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Sheriff Aaron Shiplett

Positional Narrative: House Bill 19-1177 (Red Flag Bill)

Over the past couple of weeks I have had the privilege of talking to many of you about my stance in regards to Colorado House Bill 19-1177, also known as the "Red Flag Bill". This narrative will hopefully clarify once and for all my stance and opinion on HB 19-1177. I wish to not mince words and be as direct as possible, I STRONGLY OPPOSE this legislation and have since its inception. I oppose this bill not only because of its broad wording but because of its absurd attempt to circumvent the United States Constitution.

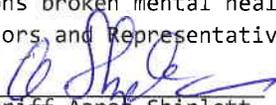
HB 19-1177 is being sold to the public as a "Mental Health" initiative but nothing could be further from the truth. This bill does not provide for or mandate any treatment for people suffering from an alleged mental health condition, it simply requires a person who is *allegedly* a danger to themselves or others to have to, without due process, release their firearms to authorities based solely on the word of another. In summary, this bill allows individuals who are not mental health professionals to file unsubstantiated affidavits concerning someone's mental fitness and ability to safely and legally own and possess a firearm. The bill is heavily flawed and is an attempt to open the door to more and more violations of 2nd Amendment rights, other constitutional violations and undue intrusions into our homes and lives.

In my opinion, Colorado legislators cannot force a Colorado Law Enforcement Officer to violate or cooperate in violating an individual's rights that have been provided to them by the United States Constitution.

On February 22, 2019, I was asked by the County Sheriffs of Colorado Association whether I supported or opposed HB 19-1177 the Red Flag Bill. I voted to oppose the bill along with several other Sheriffs from around the state. Ultimately Sheriff Reams from Weld County was chosen to testify in opposition at a committee hearing. I have spoken to Sheriff Reams about this issue and I assure you that he adamantly opposes this bill and I feel that he accurately represented the opposing Sheriffs views at that hearing. Despite our best efforts, the bill passed the House third reading without amendments and it is now headed to the Senate.

Rest assured that I, along with the Baca County Commissioners and many of my fellow Sheriffs, will continue to oppose legislation that threatens our 2nd Amendment Rights and all other rights in Baca County, across the State, and across the nation. As many of you have seen or heard, many counties across Colorado are signing 2nd Amendment "sanctuary county" resolutions. Members of the board and I have been approached and asked when and if Baca County will draft and sign such a resolution, the answer is simple, Baca County already has. The Baca County Board of Commissioners saw the "writing on the wall" and preemptively drafted and signed two resolutions numbered 2013-11 and 2018-17 regarding the safe keeping of legal gun ownership rights in Baca County.

The right to legal gun ownership is a safeguard of liberty. This bill does nothing besides allow unwarranted gun confiscations without due process and does nothing to fix this nations broken mental health system. I encourage all of you to contact any and all of our Senators and Representatives and make your voices heard! God Bless Baca County!


Sheriff Aaron Shiplett