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Obama Says in Some Areas in US it is Cheaper to Buy a Gun than a Book

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In the forum broadcast by CNN, the president tried to explain his proposals to increase controls on sale of arms to prevent them from falling into hands of people with mental illnesses or criminal records and reduce the high rate of violent deaths; the highest in a developed country.

Obama, who Tuesday announced his intention of increasing the scope of background checks for purchase of guns through executive action, said it was necessary to have the strongest background checks possible.

He criticized opposition to those measures and compared gun control to the need for seatbelts in cars and "child-proof" safety caps on medicine bottles.

The White House wants to broaden FBI background checks on people who buys a gun from a store or from an individual.

Obama said he was open to meeting gun lobby groups, including the National Rifle Association, or NRA, which refused to participate in Thursday's meeting and has opposed the measures proposed by the government.

The president said, in the past the NRA has supported expansion of background checks to include more types of transactions.

"What used to be a small exception that said collectors and hobbyists don't need to go through a background check has become this massive industry," Obama said.

"My proposals are not particularly radical, what's changed is that we've suddenly created an atmosphere where I put out a proposal (...) that is respectful of the second amendment (which protects people's right to bear arms). And, the way it is described is that we're trying to take away everybody's guns," he added.

