

# MR. PRESIDENT: PLEASE BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

*Dishonest and Corrupt "Mental Health Professionals" Threaten the Safety of All Law-Abiding People*  
By Lester Jackson

In the wake of the 100% preventable Valentine's Day maniac murders of 17 children, calls for mental health assessments became very popular. President Trump [tweeted](#) a ringing endorsement of mental health checks: the murderer "was a sick person – very sick – and we had a lot of warning about him being sick. This wasn't a surprise." The president [repeated](#) the mental health mantra at CPAC.

This enthusiasm for mental health should be viewed with extreme caution. It is a classic example of the old adage "be careful what you wish for." No one ought to realize this better than President Trump himself. After all, [his own mental health](#) has been [questioned](#) repeatedly. "James Gilligan, a psychiatrist and professor at New York University," who boasted of having worked with "the most dangerous people," including murderers and rapists, [arrogantly claimed](#) to "know how dangerous this man is." By March 13, 2018, [70,182](#) self-styled "mental health professionals" had declared the president seriously "mentally ill," despite never having met or evaluated him personally.

Psychiatrists have [demonstrated](#) arrogance, error, and dishonesty for decades. In 1964, long before anyone had ever heard of Donald J. Trump, Barry Goldwater was pronounced mentally unfit by [1,189 psychiatrists](#) who never had met the candidate but whose views were sought as members of the American Psychiatric Association. According to an honest psychiatrist, Cornell Professor [Richard A. Friedman](#):

The psychiatrists' assessment was brutal[...] ... They used terms like megalomaniac," "paranoid" and "grossly psychotic," and some even offered specific diagnoses, including schizophrenia and narcissistic personality disorder.

These "professional" pronouncements [revealed far more about the mental health profession](#) than about either Goldwater or Trump. It is hard to imagine any behavior more unprofessional than an ideologue using professional credentials to smear someone solely on the basis of personal dislike or political disagreement.

Those who disagree with the self-styled "professionals" can be forgiven for concluding that it is the latter who call their own mental health into question. Violating their own professional standards based solely on rabid political disagreement, they are so "intellectually disabled" by ideology that they sell out their ethics, their morals, and any pretense of being truly professional and rational.

Dr. Friedman, who "cringed" at the Goldwater "findings," warned against "the misuse of medical authority as a political weapon to denigrate an opponent." Is it impossible to disagree with someone without calling him stupid or crazy? Lord Acton [pointed out](#): "There is no error so monstrous that it fails to find defenders among the ablest men. Imagine a congress of eminent celebrities[...] ... The result would be an Encyclopedia of Error." "Professional" ideologues seem unable to grasp the distinction between error, even stupidity, and mental sickness.

This article is not a defense of President Trump – not by any means. In fact, a careful reader will note that, I am clearly criticizing him in this very article. (Actually, this is my [second](#) recent critique of Trump.) But not having thought through the implications of a policy proposal or speech does not make a person mentally unbalanced.

It always has been a convenient way to dispose of political opponents to label them "crazy" or, in less politically incorrect language "mentally unstable" or "mentally unfit." Why bother with refuting rational criticisms and policies of political opponents when emphatically unprofessional – and dishonest – psychiatrists and psychologists can be rounded up to declare them "nuts"? The late [Thomas](#)

[Szasz](#) was a [leading](#), if not the leading, exponent of this view. Although often rightly criticized as unreliable, Wikipedia contains this well sourced article: "[Political abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union](#)." The article argues that psychiatry has an "[inherent capacity for abuse](#)." In my recent book, [Equal Justice for Victims](#), at p. 296, I refer to "high class political prostitutes with licenses to practice psychiatry." (On March 5, Fake News called for more such people to be inflicted on the country to cure a "[major shortage](#)." All I can say is heaven forbid.)

Nikolas Cruz, the child-murderer, manifested clear signs of mental sickness. Personally, I believe that Dr. Szasz went too far in declaring mental illness a myth. There surely are violently sick people among us. The problem presented by the mental-health-check solution is that it is difficult to separate diagnoses of real mental illness from attacks on highly rational political opponents with whom dishonest politician-psychiatrists disagree.

The left bears a [heavy responsibility](#) for "[deinstitutionalization](#)" and unwarranted parole, with [terrifying](#) results, [often fatal](#) to law-abiding members of society. No one should think the left, which, even now, works relentlessly to inflict the brutal upon the tame, will meekly accept mental health checks. As [pointed out](#) in The New York Times days after the Parkland murders, "laws designed to preserve the civil liberties of people with mental illness place limits on what treatments can be imposed against a person's will." (One clearly mentally ill, but remorseful, killer has [bitterly complained](#) that he should never have been released to murder a young woman.) I do not, because I cannot, argue that the likes of Cruz should be ignored. But I do contend that we must be careful about ceding our fate to psychiatrists, let alone funding more of them.

Five members of the United States Supreme Court have made clear why there can be little justified public confidence in psychiatrists to protect society from the violently mentally ill. In 2014, they [ceded authority to determine death sentences](#) to murderer advocates posing as neutral psychiatrists, and a year ago, the same five [turned over](#) to these "professionals" lacking legal training the authority to determine the meaning of the Constitution. What this means, in practice, is that people who carefully plan and carry out premeditated murders cannot be executed because they are deemed by psychiatrists "intellectually disabled." In such cases, one can only wonder exactly who is "intellectually disabled": the murderers or their judicial and psychiatric saviors.

Leftist opposition to "institutionalization" is minor compared to the principal problem for advocates of mental health checks: exactly upon whom are we going to rely to determine the mental health of potential murderers? I do not claim to have an answer. But I do have questions: would President Trump be confident in any of the more than 70,000 "mental health professionals" who have proven their own unfitness by signing a document declaring *him* mentally ill? Would he have confidence in an experienced psychiatrist who compares him to dangerous murderers and rapists?

Until the so-called mental health professions clean up their act, I am afraid that there will be no way to confidently certify people capable of distinguishing the demented from the different, genuine mental illness from political disagreement.

[Lester Jackson](#) is author of numerous articles about capital punishment, the Supreme Court and American politics. His [recent book](#) (reviewed [here](#) and [here](#)) is *Equal Justice For Victims: A Blueprint for the Rightful Restoration of Capital Punishment*. Copyright © 2018 by [Lester Jackson](#), Ph.D.