

Following mass killing at Tulsa hospital, Biden pushes dead-on-arrival gun reform measures

Jacob Crosse
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President Joe Biden gave a prime-time address Thursday night advancing a series of limited gun control measures which will do nothing to address the unending wave of gun violence in the US and have no chance of passing in the evenly divided Senate.

His remarks came a day after a 45-year-old man murdered three health care workers and a patient before turning the gun on himself at a hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and just nine days after 19 children and two teachers were massacred at Robb Elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Testifying to the routine nature of gun violence in the US, hours before Biden gave his speech, at least five people were shot at a funeral in Racine, Wisconsin. The funeral was for 37-year-old Da'Shontay King Sr. who had been shot and killed by Racine police officer Zachary Brenner on May 20 after a short foot pursuit.

Since the Uvalde massacre, the Gun Violence Archive (GVA) has cataloged at least 21 mass shootings, which it defines as an incident in which four or more people were injured or killed in a shooting.

So far this year the GVA has documented at least 232 mass shootings in the US, amounting to more than one every day. This horrific pace would shatter the previous record set in 2021, in which the GVA identified 240 incidents which qualified as a mass shooting. So far, at least 256 people have been killed in mass shootings in the US with over 1,000 injured.

There has not been a single week in 2022 where there have not been at least four mass shootings. For comparison's sake, in 2014 there were 91 mass shootings throughout the entire year.

In his speech, Biden attempted to deflect the blame for daily mass shootings in the United States away from the deep social crisis produced by the capitalist system and onto the back of the entire population. Biden called on his "fellow Americans" to "do their part," to advance his limited gun control measures.

Biden put forward several proposals, a majority of which would require the support of 10 Republican senators to overcome the filibuster. The Democrats, who control Congress thanks to a majority in the House and Vice President Kamala Harris's tie-breaking vote in the Senate, could unilaterally abolish the filibuster and pass any number of bills concerning gun reform, voting rights, abortion rights, marriage equality, and the rest of Biden's long-dead "Build Back Better" agenda.

However, in the interest of "unity" with their far-right ruling class accomplices, Biden and the Democrats have refused to eliminate the filibuster and follow through on any of their limited social reform measures. Instead, as Biden did again during his Thursday speech, the Democrats mindlessly instruct the population to vote for them in the November elections.

Even while framing his proposals as "common sense," Biden acknowledged that the most robust measure he proposed, reinstating the 1994 assault weapons ban, had no chance of becoming law again. This fact exemplifies the rightward shift of not only the Republicans, but the Democrats as well over the last three decades.

In his speech, Biden called on Congress to a ban high-capacity magazines, institute "red-flag" laws, repeal immunity from liability for gun manufacturers and

implement a “safe-storage” law, a punitive measure that would be used to target shooters’ friends and family members after the fact for failing to lock up firearms.

Seeking to appeal to his fascist “Republican colleagues,” the Catholic Biden recited biblical verses throughout his speech while claiming that he had respect for “gun culture and tradition.” Biden claimed that his proposals were not “about taking away anyone’s rights” but about “protecting children ... families ... communities.”

Biden’s declaration that he cares about protecting children is as hollow as the measures he proposed.

Attempting to present a somber appearance meant to convey compassion, Biden gave his speech in the White House’s Cross Hall, which featured a red carpet lined with candles. In February 2021, Biden held an address from the same location to commemorate the 500,000 Americans that needlessly died from COVID-19, something he did not repeat this year when the COVID-19 death toll doubled to over a million.

The massive pandemic death toll in the United States is the outcome of the bipartisan “herd immunity” strategy pursued by Trump and Biden—a historic social crime and a searing indictment of the capitalist system and its representatives false claims to “protect children, families” or “communities.”

Biden’s appeal for “common sense” gun reform came a day after 45-year-old Michael Louis, apparently upset about ongoing pain he experienced following a recent back surgery, sought revenge on his doctor and any who tried to stop him at the Saint Francis Hospital complex in Tulsa.

In a news conference Thursday morning, Tulsa Police Chief Wendell Franklin told reporters police had discovered a letter on Louis’s body after he killed himself. Franklin claimed that Louis made clear in the letter he was going to kill Dr. Preston Phillips and “anyone who came in his way.”

While hundreds of police, including heavily armed SWAT officers, descended on the hospital within minutes of emergency services receiving calls about an active shooter situation, Louis killed himself before police made contact.

In addition to killing Dr. Phillips, the orthopedic surgeon who performed surgery on Louis last month, a second orthopedist, Dr. Stephanie Husen, was also killed. The other two victims are Amanda Green, a receptionist at the hospital, and William Love, who was at the hospital as a patient. Multiple reports claim there were several other injuries, however it is unknown as of this writing if these are gun-related injuries or if they were sustained by people trying to escape the hospital during the rampage.

Police revealed that since Louis was discharged from the hospital following his surgery, he repeatedly called Dr. Phillips complaining of back pain. Apparently upset at the fact that he was still suffering following his surgery, police claimed that Louis legally bought a .40 caliber pistol last week and an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle hours before carrying out his massacre.

In the same Thursday news conference, the president and CEO of Saint Francis Health System, Dr. Cliff Robertson, called on those viewing the press conference to “support this community with your prayers.”

Capitalism does not run on “prayers,” though, so in an email that went out to staff following the shooting, which was re-posted on social media, health care workers were instructed that they are allowed one morning to mourn the passing of their colleagues.

“To allow our staff and caregivers the opportunity to process today’s tragedy,” a snippet of the email read, “all Warren Clinic appointments in Tulsa and Broken Arrow scheduled before noon tomorrow have been canceled.”



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