

White House refuses to release photo of Trump signing bill to weaken gun laws



Washington, Feb 19 (RHC)-- Following a high school shooting in the U.S. state of Florida that left 17 people dead, the White House has once again turned down a request to release a photo of President Donald Trump signing a law that made it easier for some people with mental illness to obtain guns.

CBS News reported that it has asked for the release of president's photo a dozen times over the past year, but received only one response in April by Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who said: "We don't plan to release the picture at this time."

A White House photographer confirmed to CBS that pictures of the bill-signing exist. Last week, CBS News asked again if the White House would release the photo of the signing, but received no response.

It made the request a day after a 19-year-old boy, with mental health issues, killed 17 people at his former high school in Florida on Wednesday. The shooter, Nikolas Cruz, is accused of using a legally-purchased gun for the mass shooting.

Trump is now criticized for signing the bill known as HJ Resolution 40 in February last year -- just over a month after his inauguration -- overturning an Obama-era regulation restricting certain people from

buying guns. Had it been allowed to move ahead, the law would have added an estimated 75,000 names of mentally ill Americans to a database that would have stopped them from buying a gun.

Critics said at the time that removing the legislation made it easier for people with mental illness to purchase guns. Supporters of the action, however, argued that the legislation had stripped Second Amendment rights indiscriminately from people, who are not necessarily dangerous, such as those with eating or sleeping disorders.

One Republican lawmaker even said that the law would have discriminated against people with mental disorders from enjoying their right to have a gun.

The controversial debate over gun laws has once again been triggered after last week's shooting.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, the National Rifle Association, the NRA, spent over \$52 million in political advertisements in the 2016 election -- with more than \$11 million spent in support of Trump's campaign alone.

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