

play video games. He wasn't in the wrong place at the wrong time. He hadn't made a bad decision. He was exactly where any other kid would be. Your kid. My kids. And then, gunmen started firing. And Zaevion—who was in high school, hadn't even gotten started in life—dove on top of three girls to shield them from the bullets. And he was shot in the head. And the girls were spared. And he gave his life to save theirs, an act of heroism a lot bigger than anything we should ever expect from a 15-year-old. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

We are not asked to do what Zaevion Dobson did. We're not asked to have shoulders that big, a heart that strong, reactions that quick. I'm not asking people to have that same level of courage or sacrifice or love. But if we love our kids and care about their prospects, and if we love this country and care about its future, then we can find the courage to vote. We can find the courage to get mobilized and organized. We can find the courage to cut through all the noise and do what a sensible country would do.

That's what we're doing today. And tomorrow, we should do more. And we should do more the day after that. And if we do, we'll

leave behind a nation that's stronger than the one we inherited and worthy of the sacrifice of a young man like Zaevion.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Barden, founder and managing director, Sandy Hook Promise, and father of Daniel Barden, who was killed in the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, on December 14, 2012; Mark E. Kelly, husband, and Gloria F. Giffords, mother, of former Rep. Gabrielle D. Giffords; Cmdr. Scott J. Kelly, crewmember, International Space Station; Min Yingjun, who was arrested for stabbing 22 children outside their school in the village of Chengping in Henan Province, China, on December 14, 2012; Mayor Madeline Rogero of Knoxville, TN; Brandon Perry and Christopher D. Bassett, suspected gunmen in the shooting in Knoxville on December 17, 2015; and Faith Gordon and Kiara Rucker, Fulton High School students who were shielded by Zaevion Dobson in the Knoxville shooting.

Statement on Representative Steven J. Israel's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 5, 2016

Steve Israel has spent more than two decades serving the people of Long Island and fighting for working families. During his eight terms in Congress, he has fought to expand economic opportunity, deliver on America's promise of equality, honor our commitments to our veterans, and protect our communities from gun violence. As a leader of the Demo-

cratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Steve fought to advance our shared values and to build a future where every American who works hard can get ahead. I'm grateful for Steve's service, and I look forward to working with him throughout the remainder of his term. Michelle and I wish Steve and his family well as they begin their newest chapter.

Statement on the Observance of Orthodox Christmas

January 7, 2016

Michelle and I wish a blessed Christmas to Orthodox Christians in the United States and around the world. During this holy season, we

celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and pray for peace on Earth. This day gives us a special opportunity to commemorate the contributions