

# NEWS RELEASE

Public Information Department  
County of Warren



## Freeholder Board Declares Support for Second Amendment

(WHITE TOWNSHIP, NJ – February 11, 2020) – Expressing their intent to uphold the Second Amendment rights of the citizens of Warren County, the Board of Chosen Freeholders unanimously passed a resolution declaring Warren a “Second Amendment / Lawful Gun Owner County.”

The freeholder board “desires to express its deep commitment to the rights of citizens of Warren County to keep and bear Arms,” the resolution stated, and opposes “any efforts to unconstitutionally restrict such rights.”

A standing-room-only crowd offered comments both for and against the resolution for more than an hour before all three freeholders explained their support for the measure and voted.

“We’ve had some really great back and forth,” Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski said of the discussion, adding that, “From the bottom of my heart, I really do want to thank everyone for their decorum. The level of discourse that we rise to here, in my opinion goes far above what



*The Freeholders heard from a full house as speakers offered their views on a proposed resolution declaring the County of Warren a "Second Amendment / Lawful Gun Owner County."*

we’ve seen in other locations.”

Sarnoski said he had the utmost respect for all who expressed their views, no matter what side of the issue they took. However, Sarnoski said he is seeing greater restrictions being placed on gun ownership and added that the resolution “reflects my feelings on the rights of legal gun owners.”

Noting that his father was in law enforcement for 35 years, Sarnoski explained, “I’m the son of a police officer. He taught me how to handle a gun, and he taught me a gun owner has great responsibilities, but they also have rights, and that’s what makes this country great.”

Citizens in the United States have the right to own firearms, but in many countries, “people don’t have that right,” Sarnoski said.

Some of those who spoke questioned why the freeholder board wanted to pass such a resolution, but Sarnoski explained, “This is the process we have in this country when we disagree with our leadership. We don’t say we’re not going to follow the law, we don’t say we’re going to break the law, we say we’re going to address the laws we don’t agree with through petition. I don’t believe this board is wasting time or money by petitioning our government on our beliefs.”

Freeholder James R. Kern, III echoed Sarnoski’s praise for the way the speakers participated in the discussion, and continued that Warren County, with its comparatively low crime rate, “is a very safe place to live.”

New Jersey has some of the strictest gun laws in America, Kern said, but added he thinks some politicians are trying to pass laws just for the headlines and not because they have any positive effect.

“This is our way of symbolically telling Trenton, (and) our legislators, how we feel as a county,” Kern said.

Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner also said he supports the resolution to make a statement, saying that firearms restrictions considered at the state level mean “the law-abiding citizen in this state is now forfeiting his rights. That’s not acceptable.”

Pointing to areas that have tough gun laws but high crime, Gardner said politicians should “stop putting forth feel-good measures that do not accomplish anything for society.” Gardner added that he feels the governor and some members of the legislature “are wrong-headed on this matter” and wasting time instead of addressing core issues that contribute to gun violence, like mental illness.

Gardner said at least 75 percent of those who spoke were in favor of the board taking this stance.

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*See below for full text of the resolution.*

**THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS  
OF THE COUNTY OF WARREN**  
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building  
165 County Route 519 South  
Belvidere, NJ 07823

**RESOLUTION 76-20**

On motion by **Mr. Kern**, seconded by **Mr. Sarnoski**, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held February 11, 2020.

**RESOLUTION DECLARING THE COUNTY OF WARREN  
A SECOND AMENDMENT COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution reads: “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed,” an individual right affirmed by the United States Supreme Court and;

**WHEREAS**, the State of New Jersey was the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights, including the right to keep and bear arms, and the New Jersey Supreme Court has recognized it as a fundamental rights of its citizens; and,

**WHEREAS**, certain legislation introduced in the State Legislature, and certain legislation introduced in the current session of the United States Congress could have the effect of infringing on the rights of law abiding citizens to keep and bear arms, as guaranteed by the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders is concerned about the passage of any bill containing language which could be interpreted as infringing the rights of the citizens of Warren County to keep and bear Arms; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders desires to express its deep commitment to the rights of citizens of Warren County to keep and bear Arms; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders desires to express opposition to any law that would unconstitutionally restrict the rights under the Second Amendment of the citizens of Warren County, such as Assembly Bill 6003 proposed before the New Jersey General Assembly; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders desires to express its intent to stand for Second Amendment rights and to oppose, within the limits of the Constitution of the United States, any efforts to unconstitutionally restrict such rights, and to use such legal means at its disposal to protect the right of the citizens to keep and bear arms, including through legal action, the power of appropriation of public funds, and the right to petition for redress of grievances.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren, declares as follows:

1. The Board of Chosen Freeholders hereby express its intent to uphold the Second Amendment rights of the citizens of Warren County and its intent that public funds of the County not be used to restrict Second Amendment rights or to aid in the unnecessary and unconstitutional restriction of the rights under the Second Amendment of the citizens of Warren County to bear arms; and
2. The Board of Chosen Freeholders hereby declare Warren County, New Jersey, as a “Second Amendment/Lawful Gun Owner County.”

**RECORDED VOTE: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Kern yes, Mr. Gardner yes**

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

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Alex J. Lazorisak \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk  
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