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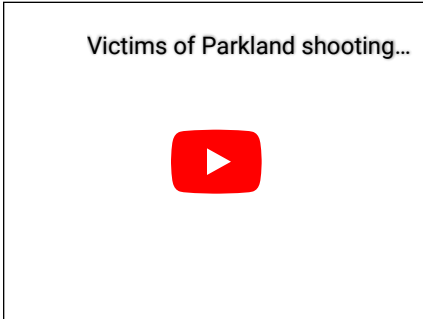
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# OpEdNews Op Eds 6/27/2023 at 8:50 PM EDT H1'ed 6/27/23 **Stop Blaming Mass Shootings on Mental Illness**

By [Robert Weiner](#) (Page 1 of 2 pages) [1 comment](#)

By Robert Weiner and Kat Smith

Article originally published in The Palm Beach Post



Victims of Parkland shooting remembered  
(Image by [YouTube Channel: WPTV News - FL Palm Beaches and Treasure Coast](#) [Details](#) [DMCA](#))



Despite the fact that most mass shootings are carried out by people without a diagnosed mental illness, it is still commonly used as a defense for these deadly massacres.

Not only is it a misconception that mental health is a primary factor in most of these violent crimes, but these claims demonize the [57.8 million](#) Americans who suffer from one or more mental illnesses.

A prime example is the convicted murderer (Nikolas Cruz\_ use name if desired or not), who shot and killed seventeen people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in 2018. According to a report by CNN, he will not be subjected to the death penalty due to his defense painting him as mentally disturbed, despite mental health experts who evaluated him that testified that this was not the case.

[Dr. Robert Denney](#), a clinical psychologist, testified, "He is grossly exaggerating severe mental illness," he continued to

say " [he was] grossly exaggerating severe psychiatric problems as well as semantic concerns, body concerns, cognitive concerns and memory complaints."

However, according to CNN, Melisa McNeill, Cruz's public defender, continued to argue that he was not in the mental capacity to receive the death penalty. "And in a civilized humane society, do we kill brain damaged, mentally ill, broken people?" McNeill said. "Do we? I hope not."

Following the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Parkland came together as a community to create the national March for Our Lives movement in order to speak out against the gun violence epidemic across the United States. They have made an enormous difference on both a state and national level.

According to a study conducted at Columbia University, only 8% of mass shootings are committed by people diagnosed with severe mental illnesses involving psychosis. Mass murderers with psychotic symptoms are actually less likely to use a firearm to carry out the offense, yet mental health continues to be entered into the discussion every time a mass shooting occurs. It is a popular belief that someone who commits a crime so heinous must be mentally disturbed in some way.

Many political leaders share this sentiment such as [Texas Governor Greg Abbot](#) t, who following the Uvalde school shooting said, "We, as a state, we, as a society, need to do a better job with mental health " Anybody who shoots somebody else has a mental health challenge, period."





It's true that there need to be better mental health resources and accessibility in the U.S., but it seems that this issue is only ever brought up as a response to gun violence instead of the actual problem at hand: a lack of gun regulation.



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Robert Weiner, NATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ISSUES STRATEGIST Bob Weiner, a national issues and public affairs strategist, has been spokesman for and directed the public affairs offices of White House Drug Czar and Four Star General Barry ([more...](#))

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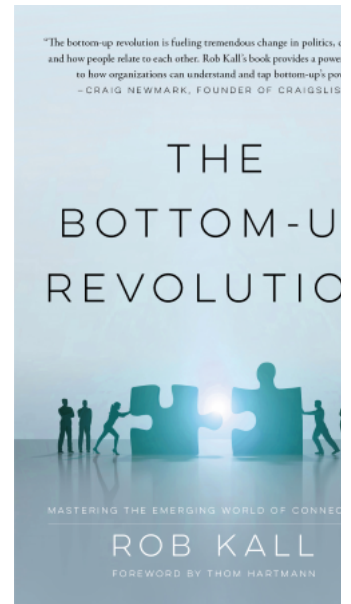
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**First Amendment** Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**Second Amendment** A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

**Third Amendment** No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner; nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

**Fourth Amendment** The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

**Fifth Amendment** No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself; nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

**Sixth Amendment** In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defence.

**Seventh Amendment** In Suits at Law, where the value in controversy shall exceed five Dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact shall be tried by a jury, which by the laws and usages of the State, and the equity of the case, shall not be so tried.

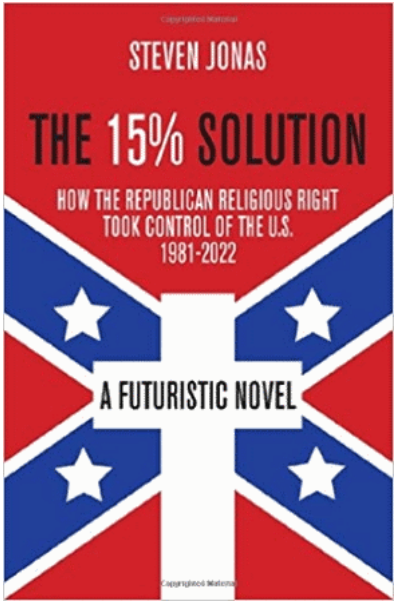
**Eighth Amendment** Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

**Ninth Amendment** The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

**Tenth Amendment** The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

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