

Statement on Signing the Department of State Rewards Program Update and Technical Corrections Act of 2012

January 15, 2013

Today I signed into law S. 2318, the Department of State Rewards Program Update and Technical Corrections Act of 2012. This legislation will enhance the ability of the U.S. Government to offer monetary rewards for information that leads to the arrest or conviction of foreign nationals accused by international criminal tribunals of atrocity-related crimes and of individuals involved in transnational organized crime.

This powerful new tool can be used to help bring to justice perpetrators of the worst crimes known to humankind. This includes individuals such as Joseph Kony and other leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), as well as certain commanders of M23 and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). All of these individuals face charges before international criminal tribunals for horrific acts, including attacks on civilians,

murder, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and rape. We have made unmistakably clear that the United States is committed to seeing war criminals and other perpetrators of atrocities held accountable for their crimes, and today's legislation can help us achieve that goal.

The legislation also authorizes the U.S. Government to offer rewards for information leading to the arrest or conviction of individuals involved in transnational organized crime, such as money laundering and trafficking in persons, arms, and illicit goods. This important new tool will support my administration's strategy to combat transnational organized crime, bolster our fight against the scourge of modern slavery, and protect our national security.

NOTE: S. 2318, approved January 15, was assigned Public Law No. 112–283.

Remarks on Gun Violence

January 16, 2013

Vice President Joe Biden. Before I begin today, let me say to the families of the innocents who were murdered 33 days ago, our heart goes out to you. And you show incredible courage—incredible courage—being here. And the President and I are going to do everything in our power to honor the memory of your children and your wives with the work we take up here today.

It's been 33 days since the Nation's heart was broken by the horrific, senseless violence that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School: twenty—twenty—beautiful first-graders gunned down in a place that's supposed to be their second sanctuary; six—six—members of the staff killed trying to save those children. It's literally been hard for the Nation to comprehend, hard for the Nation to fathom.

And I know for the families who are here that time is not measured in days, but it's mea-

sured in minutes, in seconds, since you received that news. Another minute without your daughter. Another minute without your son. Another minute without your wife. Another minute without your mom.

I want to personally thank Chris and Lynn McDonnell, who lost their beautiful daughter Grace, and the other parents who I had a chance to speak to, for their suggestions and for—again, just for the courage of all of you to be here today. I admire the grace and the resolve that you all are showing. And I must say I've been deeply affected by your faith as well. And the President and I are going to do everything to try to match the resolve you've demonstrated.

No one can know for certain if this senseless act could have been prevented, but we all know we have a moral obligation—a moral obligation—to do everything in our power to di-