

Rep. Kelly Shares Heartbreaking Gun Violence Stories On House Floor

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WASHINGTON, D.C.— Today Congresswoman Robin Kelly (IL-02), Vice Chair of the Congressional Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, delivered a passionate speech on the House floor about the human impacts of gun violence. She highlighted four heartbreaking stories from her constituents about how they have been personally affected by the gun violence epidemic.

“This week we mark the end of Gun Violence Awareness Month. But for too many families, there is no end to this month of awareness and advocacy,” said Congresswoman Kelly. “These families are painfully aware of the impacts of gun violence because they carry the weight of this epidemic with them every single day.”

Congresswoman Kelly has received more than 2,800 responses to a gun violence survey she sent to constituents earlier this month. More than 700 constituents shared personal stories of the impact gun violence has had on their lives. Her speech comes on the heels of another deadly weekend in Illinois, where 77 people were shot and five killed in Chicago alone.

Full text of Rep. Kelly’s speech is available below. Click [here](#) for a video of the speech.

Rep. Kelly Floor Speech on the Human Impacts of Gun Violence **June 29, 2021, 10AM ET**

“My husband was shot in the stomach during a robbery attempt in front of our house. Gun violence ruined his life. He was left with grievous residual injuries that have put a huge dent in my family’s finances, emotions, sense of security, and our well-being. My family has suffered a lot, but most especially my husband, who has suffered both impaired emotional and physical bodily function. He has so many medical issues as a result of his shooting. We have experienced pain and suffering like so many more families out there. There is horrible residual pain left behind by gun violence. We have become prisoners in our own home.”

“My younger brother took his own life with a handgun he legally obtained. He had a long history of mental illness, and I disagreed with his ability to purchase a firearm for this very reason. If there had been better background checks in place, he may not have been able to purchase the firearm. I wish that these restrictions were in place. I want you to know that real stakes are involved in a simple issue like background checks. If universal background checks were in place my little brother might still be alive.”

“My fiancé’s son, James, was shot and killed in 2018 after attending a get together. He was not the intended target. He was a straight-A student in his senior year of high

school, trying to decide if he was on his way to college or the Navy. But he didn't get a chance to make his choice. There were nearly 100 witnesses, but no arrest has been made.”

“I am a trauma therapist working with young children who have been exposed to violence. These children are under the age of five. Through play, they have demonstrated their experience with the sounds of gunfire. Some have even seen deceased people outside their front door. There is even less funding provided to address the trauma that gun violence produces for the most vulnerable – our children – who are living in the most violent areas.”

These are just a handful of the more than 700 stories about the devastating impacts of gun violence that my constituents have recently shared with me.

Each of these stories is heartbreaking, and they highlight both the complexity and the far-reaching consequences of the gun violence epidemic.

Every single day in my district and communities across the country, children are traumatized by the sounds of unpredictable gunfire, the sight of blood on pavement, or more ambulance lights in their neighborhoods.

Families are becoming financially ruined by the cost of continued surgeries and therapy after being shot.

Grandparents write to me and tell me their elementary-school-aged grandchildren are scared to go and play outside for fear of being gunned down like their classmates and neighbors.

When will enough be enough?

America's gun violence epidemic is a slow-motion massacre that is rapidly gaining speed.

Just this weekend, 77 people were shot in Chicago. 77 people in just one city, in just one weekend.

We must act now to stop the steady drip of daily gun violence. 2020 was one of the deadliest gun violence years on record, and we are already on track to outpace those grim statistics. More than 21,000 people are dead in just the first 6 months of this year.

We need to step up to the plate and do something to protect our constituents!

We need to make straw purchasing and gun trafficking federal crimes. We need to expand background checks. We need to support more evidence-based community violence prevention programs. We need to build opportunities for youth to get a good education and good jobs.

We cannot go on letting mothers bury their children.

This week we mark the end of Gun Violence Awareness Month. But for too many families, there is no end to this month of awareness and advocacy. These families are painfully aware of the impacts of gun violence because they carry the weight of this epidemic with them every single day.

I rise today to implore my colleagues to exercise some courage and responsibility by advancing gun violence prevention legislation.

I yield back.