

# Anti-gun lobby's Trojan Horse

*Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune*

Troy fell for it. Why not Washington?

The gun control lobby has introduced what is heralded as a "sensible" initiative that even gun owners should approve of. The problem is that it imposes a sneaky gun registration without keeping guns out of the wrong hands as it claims.

The initiative's goals are concealed under the squid's ink of expanded background checks. We are told that these enhanced background checks will prevent criminals and the mentally insane from acquiring and using firearms.

That's silly. What it will do is create a gun registry that will allow government to track legally owned firearms.

The latest push for expanded background checks began immediately after the tragic mass killing of school children in Sandy Hook, Conn. The gun controllers always have legislation stored in the top drawers of their desks, just waiting for a tragedy to exploit.

When people examine these things clear-eyed, they see through the deception. So liberals are always primed to turn tragedy into opportunity.

Adam Lanza was a mentally unstable young man who killed his mother before attacking an elementary school. Surely no one believes that people such as Lanza should be allowed to purchase a firearm. And that's what expanded background checks are supposed to prevent.

But Lanza didn't purchase the gun he used. His mother did. He killed his mother, stole her rifle and then went on his rampage. Expanded background checks would not have prevented that.

Before that, we had James Egan Holmes, the orange-haired, mentally disturbed 24-year-old, who killed a dozen moviegoers in Aurora, Colo. After he was arrested and charged with the murders, the police learned that he had consultations with three different psychologists. And shortly after the killings, one of those psychologists received a journal from

Holmes that would have raised red flags. But these were confidential records. None of this would have shown up on a background check. Holmes' visits with psychologists never resulted in a legal proceeding that could have deprived him of his freedoms.

A similar problem arises when we look at the case of Seung Hi-Cho, the madman who killed 32 people at Virginia Tech in 2009. While his personal records reveal troubling interviews with psychologists, there was nothing that would have shown up on a background check.

And that points to another problem with using mental health evaluations to justify expanded background checks. How does one go about depriving an American of his constitutional rights based upon confidential medical records? And, if we make those confidential records searchable, we put into the hands of individual psychologists the power to deprive anyone of constitutionally protected rights with the stroke of a pen.

In addition to giving individual psychologists the authority to take away anyone's Second Amendment rights, there is the problem of what constitutes mental illness. Not so long ago, the American Psychiatric Association treated homosexuality as a mental illness. And even though the term "homophobia" is a clumsy, illiterate, politically loaded concoction cooked up by gay rights activists, today's APA seriously considers treating it as a psychological disorder.

More recently, the APA published a paper arguing that pedophilia was actually good for its child victims. And the APA tried to make the case that pedophilia should only be considered a psychological disorder when it disrupts the pedophile's life.

Do we really want to empower these people with the authority to take our rights away?

The APA periodically updates its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, which is used by professional psychologists to inform their diagnoses. Because the APA has shown that it is responsive to political pressure and cultural fads, it is entirely possible that some day the manual could classify the desire to own firearms as a mental illness. Every few years some academic psychologist will try to make the argument that anyone who holds a point of view different from his own is crazy.

The initiative also requires background checks on Internet firearms sales. As one who has purchased several guns online, I can tell you that my background was checked each time.

In addition, the initiative requires background checks on personal firearms transfers. This is supposed to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Reality check: Criminals don't obey laws. That's what makes them criminals.

What this initiative will create is a registry of legal gun owners. Before liberals can confiscate your guns, they need to know where the guns are.

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