

The President's Weekly Address

January 1, 2016

Happy New Year, everybody. I am fired up for the year that stretches out before us. And that's because of what we've accomplished together over the past 7 years.

Seven years ago, our businesses were losing 800,000 jobs a month. They've now created jobs for 69 straight months, driving the unemployment rate from a high of 10 percent down to 5 percent.

Seven years ago, too many Americans went without health insurance. We've now covered more than 17 million people, dropping the rate of the uninsured below 10 percent for the very first time.

Seven years ago, we were addicted to foreign oil. Now our oil imports have plummeted, our clean energy industry is booming, and America is a global leader in the fight against climate change.

Seven years ago, there were only two States in America with marriage equality. And now there are 50.

All of this progress is because of you. And we've got so much more to do. So my New Year's resolution is to move forward on our unfinished business as much as I can. And I'll be more frequently asking for your help. That's what this American project is all about.

That's especially true for one piece of unfinished business: our epidemic of gun violence.

Last month, we remembered the third anniversary of Newtown. This Friday, I'll be thinking about my friend Gabby Giffords, 5 years into her recovery from the shooting in Tucson. And all across America, survivors of gun violence and those who lost a child or a parent or a spouse to gun violence are forced to mark such awful anniversaries every single day.

And yet Congress still hasn't done anything to prevent what happened to them from happening to other families. Three years ago, a bipartisan, commonsense bill would have required background checks for virtually everyone who buys a gun. Keep in mind, this is a pol-

icy that is supported by some 90 percent of the American people. It was supported by a majority of NRA households. But the gun lobby mobilized against it, and the Senate blocked it.

Since then, tens of thousands of our fellow Americans have been mowed down by gun violence. Tens of thousands. Each time, we're told that commonsense reforms like background checks might not have stopped the last massacre or the one before that, so we shouldn't do anything.

We know we can't stop every act of violence. But what if we tried to stop even one? What if Congress did something—anything—to protect our kids from gun violence?

A few months ago, I directed my team at the White House to look into any new actions I can take to help reduce gun violence. And on Monday, I'll meet with our Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, to discuss our options. Because I get too many letters from parents and teachers and kids to sit around and do nothing. I get letters from responsible gun owners who grieve with us every time these tragedies happen, who share my belief that the Second Amendment guarantees a right to bear arms, and who share my belief we can protect that right while keeping an irresponsible, dangerous few from inflicting harm on a massive scale.

So I know there are a bunch of us who care about this. If you are one of them, I need your help.

Change, as always, is going to take all of us. The gun lobby is loud and well organized in its defense of effortlessly available guns for anyone. The rest of us are going to have to be just as passionate and well organized in our defense of our kids. That's the work of citizenship: to stand up and fight for the change that we seek. I hope you'll join me in making America safer for all of our children.

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on December 17, 2015, in the