This afternoon, the families of Newtown, Connecticut are burying two six-year-old boys – Noah Pozner and Jack Pinto.

Noah turned six last month. Jack was a New York Giants fan.

In the days to come, many of their classmates will also be laid to rest – the victims of a tragedy too terrible to comprehend.

Twenty little girls and boys. Twenty tiny daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, friends and playmates.

Twenty children, who will never grow up and learn to drive, go on a first date or graduate from high school.

Twenty six- and seven-year-olds who will never have the chance to fall in love, get married or have children of their own.

Noah and Jack, Charlotte, Daniel, Olivia, Josephine, Ana, Dylan, Madeline, Catherine, Chase, Jesse, James, Grace, Emilie, Caroline, Jessica, Benjamin, Allison and Avielle.

No words of condolence could possibly ease the pain of families who lost cherished children. But I hope it is some small comfort that the nation mourns with them.

My heart goes out to all those affected by Friday’s massacre. And my thoughts are with the students and faculty of Sandy Hook Elementary who witnessed such unspeakable violence.

Newtown and the nation have seen great evil. But we have also seen incredible bravery.

In her final act on Earth, 27-year-old Victoria Soto hid the children of her first grade class in closets and cabinets, and then scarified herself to save them.

Dawn Hocksprung, Mary Sherlach, Lauren Russeau, Rachel Davino and Anne Marie Murphy also died trying to safeguard the children in their care.

These six educators devoted their lives to teaching Newtown’s children how to read, how to add and subtract, how to be good girls and boys, and how to grow up to be good men and women.

And they gave their lives to keep those children safe.

They are a source of hope in a hopeless situation.

I commend the teachers of Sandy Hook Elementary, who didn’t hesitate when they saw danger coming. Some barricaded their students inside classrooms or hid them in closets, preventing even greater loss of life.

And I thank the first responders who rushed into the school despite the horrors around them, knowing they had a job to do.

It is hard to even comprehend this type of tragedy, let alone recover from it.

But in the words of Helen Keller, “Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”

As the families of Newtown mourn, American mourns with them. And we will stand with them as they overcome this suffering and begin the healing process.

I believe part of that healing process will require Congress to examine what can be done to prevent more tragedies like the ones in Newtown, Connecticut; Aurora, Colorado; Oak Creek, Wisconsin; and Portland, Oregon.

As President Obama said last night, no one law can erase evil. No policy can prevent a determined madman from committing a senseless act of violence.

But we need to accept the reality that we are not doing enough to protect our citizens.

In the coming days and weeks, we will engage in a meaningful conversation and thoughtful debate about how to change laws and culture that allow violence to grow.

We have no greater responsibility than keeping our most vulnerable and most precious resource – our children – safe. And every idea should be on the table as we discuss how best to do just that.

Today we have an opportunity to pull together to help the citizens of New York, New Jersey and other parts of the Northeast as they recover from the damage of Hurricane Sandy.

As we did when Hurricane Katrina struck the gulf coast and Irene struck communities up and down the Eastern Seaboard, we have an opportunity to help make families and communities whole again.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join in moving quickly to send aid to those affected by Sandy as they continue to recover and rebuild.

The Senate must move swiftly to approve supplemental disaster aid and act to give the intelligence community the tools it needs to keep our nation safe before the Christmas holiday.