

Try enforcing existing laws before launching new ones

OBAMA, CLINTON AND THEIR SILICON VALLEY OLIGARCH FINANCIERS BROKE HUNDREDS OF LAWS BUT THEY WERE NEVER ARRESTED.

THE DIRTY POLITICIANS MADE NEW LAWS TO PROTECT ONLY THEM

BY ANDREW MALCOLM

Special to McClatchy

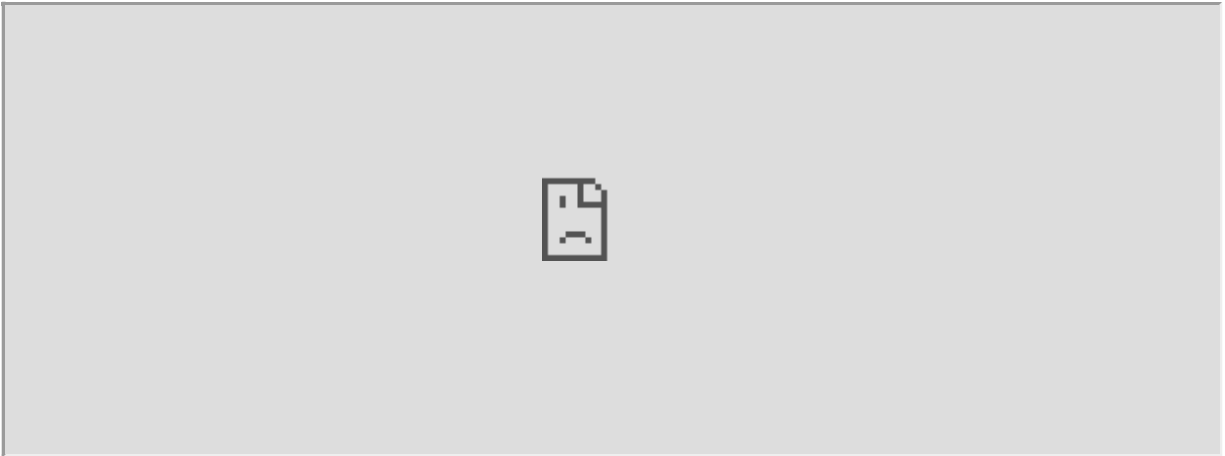
Here we go again with yet another “national conversation” about guns that is neither a conversation nor national. And not productive.

Understandably, as with the Newtown, Conn., elementary school massacre in 2012, the agonized outcries and visceral fears after the outrageous Broward high school deaths on Feb. 14 erupt from parents who entrust their most prized treasures to a public school. The betrayal is horrendous. The suffering unimaginable. And we flail around trying to find answers for the unimaginable, the inexplicable, the unacceptable.

There must be something we can do to prevent such awful events. There is. We could have.

We’re certain to hear much more of the tiresome, trite arguments from all sides this week as the annual Conservative Political Action Conference meets near Washington. You know, Second Amendment,

our blessed children, only government can do something, government has no place, yada yada.



No one needs a crystal ball to know what will come of all this: Nothing. Same as after previous incidents.

Remember a little more than five years ago to protect himself against political backlash, President Obama handed the molten gun-control debate to Vice President Joe Biden to honcho new restrictions through Congress so school shootings would never happen again? Nothing.

NRA's LaPierre at CPAC: We must harden 'wide open target' schools

1:39

National Rifle Association executive vice president and CEO Wayne LaPierre said opponents of gun rights "hate individual freedoms" and want to eliminate the 2nd Amendment. LaPierre spoke at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in Maryland. **Associated Press**

We could do what Israel's been doing in large schools for decades after terrorists killed scores of children in an attack. Lock the doors. Train and arm a few unidentified teachers to conceal-carry.

Perhaps some new restrictions will be necessary. Recall after the even worse mass shooting in Las Vegas last fall even the National Rifle Association endorsed restrictions on the so-called bump stocks that turned his long guns into virtual automatic weapons. What happened after that "national conversation"?

Nothing, until just this week when the president ordered a ban.


So, here's a silly idea that doesn't involve dramatic photo ops outside the Capitol. It's not something to fuel angry marches for news cameras. Won't fire up cable show bookers to get guests arguing vehemently between the Pepcid and Cialis ads.

This isn't a game played out for anyone's entertainment — or political gain. Why don't we try making all the existing enforcement and preventive tools work — really work — before we slide routinely into the comfortable, predictable and almost certainly unproductive arguments about dubious news ones?

It may sound unrewarding if you want to stay hysterical or score political points. Congress members would have to give up statements of rage when seemingly encountering reporters by accident in Capitol hallways. And as tempting as it might be to an impulsive president

under FBI investigation, he'd have to forsake self-serving tweet storms against that agency.

If the goal is not just to score political points — how silly to even mention such an outlandish idea these days, right? — but actually to make such murderous mayhem less likely, it's pretty smart to do what you already can do legally. Try the obvious. It's so crazy, it might just work.



Sheriff defends gun ownership after
Florida high school shooting

6:33

In a video posted February 19, following the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, Sheriff Lou Vallario of Garfield County, Colorado, voiced support for gun ownership and condemned liberal politicians who he said were politicizing such shootings. Vallario made the comments in a video shared to the Garfield County Sheriff's Office Facebook page, as part of his 'Just the Facts' video series. He said that rather than attacking guns and taking them away from people, a more effective way to stop high school shootings was to address the issue of mental health. The Sheriff's comments came five days after a shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland in which 17 people died. The shooting prompted mass protests. Referring to Nikolas Cruz, the suspect in the Stoneman case, the sheriff said red flags were missed in addressing his mental health. The sheriff's comments received a mixed response and attracted local media. Garfield County Sheriff's Office - Colorado via Storyful

Let's look at the Broward County tragedy with a touch of pragmatism: This confessed killer had a long history of anti-social behavioral problems and mental trouble. Sounds eerily familiar.

God bless well-meaning foster parents for their dedication, charity and hopes, but adults in the home are society's early warning radar. He was on strong medications. Good for him probably. But if he's still killing small animals for sport in an urban environment, as neighbors report, there's another red flag that didn't get waved.

He's been a long-time problem in high school such that it expelled him. Red Flag. Not waving. And fellow students warned. Police visited his home 39 times. 39 more flags.

Everybody talks about cancer in America. But mental health is touchy; someone's obvious maniac is another's harmless crazy uncle. In 2016, the kid made a Snapchat video while cutting his arms and announcing he was going to buy a gun.

The state's Department of Children and Families arranged a psychiatric evaluation. Yes, he had the cuts and a swastika on his book bag. But he was taking his meds on schedule and laws only allow holding someone 72 hours. He was deemed not ready for hospitalization.

Last September, the FBI got a tip about a Nikolas Cruz vowing online he was going to become a professional school shooter. Let's be fair here just for a sec: Law enforcement gets thousands of tips about bad stuff. Most are bad tips. We only hear about ones that get through the cracks.

The FBI took a Russian tip and interviewed the Boston bombers. But did nothing. Now it says it couldn't find Nikolas Cruz. Seriously? Red flag waving.

Forget for a moment arguing whether any civilian outside the Middle East needs such a weapon, this kid followed all existing rules and laws. He passed the established background check. He purchased an AR-15 and ammo and numerous magazines. Why? Because existing red flags weren't in the system.

In January, on a government tip line a man told an FBI employee about his friend's behavior, gun and plans to shoot up a school. The tip went nowhere. Seriously? Red flag waving. Also rockets going off.

Remember 9/11 and the after-report that found numerous little pieces of separate suspicious planning on file that others knew nothing about?

“Everything everybody seems to know, we didn't know,” said a bereaved foster father. The same could be said for dozens of other people and institutions along this latest lethal way.

So, what new law could make people do what they already can do but aren't?

Malcolm is an author and veteran national and foreign correspondent covering politics since the 1960s. Follow him [@AHMalcolm](#).

Father of student killed in Florida school shooting asks Rubio about assault weapons ban

0:41

At a town hall held by CNN in Sunrise, Florida, on Wednesday night, thousands of angry students, teachers and parents booed Republican Sen. Marco Rubio when he indicated that he would not support an assault-weapons ban CNN via AP
