



Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

Recently, Humboldt County Sheriff Mike Downey held a news conference and let it be known that he is a Constitutional Sheriff. He is not alone, but has joined with other Sheriffs across the nation in taking a stand to uphold the Constitution of the United States as well as the constitution of the state in which the involved Sheriff resides. That would be the Constitution of the State of California in Sheriff Downey's case. The particular portion of the United States Constitution referred to in the news conference happened to be the Second Amendment, the right to bear arms, a hot subject throughout the United States at this point in time. I think the main concern at present is the proposal to change gun laws by Executive Order which would be contrary to the Constitution of the United States Second Amendment as written. A group of Humboldt County surgeons wrote a letter to the editor, disagreeing with the Sheriff over how to control firearms. Both parties agree on one thing and that is the basic meaning of the Second Amendment as the law of the land. The physicians not only see the direct results of gunshot wounds, they must also repair the damage done. The law man also sees the direct results of gunshot wounds, the impact on friends and family and then has to assist in the criminal proceedings. As in any situation, you cannot allow haste to get in the way of good judgment. To place the Second Amendment (or any other Amendment) into the hands of a few for their interpretation, no matter how well intentioned, will not benefit the citizens of the United States. I think that it is encouraging to see the Sheriff and the surgeons pretty much on the same page and I would like to see further discussion between the two parties. Sheriff Downey and every other Sheriff in the United States took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and of the state in which they reside. The point in question is "did they read and understand the Constitutions before taking the oath?" Or did they figure on getting around to it later when they had time? Sheriff Downey has let his constituents know that he has read both the United States and California Constitutions; he understands them and is ready to enforce them to the best of his ability. All elected officials take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States. I have helped author questions for election candidates and one of my questions has been "When was the last time you read the Constitution of the United States and do you understand it?" Some of the answers have made me a bit uncomfortable. To those Sheriffs who have let it be known that they understand and support the Constitution, thanks for being there for all of us and not a chosen few.

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