackmail," some outlets said. Are they serious? Do we really think that thousands of families whose lives have been shattered by gun violence don't have a right to weigh in on this issue? Do we think their emotions, their loss is not relevant to this debate? So, all in all, this was a pretty shameful day for Washington.

But this effort is not over. I want to make it clear to the American people: We can still bring about meaningful changes that reduce gun violence, so long as the American people don't give up on it. Even without Congress, my administration will keep doing everything it can to protect more of our communities. We're going to address the barriers that prevent States from participating in the existing background check system. We're going to give law enforcement more information about lost and stolen guns so it can do its job. We're going to

help to put in place emergency plans to protect our children in their schools.

But we can do more if Congress gets its act together. And if this Congress refuses to listen to the American people and pass common-sense gun legislation, then the real impact is going to have to come from the voters.

To all the people who supported this legislation—law enforcement and responsible gun owners, Democrats and Republicans, urban moms, rural hunters, whoever you are—you need to let your Representatives in Congress know that you are disappointed and that if they don't act this time, you will remember come election time.

To the wide majority of NRA households who supported this legislation, you need to let your leadership and lobbyists in Washington know they didn't represent your views on this one.

The point is, those who care deeply about preventing more and more gun violence will have to be as passionate and as organized and as vocal as those who blocked these common-sense steps to help keep our kids safe. Ultimately, you outnumber those who argued the other way. But they're better organized. They're better financed. They've been at it longer. And they make sure to stay focused on this one issue during election time. And that's the reason why you can have something that 90 percent of Americans support and you can't get it through the Senate or the House of Representatives.

So to change Washington, you, the American people, are going to have to sustain some passion about this. And when necessary, you've got to send the right people to Washington. And that requires strength, and it requires persistence.

And that's the one thing that these families should have inspired in all of us. I still don't know how they have been able to muster up the strength to do what they've doing over the last several weeks, last several months.

And I see this as just round one. When Newtown happened, I met with these families and I spoke to the community, and I said, something must be different right now. We're

going to have to change. That's what the whole country said. Everybody talked about how we were going to change something to make sure this didn't happen again, just like everybody talked about how we needed to do something after Aurora. Everybody talked about, we needed to change something after Tucson.

And I'm assuming that the emotions that we've all felt since Newtown, the emotions that we've all felt since Tucson and Aurora and Chicago—the pain we share with these families and families all across the country who've lost a loved one to gun violence—I'm assuming that's not a temporary thing. I'm assuming our expressions of grief and our commitment to do something different—to prevent these things from happening—are not empty words.

## Remarks at an Interfaith Prayer Service for the Victims of the Terrorist Attack in Boston, Massachusetts *April 18, 2013*

Thank you. Please. Hello, Boston.

Scripture tells us to “run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Run with endurance the race that is set before us.

On Monday morning, the Sun rose over Boston. The sunlight glistened off the State-house dome. In the Common and the Public Garden, spring was in bloom. On this Patriot's Day, like so many before, fans jumped onto the “T” to see the Sox at Fenway. In Hopkinton, runners laced up their shoes and set out on a 26.2-mile test of dedication and grit and the human spirit. And across this city, hundreds of thousands of Bostonians lined the streets: to hand the runners cups of water and to cheer them on.

It was a beautiful day to be in Boston, a day that explains why a poet once wrote that this town is not just a capital, not just a place. Boston, he said, “is the perfect state of grace.”

And then, in an instant, the day's beauty was shattered. A celebration became a tragedy. And so we come together to pray and mourn and measure our loss. But we also come together today to reclaim that state of grace: to reaffirm that the spirit of this city is undaunted

I believe we're going to be able to get this done. Sooner or later, we are going to get this right. The memories of these children demand it. And so do the American people.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president and chief executive officer, National Rifle Association. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mark Barden, father of Daniel Barden, who was killed in the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, on December 14, 2012.

and the spirit of this country shall remain undimmed.

To Governor Patrick; Mayor Menino; Cardinal O'Malley and all the faith leaders who are here; Governors Romney, Swift, Weld, and Dukakis; Members of Congress; and most of all, the people of Boston and the families who've lost a piece of your heart: We thank you for your leadership. We thank you for your courage. We thank you for your grace.

I'm here today on behalf of the American people with a simple message: Every one of us has been touched by this attack on your beloved city. Every one of us stands with you.

Because, after all, it's our beloved city too. Boston may be your hometown, but we claim it too. It's one of America's iconic cities. It's one of the world's great cities. And one of the reasons the world knows Boston so well is that Boston opens its heart to the world.

Over successive generations, you've welcomed again and again new arrivals to our shores, immigrants who constantly reinvigorated this city and this Commonwealth and our Nation. Every fall, you welcome students from all across America and all across the globe, and