

### **Assassination Attempt at Trump Rally Sparks Gun Control Debate**

The former president Donald Trump narrowly escaped an assassination attempt during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania on July 13. Attempted by Thomas Matthew Crooks, a 20-year-old, who fired shots from an AR-15-style rifle, the incident resulted in injuries to Trump and others and one fatality among the rally attendees.

The assassination attempt revealed a series of security oversights, as Crooks was able to access a rooftop that offered a clear line of sight to the stage. Until Crooks had already opened fire, he was undetected despite the presence of the Secret Service and local law enforcement. Crooks was positioned approximately 150 meters away from the stage on an unsecured rooftop, a spot outside the immediate security perimeter set by the Secret Service but crucially within the effective range of the firearm used.

An independent inquiry has been initiated by President Joe Biden, and Congress has begun a bipartisan review. According to the FBI's investigations, Crooks' social media profiles and background checks showed no signs of violent intentions or political extremism. Although early to state, such an outcome of the investigation brings to light the challenges in threat assessments and the indicators that might be missed in standard security screenings.

The assassination attempt has reignited the debate over gun control in the US, reflecting a stark political divide. Republicans, including Trump himself, have traditionally opposed stringent gun regulations, citing Second Amendment rights. In contrast, Democrats advocate for tighter controls to prevent gun violence, emphasized by repeated mass shootings. The incident has also highlighted an obvious but crucial flaw: the absence of universal background checks for all forms of gun purchases, including private and online sales that often bypass thorough scrutiny.

Historically, such incidents have influenced electoral outcomes, reminiscent of Ronald Reagan's rise in popularity following the attempt on his life. The July 13 assassination attempt brings to light not only security concerns but also stirs the political atmosphere as the U.S. approaches the presidential election on November 5.