

Statement on Representative James A. McDermott's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 4, 2016

For more than 40 years, Jim McDermott has worked tirelessly on behalf of the people of Washington State. As a State legislator, he helped pass laws that offered healthcare to unemployed and low-income Washingtonians, the first such program in the Nation. In the United States Congress, he continued to be a

much-needed voice for his most vulnerable constituents. Across America, you'll find families that are better off because Jim McDermott was fighting for them. I'm grateful for Jim's service, and Michelle and I wish him all the best in whatever the future holds.

Remarks on Gun Violence

January 5, 2016

The President. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Mark, I want to thank you for your introduction. I still remember the first time we met and the time we spent together and the conversation we had about Daniel. And that changed me that day. And my hope, earnestly, has been that it would change the country.

Five years ago this week, a sitting Member of Congress and 18 others were shot at, at a supermarket in Tucson, Arizona. It wasn't the first time I had to talk to the Nation in response to a mass shooting, nor would it be the last. Fort Hood. Binghamton. Aurora. Oak Creek. Newtown. The Navy Yard. Santa Barbara. Charleston. San Bernardino. Too many.

Audience member. Too many.

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The President. Now, thanks to a great medical team and the love of her husband Mark, my dear friend and colleague, Gabby Giffords, survived. She's here with us today with her wonderful mom. Thanks to a great medical team, her wonderful husband Mark, who, by the way, the last time I met with Mark—this is just a small aside—you may know Mark's twin brother is in outer space. [Laughter] He came to the office, and I said, "How often are you talking to him?" And he says, "Well, I usually talk to him every day, but the call was coming in right before the meeting so I think I may have not an-

swered his call"—[laughter]—which made me feel kind of bad. [Laughter] That's a long-distance call. [Laughter] So I told him if his brother Scott is calling today, that he should take it. [Laughter] Turn the ringer on. [Laughter]

I was there with Gabby when she was still in the hospital, and we didn't think necessarily at that point that she was going to survive. And that visit right before a memorial—about an hour later Gabby first opened her eyes. And I remember talking to mom about that. [Laughter] But I know the pain that she and her family have endured these past 5 years and the rehabilitation and the work and the effort to recover from shattering injuries.

And then, I think of all the Americans who aren't as fortunate. Every single year, more than 30,000 Americans have their lives cut short by guns—30,000. Suicides. Domestic violence. Gang shootouts. Accidents. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have lost brothers and sisters, or buried their own children. Many have had to learn to live with a disability or learned to live without the love of their life.

A number of those people are here today. They can tell you some stories. In this room right here, there are a lot of stories. There's a lot of heartache. There's a lot of resilience, there's a lot of strength, but there's also a lot of pain. And this is just a small sampling.

The United States of America is not the only country on Earth with violent or dangerous people. We are not inherently more prone to