

## The President's Weekly Address December 14, 2013

One year ago today, a quiet, peaceful town was shattered by unspeakable violence. Six dedicated school workers and 20 beautiful children were taken from our lives forever. As parents, as Americans, the news filled us with grief.

Newtown is a town like so many of our hometowns. The victims were educators and kids that could have been any of our own. And our hearts were broken: for the families that lost a piece of their heart; for the communities changed forever; for the survivors, so young, whose innocence was torn away far too soon.

But beneath the sadness, we also felt a sense of resolve that these tragedies must end and that to end them, we must change. From the very beginning, our efforts were led by the parents of Newtown—men and women, impossibly brave—who stepped forward in the hopes that they might spare others their heartbreak. And they were joined by millions of Americans—mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers—who refused to accept these acts of violence as somehow inevitable.

Over the past year, their voices have sustained us, and their example has inspired us: to be better parents and better neighbors; to give our children everything they need to face the world without fear; to meet our responsibilities not just to our own families, but to our communities. More than the tragedy itself, it's how Newtown will be remembered.

## Remarks at "Christmas in Washington" December 15, 2013

Thank you. Well, merry Christmas, everybody! I want to thank our host, Hugh Jackman, for keeping our safety in mind and leaving Wolverine's claws at home. [Laughter] It can't be easy to wrap presents with those things. [Laughter] Good for carving up "roast beast" though. [Laughter]

I want to thank all the incredible performers for sharing their talents and their holiday spirit

And on this anniversary of a day we will never forget, that's the example we should continue to follow. Because we haven't yet done enough to make our communities and our country safer. We have to do more to keep dangerous people from getting their hands on a gun so easily. We have to do more to heal troubled minds. We have to do everything we can to protect our children from harm and make them feel loved and valued and cared for.

And as we do, we can't lose sight of the fact that real change won't come from Washington. It will come the way it's always come: from you, from the American people. As a nation, we can't stop every act of violence. We can't heal every troubled mind. But if we want to live in a country where we can go to work, send our kids to school, and walk our streets free from fear, we have to keep trying. We have to keep caring. We have to treat every child like they're ours. Like those in Sandy Hook, we must choose to love.

And together, we must and can change. Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:30 p.m. on December 13 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast on December 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 14.

with us tonight. And we appreciate the whole team at Time Warner and the National Building Museum who make it possible for our fellow Americans to enjoy these evenings' performances.

Every year, we mark the holiday season with celebrations and good cheer. And I should remind my girls that I like getting Christmas presents as much as anybody. [Laughter] But

this is also a time to remember the story of a child born to two faithful travelers on a holy night, long ago.

The sacred birth of Jesus Christ was God's gift to man on Earth. And through His example, He taught us that we should love the Lord, love our neighbors as we love ourselves. It's a teaching that has endured for generations. And today, it lies at the heart of my faith and that of millions of Americans and billions around the globe.

No matter who we are or where we come from or how we worship, it's a message of hope and devotion that can unite all of us this holiday season. It compels all of us to reach out and help our less fortunate citizens—our poor, our sick, our neighbors in need—and to serve those who sacrifice so much on our behalf.

And that's why tonight's celebration benefits the Children's National Medical Center and all the children whose lives they touch and save, including all the little elves who are here tonight. [Laughter]

And that's why, with our men and women in uniform serving far from home in harm's way, we thank them as well and their families. And we wish, this holiday season and all seasons, for peace on Earth.

To all Americans, from our family to yours, God bless you, and have a very merry Christmas.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to actor Hugh Jackman.

## Statement on Senate Confirmation of Jeh C. Johnson as Secretary of Homeland Security *December 16, 2013*

I am pleased the Senate has confirmed Jeh Johnson as our next Secretary of Homeland Security with broad bipartisan support. In Jeh our dedicated homeland security professionals will have a strong leader with a deep understanding of the threats we face and a proven ability to work across agencies and complex organizations to keep America secure. Jeh has been a critical member of my national security team, and he helped to shape some of our most

successful national security policies and strategies. As Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh will play a leading role in our efforts to protect the homeland against terrorist attacks, adapt to changing threats, stay prepared for natural disasters, strengthen our border security, and make our immigration system fairer, while upholding the values, civil liberties, and laws that make America great. I look forward to Jeh's counsel and sound judgment for years to come.

## Statement on Representative James D. Matheson's Decision Not To Seek Reelection *December 17, 2013*

Jim Matheson has proudly represented the people of Utah for more than 12 years in the United States Congress. He has been a forceful advocate of our Nation's veterans and worked to strengthen our economy through his support of key trade agreements. Michelle and

I thank Congressman Matheson for his service and wish him, his wife Amy, and their two sons the very best in the future.

NOTE: The statement referred to Will and Harris Matheson, sons of Rep. Matheson.