

# THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

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## President Obama on the Need to Reduce Gun Violence: "Shame on us if we've forgotten"



Standing with the families and teachers of gun violence victims at the White House on Thursday, President Obama called on Congress to pass commonsense reforms that will protect other children, families, and communities from experiencing similar pain and heartbreak.

In his remarks, President Obama promised the American people that he had not forgotten the 20 innocent children and teachers who were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary in December.

The President said:

"There's absolutely no reason why we can't get this done. But the reason we're talking about here today is because it's not done until it's done. And there are some powerful voices on the other side that are interested in running out the clock or changing the subject or drowning out the majority of the American people to prevent any of these reforms from happening at all. They're doing everything they can to make all our progress collapse under the weight of fear and frustration, or their assumption is that people will just forget about it.

"I read an article in the news just the other day wondering is Washington -- has Washington missed its opportunity, because as time goes on after Newtown, somehow people start moving on and forgetting. Let me tell you, the people here, they don't forget. Grace's dad is not forgetting. Hadiya's mom hasn't forgotten. The notion that two months or three months after something as horrific as what happened in Newtown happens and we've moved on to other things, that's not who we are. That's not who we are.

"And I want to make sure every American is listening today. Less than 100 days ago that happened, and the entire country was shocked. And the entire country pledged we would do something about it and that this time would be different. Shame on us if we've forgotten. I haven't forgotten those kids. Shame on us if we've forgotten."

Watch the President's full remarks [here](#).

### Julia Pierson Sworn In As First Woman to Lead the U.S. Secret Service



On Wednesday, Julia Pierson was sworn in as the first-ever female U.S. Secret Service Director. Vice President Biden administered the oath of office in a ceremony in the Oval Office.

President Obama commended Pierson's demonstrated commitment to her work with the U.S. Secret Service, saying:

"I have to say that Julia's reputation within the Service is extraordinary," President Obama said following the ceremony. "She's come up through the ranks. She's done just about every job there is to do at the Secret Service."

"Obviously, she's breaking the mold in terms of directors of the agency, and I think that people are all extraordinarily proud of her. And we have the greatest confidence in the wonderful task that lies ahead and very confident that she is going to do a great job. So we just want to say congratulations."

### President Obama's Remarks at Naturalization Ceremony

On Monday, President Obama delivered remarks at a naturalization ceremony at the White House for 28 active duty service members and civilians. In his remarks, President Obama welcomed the new citizens and affirmed his commitment to reforming our immigration system with commonsense proposals.

"We are so proud of everybody here. In each of you, we see the true spirit of America. And we see a bit of ourselves, too, because most of our stories trace back to moments just like this one. To an ancestor who — just like the men and women here today — raised their right hand and recited that sacred oath.

"And the point is that unless you are one of the first Americans, unless you are a Native American, you came from someplace else. That's why we've always defined ourselves as a nation of immigrants. And we've always been better off for it. The promise we see in those who come from all over the world is one of our greatest strengths. It's kept our workforce young. It keeps our businesses on the cutting edge. It's helped to build the greatest economic engine that the world has ever known."

Read President Obama's remarks [here](#).

### President Obama meets with African leaders

On Thursday, President Obama met with President Macky Sall of Senegal, President Joyce Banda of Malawi, President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone, and Prime Minister Jose Maria Pereira Neves of Cape Verde at the White House.

In a meeting in the Cabinet Room President Obama and the visiting leaders discussed how we can work together to support their efforts to promote democratic institutions and encourage economic opportunity. President Obama commended each leader for their work on transparency and respect for human rights and for their leadership on food security.

In remarks following the meeting, President Obama emphasized the United States' dedication to continued commitment and strengthened partnerships with African countries.

The President said:



"So what our discussion has focused on is, number one, how do we continue to build on strong democracies; how do we continue to build on transparency and accountability. Because what we've learned over the last several decades is that when you've got good governance -- when you have democracies that work, sound management of public funds, transparency and accountability to the citizens that put leaders in place -- it turns out that that is not only good for the state and the functioning of government, it's also good for economic development because it gives people confidence, it attracts business, it facilitates trade and commerce...

"And so my main message to each of these leaders is that the United States is going to be a strong partner, not based on the old model in which we are a donor and they are simply a recipient, but a new model that's based on partnership and recognizing that no continent has greater potential or greater upside than the continent of Africa if they in fact have the kind of strong leadership that these four individuals represent."

Watch the President's remarks following the meeting [here](#).

### President Obama's Statement on Passover

In celebration of Passover, President Obama released the following statement:

"As we prepare for our fifth Seder in the White House, Michelle and I send our warmest wishes to all those celebrating Passover here in America, in the State of Israel, and around the world.

"Tonight, Jewish families will gather with family and friends to celebrate with songs, wine, and food. They will read from the *Haggadah*, and retell the story that makes this holiday so powerful.

"Last week, I visited the state of Israel for the third time, my first as President. I reaffirmed our countries' unbreakable bonds with Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Peres. I had the chance to speak directly with young Israelis about the future they wanted for their country, their region, and the world. And I saw once again how the dream of true freedom found its full expression in those words of hope from Hatikvah, *lihyot 'am chofshi be'artzeinu*, 'To be a free people in our land.'

"Passover is a celebration of the freedom our ancestors dreamed of, fought for, and ultimately won. But even as we give thanks, we are called to look to the future. We are reminded that responsibility does not end when we reach the promised land, it only begins. As my family and I prepare to once again take part in this ancient and powerful tradition, I am hopeful that we can draw upon the best in ourselves to find the promise in the days that lie ahead, meet the challenges that will come, and continuing the hard work of repairing the world. Chag sameach."

### Statement by the President on Easter Weekend

On Friday, President Obama released the following statement on Good Friday and Easter:

"This weekend, Michelle and I join our fellow Christians here at home and around the world in marking Good Friday and celebrating Easter. These Holy Days are a time to reflect on the momentous sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for each of us, and to celebrate the triumph of the Resurrection and His gift of grace. It is a time for renewed hope amidst continued challenges. It's also a time to ponder the common values that unite us -- to have compassion for all and to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves. As we embrace our loved ones and give thanks for our blessings, we wish all who celebrate with us a blessed Easter."

### Issues in the News

#### **Talking Points: Reducing Gun Violence**

- President Obama stood with mothers today to urge Congress to take action on common-sense measure to keep our children safe from gun violence.
- President Obama, like most Americans, believes the Second Amendment guarantees an individual's right to bear arms. He also believes, like most Americans, that we have a responsibility to make sure guns are used in a safe manner and do not fall into the wrong hands. As the President has said repeatedly, "While there is no law or set of laws that can prevent every senseless act of violence completely, if there is if even one thing we can do to reduce this violence – even one life can be saved – we have an obligation to try."
- That's why President Obama asked the Vice President to lead an effort, working with members of the cabinet, to outline concrete steps we can take action on right now to keep our kids safe, help prevent mass shootings, and reduce the widespread gun violence in our country.

- President Obama laid out a specific plan based on these recommendations that will protect our children and communities by reducing gun violence. He also signed 23 executive actions to reduce gun violence. But these executive actions are not a replacement for legislative action on Capitol Hill.
- There is a genuine disagreement about the best way forward to reduce the epidemic of gun violence, but the American people have been very clear that the time to act is now. Senators in Washington have heard their calls and in the last few weeks taken some big steps forward.
- Just a few weeks ago, the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced a bill that would make it harder for criminals and people with severe mental illnesses who could be a threat to themselves or others to obtain a gun- this is an idea supported by nine out of ten Americans, including a majority of people who own guns.
- The Senate has also been developing a bill that would crack down on people who buy guns with the intent to funnel them to criminals. This bill would reduce violent crime and help protect our law enforcement officials.
- And the Senate took steps to reinstate and toughen a ban on military-style assault weapons and set a 10 round limit for magazines. This would make our schools safer places for our children to grow and learn.
- These measures deserve a vote and will get one in the Senate. I urge members of the House to do the same. These are not controversial bills- they're common sense and supported by the majority of the American people.
- We might not be able to stop every act of gun violence. But as Americans, we have an obligation to try.
- We have a real chance to reduce gun violence in our country. We can reaffirm our tradition of responsible gun ownership, and we can do more to stop guns from getting into the hands of dangerous people who would use them to commit acts of violence.
- We've made progress in the last few months, but there is more work to do. In the weeks ahead we need to finish the job.