

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Applauds President Obama For Taking Action To Curb Gun Violence

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ST. CROIX -- Today, Virgin Islands Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett applauded President Barack Obama's announcement that the administration will take executive action to help reduce and prevent gun violence in America, a press release Mrs. Plaskett's office issued this afternoon reveals.

"I commend President Obama for taking action to address the gun violence in this country. These are common-sense actions that will mitigate the pandemic level of gun violence occurring in our streets, which have been a tragic and ongoing issue that has plagued our territory. These actions will save lives and make our streets safer—without infringing on the right to own firearms by law-abiding citizens," Mrs. Plaskett said.

“Additionally, Congress must act to pass comprehensive legislation that will not only expand background checks and close dangerous loopholes, but also strengthen border security to stop the flow of illegal guns into the country, and here in the territory. Much is made—rightfully—about the gun violence, and the number of illegal guns in cities like Chicago, but in 2015, the Virgin Islands had a homicide rate more than double that of Chicago. The Guns on our street don’t come from neighboring states with less stringent gun laws. We have to increase resources to protect our borders,” the freshman congresswoman added.

In addition to supporting President Obama’s actions, Mrs. Plaskett is an original co-sponsor of [legislation](#) that will require the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service to compile data and submit an annual report to Congress on the effects of gun violence on public health. She is also an original co-sponsor of a [bill](#) aimed at reinstating the Assault Weapons Ban.

The [executive actions](#) announced by the President on Tuesday will make significant progress in the ongoing struggle to curb gun violence:

Toughening background checks nationwide: The President’s executive actions provide new guidance on existing federal laws, clarifying that any individual in the business of selling firearms must obtain a license through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and therefore conduct background checks on prospective gun purchasers. These actions also include new measures and resources to make the background check system more efficient and effective.

Protecting communities with bolstered enforcement: The executive actions take new steps to promote smart and effective enforcement of our gun laws – including a proposed increase in funding for more ATF agents, greater resources for tracking illegal online firearms trafficking and strengthened domestic violence outreach efforts.

Improving mental health services: The President is proposing increased investment to expand access to mental health care. Further, the executive actions remove barriers that prevent the reporting of relevant mental health information to the background check system.

Driving new research into gun safety: The executive actions direct the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security to conduct or sponsor research into new technology to make firearms safer.