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Disgrace in the U.S. Senate – A Police Perspective

Cops are true optimists. Surrounded by violence and facing danger every day, we have to be optimists. We represent the Police Chiefs from every major city in the Nation – and we believe we can do more to make America safe.

That's why we looked to the U.S. Senate for courage and leadership on gun violence, to enact reforms that are long overdue. With 94 % of the public asking for better gun laws, we expected the Senate to do what cops do – protect the public. But a minority of Senators protected themselves instead of the American people. That's a disgrace.

A handful of courageous Senators had offered bills to enact modest Federal reforms intended to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill, laws already on the books in many of the States. None of the proposed reforms would have taken guns from anyone and there were no plans for gun registration or licensing. Nothing to threaten those who own guns for recreation, sporting and hunting. But the gun lobby said "No" to all of it, and when weak Senators caved into the pressure, these common-sense measures did not pass. Not one of them.

Showing an unprecedented lack of courage, U.S. Senators defied the will of the American people and voted according to their instructions from the Washington gun lobby. Much was said about the rights of gun owners, but almost nothing was said about the equal rights of the public to be safe from gun violence. As the families of children murdered in Newtown watched from the Senate gallery, better laws were defeated by less than a majority because of a procedural requirement for 60 votes. The Newtown families came for justice and reassurance, but they witnessed a disgrace in the U.S. Senate.

During the same week in America, the Boston bombings came as a grim reminder of the violence that constantly threatens the public and their police. But the events in Boston also remind us that bravery and leadership are the qualities that make Americans proud – and that's why we will remain optimistic no matter what.



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Like all the cops who put on a uniform each day, Chiefs of Police will not give up on Washington. We will continue our struggle for laws that protect the public from gun violence. Just as the public knows their police will be there for them, the Chiefs want Americans to know that we are not giving up and going away.

This was a week that should forge a new resolve. The grief of the Newtown families and spirit of Boston's citizens and police will not be lost on those of us who are committed to public safety.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey
Philadelphia Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association

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