

First Lady Offers Solace to Families of Gun Victims

Rep. Kurt Schrader is alone among Oregon delegation to shun gun control

Teresa Raiford was one of a group of people who have lost loved ones to gun violence who went to Washington DC last week to meet legislators and attend the State of the Union address. The business consultant and community activist says the highlight of the trip was a visit with First Lady Michelle Obama.

“Michelle Obama spent time with each family individually,” Raiford says. “She did not rush us even though it was right before the State of the Union address. She let everyone speak for as long as they wanted.”

Mayors Against Illegal Guns, the gun control group founded by New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg, brought Raiford and other victims of gun violence to the capitol to lobby for a range of measures including: universal background checks for gun buyers, a ban

on assault weapons and high capacity magazines, and making gun trafficking a federal crime. Raiford and others spent two days meeting with Oregon legislators to ask them to support gun control efforts in Congress.

Raiford’s nephew Andre Dupree Payton, 19, was killed outside a downtown

aimed at healing the violence that claimed her nephew’s life.

“My nephew got killed by a bullet that came out with 66 other bullets,” Raiford said. “They found 67 bullets. And my friend Paul’s brother-in-law was killed at Clackamas Town Center by the 13th bullet – and that

Obama spent hours with Raiford’s group before the State of the Union address

nightclub in Portland, on Sept. 26, 2010. Raiford was visiting family in Portland at the time and decided to stay after the tragedy. Previously she had been living in Texas, where she ran a successful business development company.

Since then, she has run for Portland City Commissioner and promoted countless community events, all

took one and a half minutes.

“What I want to support is gun education, gun safety and lockboxes. The boy who killed people at Clackamas got the gun because it was not locked up. The Raven group found that 80 percent of people incarcerated for gun crimes bought their guns off the street legally”

“There’s a lot of NRA

people who feel that this is necessary and doesn’t take away our Second Amendment rights. None of the stuff we’re talking about violates anyone’s Second Amendment rights.

“I am asking people to go to demandplan.org and sign the petition,” Raiford says. “And we need to get Rep. Kurt Schrader on board so I’m asking people to call him or email his office. Reps. Blumenauer and DeFazio, and Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley are all on board, so that’s where the effort needs to be.

The First Lady spent two and a half hours with Raiford’s group on the afternoon before the State of the Union address.

“She says they are 100 percent behind background checks, and they are supporting victim families like myself,” Raiford says. “We’re never getting our children back but we’re



First Lady Michelle Obama met with family members of victims of gun violence last week. She is pictured here with Teresa Raiford, whose nephew Andre Payton was shot in Portland September 2010. Raiford is lobbying for gun control measures including universal background checks. Visit demandplan.org to learn more.

doing this for them. The president can’t do it without us. We need to be empowered by our communities.” You can contact Rep. Kurt Schrader’s office at: 202-225-5711

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