The Killers in Our Midst

Nearly all mass shooters have been young men alienated from society.

The weekend witnessed mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton. Both events are horrific, but the left. But a President has a special role in the American system even if our politics has elevated the Presidency more than it should. Either Mr. Trump restraints his rhetoric or he will pay a consequential political price. Joe Biden's theme of a return to "decency" and "normalcy" will resonate with even millions of Trump voters if Mr. Trump doesn't change.

One place for leaders to focus, as we've long argued, is mental health. This is a matter of policy more than money. HHS's mental-health division projects mental-health spending from all sources, public and private, will be about $238 billion in 2020, up from $147 billion in 2009. Mental health is an "essential" benefit under ObamaCare, and California passed an income-tax surcharge expressly for mental health.

The problem is identifying those with mental illness who are a threat, and then allowing society to intervene to prevent violence. Overwhelming evidence suggests that the de-institutionalization of the seriously mentally ill has had tragic results. Libertarians and mental-health advocates who resist such intervention need to do some soul-searching.

The same goes for those in the gun lobby who claim that denying access to guns from those with a history of mental illness violates individual rights. So-called red-flag laws that let police or family members petition a court to remove firearms from someone who may be a threat might not have stopped the El Paso shooter, who is suspected of having a manifesto posted on the 8chan before the rampage. He expressed symmetrical motivations of the Christchurch and denounced Hispanic immigrants he also raged against "unchecked ones" who support immigration and "his land.

Regarding Andy Kessler's "Great Books for a Brainwashing" (Inside View, July 29): Unlike other colleges mentioned by Mr. Kessler, Yale does not ask its students to read specific books during the summer. However, Yale University Press publishes a list of titles from its catalog that might be suitable for high school or college summer reading programs. These include works about history, religion, astronomy, free speech, the Holocaust and Benjamin Franklin, among many others. Students admitted to Yale's Directed Studies Program are asked to read selections from Plato, Herodotus and Homer.

Our hope is that all students, at Yale and elsewhere, read widely and enthusiastically during the summer and throughout the year. For myself, I can only agree with the writer Jorge Luis Borges, who said, "I had always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library."

Mr. Kessler highlights the prevalence in American universities of indoctrinating new students "toward . . . an initiation into the cool social-justice league."

During orientation (or should I say, brainwashing) at Long Island's Stony Brook University, the LGBTQ ethos wafted through the long day's presentations, question and answer sessions, etc.

The assigned reading turns out to be an account of transvestite angst. The academic hierarchy can assign what it will. I may read "1984" instead.

Andrew Cuomo's Energy Policy Is Enlightened

I guess I can forget about having my little book of advice for students included in the summer reading lists for elite colleges and universities.

What do I know? After 30 years in international business, followed by 13 years on a college faculty, I thought that some practical advice might prove valuable for a new college student. Topics such as how to choose majors and careers, how to intelligently use electives to support these choices and how to present oneself as a serious student, all seem quite important to me.

I think it better to focus this summer on helping students transition to college, and allow them to tackle the "great questions" after they are established.