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CLARK PARK VENDORS LOOK FOR CITY SOLUTIONS

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Crosses bearing the names of those killed in Tuesday's mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, on Thursday. — THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTO/CALLAGHAN O'HARE

Massacres test whether Washington can move beyond paralysis

Michael D. Shear

WASHINGTON — Days after 19 children and two teachers were gunned down in Texas, politicians in Washington are tinkering around the edges of America's gun laws.

A bipartisan group of senators is scheduled to hold virtual meetings early next week and has some proposals on the table: the expansion of background checks, legal changes to prevent the mentally ill and teenagers from getting guns, and new rules for gun trafficking.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., the leader of the effort, said he had not seen so much willingness to talk since 20 children were murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012.

But the emerging details of the massacre at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday suggest that few of the proposals under discussion would have made much of a difference. The gunman did not have a criminal record that might have been caught by expanded background checks. There



A prayer vigil at the county fairgrounds in Uvalde, Texas, on Wednesday evening, May 25, 2022, the day after a mass shooting at Robb Elementary School. — THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTO/MERIDITH KOHUT

is no evidence that the gun had been part of a trafficking ring. And so far, there have not been reports of mental illness that might have triggered a so-called red flag law.

More far-reaching efforts — such

as banning military-style weapons, raising the age for gun purchases and requiring licensing and registration for firearm ownership — have already

MASSACRES » 4A

Chambers, minority firms call for tax cuts

Stephen Williams TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

A group of business chambers, business groups and diverse businesses in Philadelphia, are calling on Mayor Jim Kenney and City Council to make substantial wage and business cuts in fiscal year 2023. They are holding a rally at noon on Wednesday on the north side of City Hall.

The rally is billed "Give Philly a Raise!" said William Carter IV, Esq., Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia vice president for local advocacy and engagement, said the cuts would allow city businesses to grow, hire and give workers a reduction in their taxes.

In addition to the Philadelphia chamber, other groups in support of the rally include: the African American Chamber of Commerce, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Laborers' District Council, Urban League of Philadelphia, OIC Philadelphia, Citizens Bank and Mosaic Development Partners.



William Carter IV



Tonya Ladipo

"This is something that has been debated and talked about for decades, but the city of the Philadelphia has the nation's highest wage tax," Carter said. "For years, that has been talked about by businesses who wanted to move out of the city, small, mid-sized and large. It deters employers from coming into our city. We want more jobs in the city."

In Philadelphia, businesses are taxed on sales and income.

TAX CUTS » 4A

Biden sees 'rational' approach on guns

Will Weissert

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said Monday that the "Second Amendment was never absolute" and that, after the Texas elementary school shooting, there may be some bipartisan support to tighten restrictions on the kind of high-powered weapons used by the gunman.

"I think things have gotten so bad that everybody's getting more rational, at least that's my hope," Biden told reporters before honoring the nation's fallen in Memorial Day remarks at Arlington National Cemetery.

His comments came a day after he traveled to the shattered Texas community of

Uvalde, mourning privately for three-plus hours with anguished families grieving for the 19 children and two teachers who died in the shooting. Faced with chants of "do something" as he departed a church service, Biden pledged: "We will."

After the Uvalde trip, Biden spent Sunday night at his home in Delaware and, as he arrived at the White House for Memorial Day events, was asked if he's now more motivated to see new federal limits imposed on firearms.

"I've been pretty motivated all along," he said. "I'm going to continue to push and we'll see how this goes."

GUNS » 5A



President Joe Biden lays a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day. — AP PHOTO/ANDREW HARNIK

Johnson unveils property tax relief plan

Seven-point proposal to ease burden of higher reassessments

Brian Saunders TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Philadelphia City Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson, D-2nd District announced his Save Our Homes plan during last week's City Council meeting to help citizens with the rise in property assessment taxes.

Johnson's seven-point plan has the support of 12 of his colleagues. Currently, only Council President Darrell Clarke, Councilmember Brian O'Neill, R-10th District, and At-large Councilmember Allan Domb have not signed on to the proposed bills.

"I am proud to announce the Save our Homes tax relief plan," Johnson said. "It will stop this displacement by making property taxes fairer and more transparent. Moreover, this plan is revenue-neutral. It simply takes the expected revenue increase from the latest property assessments



Philadelphia Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson, D-2nd District, announced his Save Our Homes plan during last week's City Council meeting to help citizens with the rising cost of property assessment taxes. — TRIBUNE PHOTO/ABDUL R. SULAYMAN

and gives the money back to where it belongs, which is to the people."

Johnson's plan will increase the homestead exemption from \$45,000 to \$90,000. If you own a home, you qualify, and currently, it saves homeowners \$629. If approved, that number would double to \$1,260.

TAX RELIEF » 5A