

A gun control proposal

While we will not be completely free of gun violence for the foreseeable future, and laws and rules cannot ever completely fix what appears to be a mental health crisis that incites people to become violent, I would like to propose a plan that I think might be acceptable to the various sides of the gun control debate.

1. Adults continue to be able to buy and own guns, as protected by the Constitution, including handguns and semi-automatic rifles.
2. A background check will include a mental health examination by a licensed mental health worker, using a standardized test to detect violent tendencies that might result in harm to other people. Failure to pass the test will result in denial of gun ownership.
3. A prospective gun owner will select the mental health worker. That way claims about government or other party biases as to who passes and who fails will be reduced. The stipulation is that the worker is licensed and the test is standardized.
4. In the case where the buyer passes the test and proceeds to commit an act of gun violence, the mental health worker is indemnified by the fact that the test is standardized.
5. The standardized test will be formulated by a body of mental health professionals and approved by the legislature.
6. So-called “Red-flag” laws are permissible. In the case that a gun owner shows signs of violence, authorities can coerce the gun owner to re-take the test. Again, the gun owner can select the mental health worker, and the test is standardized. If the gun owner passes the test, they retain their gun. If they fail, their gun will be confiscated.

I realize this is putting a burden on a psychological examination, which are at best statistically accurate. However, I believe that this proposal represents a compromise that will reduce gun violence.

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Postscript:

Yesterday, a July 4th parade in a Chicago suburb was shot up by a lone gunman, killing six people. His social media was filled with fixations on violence, yet nothing was done before the shooting. Would this guy be able to pass a mental health test given after being brought in via a Red-flag? He would not be facing incrimination or institutionalization, only an impartial evaluation as to whether he was fit to own a firearm.