

President Trump and the G.O.P. have made a mockery of that history — and our justice system, too.

Gary L. Adler  
Lynbrook, N.Y.

**To the Editor:**

Re “Kennedy Center Challenge: Funding” (Arts, Feb. 20):

Why should fund-raising be a problem? President Trump might very well appoint himself chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts and grant the Kennedy Center its full \$268 million budget. When you’re king, nothing is beyond your reach.

Karen Cooper  
New York

*The writer was director of Film Forum from 1972 to 2023.*

## Turning to Gun Ownership

**To the Editor:**

Re “Moment They Knew It Was Time to Own a Gun” (front page, Feb. 20):

This is a very upsetting story. More Americans from increasingly diverse backgrounds are turning to guns to deal with the threats they face or think they face from other Americans.

But the source that underlies these disparate reasons to buy firearms is anxiety — the increased anxiety in America that results from the three disturbing “I”s of contemporary life in this country: inequality, insecurity and instability.

Research finds that when people are anxious, they find solace in seemingly simple answers, like belief in conspiracy theories, and the sense that a gun can protect them from unfamiliar, threatening forces in the external and their internal world.

Guns cannot cure what ails us as people; the answer is greater attention to individual psychology and mental health, but the nation fails to invest enough resources on mental health, and the funds will likely drop significantly with the Trump administration's cutbacks at the National Institutes of Health.

And more Americans will buy guns that will kill other Americans.

Richard M. Perloff

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