

By Loretta Boniti

North Carolina political leaders said the state should learn from the tragedy in Connecticut. They said it is not clear if any changes need to be made, but the state should be open to the possibility.

The images and emotions still have many Americans reeling from Friday's tragic shooting in Newtown, CT.

But as President Barack Obama has spoken on behalf of a heartbroken nation, he has also repeated his desire for finding a way to stop the violence.

"We can't tolerate this anymore," Obama said Sunday night. "These tragedies must end and to end them, we must change."

With the president's words he is opening the door to discussion about policies and laws. Three main areas are being talked about for examination: mental health, school safety, and guns.

Leaders said a real discussion will mean pushing politics aside.

"It has the potential to shake us out of our fixed patterns and our stock responses," said U.S. Rep. David Price. "I mean doesn't it? If this can't affect us, if this can't say to us surely we can figure this out. Surely we can do better. I don't know what would."

Here in North Carolina, legislative leaders said they are still mourning for the victims and waiting and watching to see the lead taken at the federal level.

But for the state's top law enforcement official, he said he is ready to learn from this tragedy.

"We have learned from this incident and others that there are people who will commit unspeakable violence against the most vulnerable," said Attorney General Roy Cooper.

Cooper said law enforcement in North Carolina changed procedures following the school shooting in Columbine and made mental health adjustments following the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

"We pushed through a law in North Carolina that prohibited a person who had been committed for a mental illness from purchasing a gun," said Cooper.

He said if lessons are learned as the investigation in Connecticut continues, North Carolina, and the nation, needs to be ready to make adjustments.