

Civic Minds

Date: Friday, January 8, 2016

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Article Title: Tearful Obama's actions on guns face towering hurdles

Section: Main, A1

Vocabulary:

Look up the definition of **resilience**. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

Quote: "There's a lot of **resilience**, there's a lot of strength, but there's also a lot of pain."

Comprehension Questions

1. Tears streaming down his face, President Obama on Tuesday condemned the gun violence that has reached across the United States as he vowed to do what?
2. For all the emotion he showed, Obama nonetheless faces three types of hurdles to the plan he laid out. What are they?
3. A number of the executive actions he plans are only suggested "guidance" for federal agencies. What does this mean?
4. Among other measures, the plan aims to better define what?
5. Nearly _____ million gun sales were processed through the background-check system in 2014, but some industry analysts say that as many as _____ percent more firearms could have been sold through private transactions not subject to background checks.
6. Even the most hopeful advocates say the new plan would affect only thousands of sales.
7. Obama's plan is likely to face legal challenges from whom?
8. Shortly before Obama's remarks, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives released guidance to gun sellers on the criteria that could qualify someone as a gun "dealer" who needs to be licensed and conduct background checks. What is the criteria?
9. With Congress unwilling to act, many gun-control groups have turned to states for changes, with _____ states (including Washington state) now imposing some form of background check.

Class Discussion Questions and Essay Prompts:

- ***How do you feel about the mass shootings that are happening in our country?***
- ***What legislation will effect change in this area?***
- ***Did you watch President Obama's statement? If you haven't, please do. What did you think about his message? Do you agree or disagree with his plan?***
- ***How do your parent's and other family members feel about tightening gun reform, like background checks?***

The National Rifle Association, targeted by Obama in his speech, mocked the president's tears. "The American people do not need more emotional, condescending lectures that are completely devoid of facts," said Chris Cox, the group's top lobbyist.

Republican presidential candidates also raced to condemn Obama, with U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas putting up a Web page with a menacing, altered picture of the president in a commando outfit. A caption read "Obama Wants Your Guns" next to a fundraising appeal.

- How do you feel about the National Rifle Association's stance, as well as U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz' comments?

U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin posted his opposition on Twitter as the president spoke, saying that Obama's "words and actions amount to a form of intimidation that undermines liberty."

But Dan Gross, the president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, posted on Twitter from the East Room: "President wiping tears. So am I. One of the most moving things I've ever seen."

Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, posted a "thank you" to Obama for "taking a crucial step forward on gun violence."

- What message would you Twitter to President Obama for taking this step?

Essay

"Each time this comes up," Obama said in his speech, "we are fed the excuse that common-sense reforms like background checks might not have stopped the last massacre, or the one before that, or the one before that, so why bother trying. I reject that thinking. We know we can't stop every act of violence, every act of evil in the world. But maybe we could try to stop one act of evil, one act of violence."

- Do you agree or disagree with Obama's statement?

Newspaper-related CBA activity: U.S. Policy

How the United States government interacts with the world affects people across the globe. Analyze and evaluate the causes and effects of US foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world.

- Using The Seattle Times e-edition, find an article from this week that deals with world politics or foreign policy.
- What are the main points of view from someone living in that particular country? How is that "view" similar and different than your own opinion, regarding the specific issue the article is discussing?

- Why is it important to study and learn about foreign policy? How does it help you understand the world we live in, using current issues and events?

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