

President Obama Preparing to Receive Gun Policy Recommendations



Handguns are on display at B & J Guns in New York in 2008.

From Learning English, this is IN THE NEWS in VOA Special English.

Almost a month has passed since a gunman killed twenty children and six adults at a school in Newtown, Connecticut. The shooter was found to have many weapons.

After the killings, President Obama ordered Vice President Joe Biden to lead a task force on how to reduce gun violence. Mr. Biden and his group are likely to present their ideas to the president by next Tuesday.

The task force includes representatives of hunting organizations, support groups for victims of gun violence, filmmakers and other members of the media. It also includes law enforcement officials, religious leaders and medical experts.

Vice President Biden says their ideas might include more complete investigations of those seeking to buy guns. He says the proposals may include a ban on ammunition clips that carry many bullets. He is appealing for compromise.

“There has got to be some common ground here, to not solve every problem, but diminish the probability that what we have seen in these mass shootings will occur, and diminish the probability that our children are at risk in their schools.”

The vice president met strong opposition this week in talks with a representative of the National Rifle Association, the NRA. The group opposes efforts to strengthen gun laws. It also is critical of steps it says would violate the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. The Second Amendment guarantees the right to bear, or possess, arms.

David Keene is president of the NRA. He says it is clear that the Obama administration has already decided its positions on firearms. He said the NRA is preparing to energize its members for a fight.

President Obama is expected to seek congressional action on the Biden group’s proposals. He also may approve executive orders designed to reduce gun violence.

American lawmakers may not act any time soon on gun-control proposals. Senate Minority leader Mitch McConnell warned recently that gun legislation may have to wait until after Congress acts on spending and debt concerns.

Former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords is among those who want Congress to act. She suffered severe injuries in a deadly shooting two years ago in Arizona. She and her husband launched a new effort this week. They hope to fight the influence of the NRA and other gun rights supporters in Congress.

Another activist for gun control says he believes Mr. Obama will soon make recommendations on the issue. Dan Gross is president of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. He told VOA he believes the president will offer detailed proposals in his State of the Union message to Congress.

“I expect to hear specifics and that is based on conversations we have been having [with the White House]. You know, the inauguration is probably too soon. But the State of the Union, based on appropriately urgent timing of this task force, we would expect to hear specifics.”

President Obama is expected to announce new policies on gun violence shortly after he begins his second term.