

Gun Violence and President Biden's Policy:

An update from Justice Team Leader Tom Buglio

For many of us in the Gun Violence Prevention community who watched the President's State of the Union Address on Tuesday, March 1st, we were disappointed. President Biden is truly a friend of our movement, and has worked in the past to help pass the Brady Background Check Bill into law in 1993, and the first 'assault weapons ban' in 1994, which unfortunately expired in 2004. We had great hopes that while in office as President, he would use his bully pulpit more than he has to push for real, concrete action.

While he has done some good things (executive actions and federal money for Community Violence Programs being the most productive), he has not consistently used his office to address our issue. Of course, he may have a few other burning issues on his plate! Pandemic, Ukraine and Putin, the economy and inflation etc. etc.

I wrote the White House last week asking for three things in the State of the Union address: Nominate another ATF director (the first one failed to be confirmed in the summer); declare a federal office of Gun Violence Prevention - with a GVP czar; and get ATF to make a decision on Ghost Guns - force them to be subject to background checks. Here is President Biden's response:



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 2, 2022

Dear Mr. Buglio,

Thank you for writing to me about gun violence in America—an epidemic that has plagued our Nation for far too long.

We have seen mass murders in places where we live, learn, work, and pray. We have seen far too many lives lost to community violence and suicide by firearm. Gun violence is a stain on our character as a Nation, and we must do everything we can to save lives.

My first priority is to protect the American people, and I will use every resource at my disposal—consistent with our Nation's laws and the Second Amendment—to keep our families, friends, and neighbors safe from gun violence. That is why I have taken action to rein in the proliferation of homemade and modified guns, collect more data about firearms trafficking, and help states keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals. I am also implementing a zero-tolerance policy for rogue firearms dealers who willfully violate federal laws, and I am pushing for more investment to help address and prevent gun violence in local communities.

My Administration is taking action, but we need Congress to act, too. Common-sense bills that require background checks and close loopholes have already passed the House of Representatives, and I am urging the Senate to send those bills to my desk. I have also called on Congress to ban assault weapons and high capacity magazines and to repeal gun manufacturers' immunity from liability.

This isn't a partisan issue. Most responsible gun owners will tell you that they support reasonable reforms, and that they—along with the vast majority of the American people—believe that anyone who tries to purchase a gun should have to go through a background check.

Our country has lost too many lives to the gun violence epidemic, and it is in our power to stop it. I will not stop fighting until we do.

Sincerely,

I appreciate having someone like Joe Biden as our President, and appreciate his responding to my letter. In the State of the Union, however, when he did finally talk about gun violence, his points were scattered and unfocused, with no new ideas or commitments to do anything that hasn't already been tried. It was a disappointment, from a good man who has a very full plate of national and international issues to deal with. - TB