



# UTAH SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE: JUNE 1, 2021

## THE CONSTITUTION & INDIVIDUALS' RIGHTS TO BEAR ARMS

Prompted by increasing public concern to safeguard constitutional rights, we, the elected Sheriffs of Utah, solemnly reaffirm our sworn oaths to "...support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Utah...."

We humbly serve as the chief law enforcement officers of the 29 counties of the great State of Utah. As such, we publicly reassert our individual and collective duty to defend all of the constitutional rights of our citizens.

The Declaration of Independence acknowledges the existence of certain truths, including that all men are created equal. It further declares these truths to be "self-evident", "unalienable", and "endowed by the Creator". Thus, Providence is the source of unalienable rights, and the Constitution and those sworn to uphold it are protectors of those rights.

With our fellow Utahans, we recognize the Constitution not only as the founding document that establishes the structure of our government, but in regards to the Bill of Rights—the first Ten Amendments—it is the Guarantor of individual rights and the Limiter of federal government power. The Constitution is the Supreme law of the land and all legislation and government action must comply strictly with it.

We recognize the Legislature as the body responsible for enacting laws and the Judiciary as the official interpreters of the law. As Sheriffs, it is our duty to enforce laws. Enforcing the law is a responsibility we seek to fulfill carefully, with respect and compassion for others and with unwavering protection of individual constitutional rights. We also acknowledge our obligation to safeguard the lives of our law enforcement and corrections officers as they serve and protect our communities.

We appreciate the Legislature, our Governor and other Executive Officials, and the Judiciary for working to uphold the Constitution. We obviously have separate and distinct functions, but must be united in our respect for the role of the citizenry, the rule of law, and our enumerated responsibilities.

One of the Sheriffs' most critical statutory duties is preserving the public peace. In accomplishing this mission, we have many capable partners. On a regular basis, state, local and federal law enforcement officers assist one another in ensuring the safety of Utahans. All of these officers have taken oaths to uphold the Constitution, and in our experience, nearly all of them work to meticulously adhere to the requirements of the Constitution.

We currently have a significant body of law to help maintain the balance between ensuring the safety of the community and protecting individual rights. We believe that as a State, we should be circumspect of new legislation, resolutions or executive orders, particularly those from the federal government, which may infringe upon individuals' constitutional rights.

As members of the human family, we value the sanctity of life. We live in a time when unlawful violence is commonplace, and along with the victims and survivors of violence, we recognize these tragedies to be irrational, callous and infuriating. Some individuals seek to use any means possible to injure or destroy life or property. While potential safety concerns continue to exist, we encourage citizens to refuse to give into fear tactics—those meant to confuse and cause chaos. Rather, we seek to be united as Americans and Utahans, to care for one another, and to ensure preparedness and safety in our places of worship and learning, in our homes and places of recreation and business.

## UTAH SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

As your elected Sheriffs, we humbly report that we are working diligently to prevent and prepare for potential violence or disaster. In doing so, we feel strongly that the focus of these efforts must be on the perpetrator and properly leading through the potential incidents. It is not necessary or wise to focus on the inanimate weapon, instrument or tool of the crime. We ask for your support in ensuring these principles are discussed further and applied to any upcoming legislation.

In addition, citizens are a vital part of preserving the importance of constitutional authority given we each shoulder a common obligation to ensure the constitutional legacy provided by our progenitors is passed intact to our children and grandchildren. Our resilient constitutional foundation has existed for 234 years, the oldest still in force today. Many countries with written constitutions have patterned theirs after ours. Our future generations need the constitutional foundation given to us in order to experience the same freedoms and happiness we have enjoyed.

Importantly, the Second Amendment of our divinely inspired Constitution clearly states "...the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed." We hereby recognize a significant principle underlying the Second Amendment: the right to keep and bear arms is indispensable to the existence of a free people.

As your elected Sheriffs, we individually and collectively pledge to do everything within our power to steadfastly protect the Second Amendment and all other individual rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

We understand the destructive influences currently existing in our country will only relent when women and men everywhere genuinely care for each other. We must rely on Providence and care deeply about preserving the Constitution and its freedoms in order to be a strong and prosperous people.

We invite and encourage the citizens of our respective counties, as well as citizens across the State, to join us in following the respectful, peaceful and orderly processes established by the Constitution for protecting individual rights and ensuring a prosperous future for all Americans and Utahans.

May God see fit to continue to bless the citizens of the United States of America and the great State of Utah.

Faithfully yours,  
The Utah Sheriffs