



**COLUMBIA COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**
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To Columbia County Citizens:

Recent events in our nation have created tremendous focus on the Second Amendment in our Constitution. I have been asked by citizens to comment on the tone of the discussion at the federal level and the potential threat to the freedoms of gun owners in our county.

I have been a longtime supporter of Second Amendment freedoms and have taken public stands in support of the individual's right to keep and bear arms. I am also an advocate for responsible gun ownership and am working to expand the opportunities for citizens to learn practical gun safety and training techniques.

I also will be expressing my thoughts to our state and federal legislative representatives, encouraging them to respect the gun rights of the individual but also to find ways to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and other individuals who lack the capacity to make sound moral decisions in regard to their possession of firearms. Some of those ways include:

- Broadened prosecution of felonious gun criminals
- Severe penalties for gun violence
- Closing the gap in the law in regard to prohibiting the possession of firearms by mentally unstable individuals

In many instances, laws are already in place, but lack the necessary enforcement or resources to investigate, convict and incarcerate violent offenders.

Sadly, I believe the tone of the discussion in our Nation's Capitol is too focused on limiting our basic rights as delineated and protected by our Constitution, instead of addressing the issues that gave rise to the incidents in Newtown, Connecticut and in Clackamas. I do not believe that most of the "fixes" being discussed by politicians in Washington, DC would have prevented what happened in those incidents.

As Sheriff, I have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States of America. I have upheld and will continue to uphold this oath, including supporting the Second Amendment rights of our citizens. When tragedy or controversy strikes our nation, I believe it is incumbent upon us all to avoid hasty reactions to situations that impact the rights of all people.

Jeff Dickerson
Columbia County Sheriff