



Before I begin, I'd like to apologize, again, for my comments on Monday. Look, you guys know me. I'm a father, I'm a grandfather, I'm heartbroken for these families. The thought that my initial response could have caused more pain is something that will keep me up at night, and I'm sorry.

As it says in Psalm 112, "...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." I need to be better at that, and I ask for your forgiveness.

As we continue to hold up the families in prayer, It's also time to speak the truth about the violence that wracks our state, particularly Chicagoland. The suffering, the loss and the pain is nightmarish and ongoing. And it doesn't have to be this way.

Today I am calling for a special session of the Illinois State Legislature to take action to stop the mayhem on our streets.

- We must do whatever it takes to address the breakdown in mental health, particularly among isolated young men, which was made immeasurably worse during lockdowns.
- We must repeal Pritzker's coddle the criminal acts – No Cash Bail and the Safe-T Act – and surge police support into the Chicago area.
- The Illinois Firearms Restraining Act is on the books and should have been used. The Highland Park shooter was posting violent videos with an intent to attack. This shooter could have been stopped and would have been stopped if Governor Pritzker and the government were living up to their duty to protect the innocent.

Let's be clear: Governor Pritzker, this happened on your watch. You've got more gun control laws than almost anywhere else in America. Our problems are more complex than enacting more restrictive laws on law-abiding citizens.

The Firearms Restraining Act would have prevented the tragedy on the Fourth, but you buried it, left it moldering in some bureaucratic basement somewhere. Your watch, Governor. It's not enough to pass laws. You have to do the hard work of making sure the laws do what they're supposed to do.

Gun owners, let's get real: The Firearms Restraining Act exists. Stop pretending that it doesn't. If we have to amend it to be sure it protects our Constitutional rights, then we'll look at that. But for Pete's sake, let's use it.

This unspeakable tragedy happened in an affluent, mostly white, neighborhood, so it's getting national news. But we must not forget that more than 60 people have been shot in and around Chicago already in July. Ten died before Monday.

Four people were shot in West Garfield Park over the weekend. Two women were shot in Chinatown because they got caught in a crossfire. A teenage girl was shot and killed in Little Village. A 90-year-old man was found lying where he was shot – shot in the stomach – in Lawndale.

Governor Pritzker: The pain in Highland Park, West Garfield Park, Edgefield Park – and even in the Loop – this is all on your watch. The loss of life in these African American and minority communities matters just as much as the tragedy in Highland Park, but Gov. Pritzker, you never talk about them. Own it.

Use the laws on the books. Repeal No Cash Bail. Repeal the Safe-T Act, which should be renamed the Enable Homicide Act. It's been four years and nothing has changed. How much longer do the people of our state have to suffer?

As for mental health, the suffering is enormous. Among the issues I've heard: long wait times, burdensome paperwork, shortage of providers at all levels – especially psychiatrists – and not enough funding. We must bring everyone involved in mental health care to the same table to look for solutions.

I'm talking about doctors, first responders, patients, and home caregivers; parents, teachers and churches to identify the gaps these tormented people are falling through, and find solutions. Creating such a group, will be item #1 in the special session I am proposing.

The time for talking is over. We have to act.

I'd be happy to take a few questions, now.