

Gov. Pritzker Addresses July 4 Morning Mass Shooting in Highland Park

July 4 2022 6:22 PM



CHICAGO - Good afternoon. I want to begin by honoring the heroic actions of law enforcement who ran toward the gunshots they heard today. In particular, lives were saved because the Highland Park Police courageously protected and served their community.

I also want to thank our Illinois State Police who have been coordinating on the ground since this morning with Highland Park PD, neighboring police forces, the County Task force, FBI and ATF. Our troopers will continue the investigation and search until the job is done.

To the residents of Highland Park and surrounding communities: This murderer will be brought to justice. But until that happens, please follow instructions from local authorities on how best to keep you and your family safe. And please know that every resource at the state's disposal will be available to you in the days and weeks ahead as you recover from this horrific tragedy.

A little while ago, I spoke with President Biden who pledged all support the White House can provide. The President agrees with me: This madness must stop.

This morning a gunman opened fire on a July Fourth parade in Highland Park, taking 6 innocent lives, leaving 24 people in the hospital, traumatizing countless children and families, and shattering the peace of this community.

The families of 6 individuals woke up today to join a community celebration of our nation's independence. They will go to bed tonight less than whole.

There are no words for the kind of evil that shows up at a public celebration of freedom, hides on a roof and shoots innocent people with an assault rifle. There are no words I can offer to lessen the pain of those families who will no longer associate the 4th of July with celebration, but instead with grief. Please know that our state grieves with you, that MK and I and our family grieve with you.

It is devastating that a celebration of America was ripped apart by our uniquely American plague. A day dedicated to freedom has put into stark relief the one freedom we as a nation refuse to uphold – the freedom of our fellow citizens to live without the daily fear of gun violence.

You know what I love about the 4th of July? We celebrate the founding of this wonderful nation by gathering with family and friends, and enjoying parades and fireworks. Our cameras on days like this are filled with messy faces and reckless smiles and pretty sunsets – an effort to bottle up that unique feeling of sun-filled joy.

That's what evil took from us today. That's what gun violence robs us of — no matter the neighborhood or city it erupts in.

If you are angry today, I'm here to tell you to be angry. I'm furious. I'm furious that yet more innocent lives were taken by gun violence. I'm furious that their loved ones are forever broken by what took place today. I'm furious that children and their families have been traumatized. I'm furious that this is happening in communities all across Illinois and America. I'm furious because it does not have to be this way and yet we as a nation, well, we continue to allow this to happen. While we celebrate the 4th of July just once a year, mass shootings have become our weekly – yes, weekly – American tradition.

There are going to be people who say that today is not the day, that now is not the time, to talk about guns. I'm telling you there is no better day and no better time than right here and right now.

It's the 4th of July - a day for reflection on our freedoms. Our founders carried muskets, not assault weapons. And I don't think a single one of them would have said you have a constitutional right to an assault weapon with a high capacity magazine — or that that is more important than the right of the people who attended this parade today to live.

So yes, I'm angry. We as a nation deserve better.

May the memory of those we lost today be a blessing – and a call to action.