



Gun Violence Prevention Committee – Sanctuary Counties in Michigan

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DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that more than half of Michigan's 83 counties have passed resolutions identifying themselves as Second Amendment Sanctuary Counties? These counties prohibit or impede the enforcement of federal or state gun laws perceived to violate the 2nd Amendment. Gun rights supporters modeled this idea on the immigration sanctuary cities movement. The present sanctuary county movement is most utilized by sheriffs who will not enforce specific gun safety laws and firearm confiscation statutes.

The resolutions are largely symbolic, not legally binding, and often initiated and supported by the gun lobby. They are passed by the County Commissioners at meetings heavily attended by gun rights advocates. These resolutions have passed in 45 MI counties including Jackson, Eaton, Clinton, and Livingston counties.

In February of 2020, the Michigan House passed House Resolution 227. The resolution did not name Michigan a "sanctuary state" but declared by a 75-32 vote the intent to protect the US and MI Constitutional right to bear arms.

The wording of these resolutions varies within MI counties. Eaton and Clinton Counties passed resolutions that affirm the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. The Jackson County resolution states that the prosecutor and sheriff can use sound discretion and not enforce a firearms law perceived to be unconstitutional against any citizen. The resolutions are most often utilized against red flag laws and background checks.

The Attorneys General of the US and other legal experts predict court challenges to actions based on Second Amendment Sanctuary Counties resolutions, stating only courts can overturn legislation. It is argued that supporters of the resolutions misunderstand the clear constitutional limits on gun rights. In DC v. Heller: "it is not a right to keep and carry any weapon in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose. . ."

In Michigan, any legislation that intends to confiscate firearms from an individual if they are determined by the court to be a threat to themselves has been stalled in the 2019-2020 legislative session. Senate Resolution 118 urged the MI Capitol Commission to prohibit firearms on the Capitol grounds was referred in February 2020 to the Committee on Government Operations.

All levels of government are important. Know who your County Commissioners are and VOTE with knowledge of their principles on the issues that are important to the safety and welfare of Michigan citizens.