

# NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

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## **STATEMENT BY BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE CHIEF JIM JOHNSON, CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE ON THE MASSACRE AT SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The members of the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence express our deepest sorrow and our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the tragic and catastrophic massacre this past Friday at Sandy Hook Elementary School. We grieve for the 20 first-grade students who were killed, for the adults who died while trying to protect them, for their families who will always mourn their loss, for the students and teachers who survived but will never be the same, and for the Newtown community whose sense of security is now shattered.

As law enforcement professionals, we have a duty to protect the lives and safety of our citizens. There is nothing we will not do to fulfill this duty, including risking our own lives. But that, in this instance, was not enough. The police response at Sandy Hook was swift and brave, but there was no chance for law enforcement to save the lives lost, given the firepower involved and how quickly the perpetrator was able to inflict wide-spread carnage, spray-firing multiple rounds of ammunition.

Vicious, mindless slaughter is taking place with alarming and accelerating frequency in the schools, shopping malls, and movie theatres of America, in addition to the gun violence that occurs daily but receives less attention. Gun violence has become an epidemic that must be addressed with urgency.

Our duty demands that we do more than risk our lives in the next frenzied assault. A comprehensive approach to this problem is needed, and it is our duty to let policymakers and the public know what policies we need to better protect the public. As public safety professionals, we are calling for the President and Congress to:

- Require background checks for ALL firearm purchasers.
- Limit high-capacity ammunition magazines to ten rounds.
- Ban new semi-automatic assault weapons.

These measures will save lives. Failure to act will continue to cost lives. There is a historic, long established Constitutional right for Americans to own guns. These three measures do not infringe on that right. They will prevent millions of dangerous people from acquiring firearms, and prevent weapons whose distinguishing characteristic is the ability to spray-fire tens to hundreds of rounds in rapid succession, inflicting the kind of carnage we have seen from Aurora to Newtown. Semiautomatic assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines are

made for war. They have no role in self-defense or hunting, unless the goal is to hunt human beings.

In his remarks to the grieving community of Newtown, President Obama was clear about the need for action to prevent future tragedies. We stand ready to work with the President and with Congress to do what is necessary to stop this gun violence epidemic and to prevent what happened in Newtown from happening to others.

We are appealing to all policymakers in the strongest most urgent possible terms. Forget the politics. Remember these children. To save lives, act now.

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International Association of Chiefs of Police  
Major Cities Chiefs Association  
National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives  
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives  
Police Executive Research Forum  
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