

SHORT TAKE: AN OBVIOUS WAY TO CURB SUICIDES

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From a Friday Bloomberg View editorial:

In its alarming new report on America's fast-rising suicide rate, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites many pressures that might lead people to take their own lives: problems with relationships or work, substance abuse, money troubles or housing insecurity.

The report also offers several strategies to prevent suicide. But there's one it ignores: stronger gun laws.

Suicide requires both motivation and means. In the U.S., to nobody's surprise, firearms are the most common method, accounting for 41 percent of suicides of people with known mental-health conditions, and 55 percent of those without. Suicide is very often an impulsive act, and a person who contemplates it can readily survive if no lethal weapon is at hand.

The experiences of Connecticut and Indiana prove the point. After those states

passed "red-flag" gun laws, which enable police to seize firearms from people who are a risk to themselves or others, firearm suicide rates fell significantly, a recent study found.

In 2016, almost 45,000 people killed themselves in the U.S., a 30 percent increase since 1999. To be sure, we should try harder to lift people out of despair. But limiting high-risk individuals' access to guns would mitigate this epidemic all by itself.