



Written by [William S. Hahn](#) on August 22, 2023

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Nullification Gets It Done, Again!

While known for its big-city crime and leftist politics, the state of Illinois recently gave liberty-minded activists a lesson in how nullification is used to protect the God-given rights of citizens.

After the July 4 Highland Park shooting last year, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed into law many curtailments on gun ownership, reflecting the usual black-guns-and-large-capacity-magazines-bad mentality.



AP Images

Shortly thereafter, something encouraging happened. Rather than simply complying with the new gun-control law, 74 Illinois sheriff's departments publicly announced they would not be enforcing it. The *Chicago Tribune* recently reported that the number has now grown to more than 90. The state has 102 counties. You do the math.

As an example of big-city policy running headlong into rural values, the La Salle County Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution opposing the new law, and the county's state attorney also put out a statement that he would not prosecute anyone who violated the new law. As local Illinois news outlet *The Times* reported, "[Attorney] Joe Navarro said he thinks the law is unconstitutional and that he will act accordingly."

La Salle County Sheriff Adam Diss doesn't think too much of the law either. He said in January to *The Times*, "The right to keep and bear arms for the defense of life, liberty and property is regarded as an inalienable right by the people."

It may come as no surprise that Sheriff Diss is a Republican. However, Navarro is a Democrat, demonstrating that party labels should mean nothing when it comes to obeying the Constitution.

As we wrote in our booklet *The Founders' Brilliant Solution to Big Government: Article VI*, "America's Founders said constitutional violations should be met with constitutional enforcement. Local, state, and federal officials have a duty to protect our rights by opposing constitutional violations."

The bearing of arms is a popular right that government loves to violate. After all, take away the arms of the people and they are left defenseless against government-sanctioned tyranny. Gun registration is always a precursor to confiscation.

When a law challenges a basic right of individuals, elected officials have a duty to protect their constituents by declaring the usurpation of or attack on the right as null and void. For those who understand this constitutional principle, it is a powerful tool.

Nullification has been used on many occasions throughout American history, most recently and notably against the unconstitutional Covid lockdowns.

Yet, there are still many legislators and special-interest groups that argue against using nullification. They say it doesn't work and that it's unconstitutional. People who say this either don't understand the



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concept, or they are making excuses because they don't want to act.

We say to that, "Lead, follow, or get out of the way!" No other constitutional tool provides immediate relief to constituents as nullification does. There's no lengthy court battle. There's no need to amend the Constitution. There's no additional legislation to be passed. There's no need for a majority to act. Many times, there's only a need for one individual to act, or, in this case, to *not* act.

The sheriff is the highest elected official in the county. As the top law-enforcement officer for his constituents, he has an obligation to jealously guard their God-given rights. As this example in Illinois demonstrates, elected officials who take principled stands find themselves standing together.

Learn more about nullification and when, why, and how the Founding Fathers suggested it be used by downloading our free PDF [The Founders' Brilliant Solution to Big Government: Article VI](#), part of our Constitutional Principles series.

The concept of nullification has been taught by The John Birch Society since 1958. Isn't it time you joined? Start at [JBS.org](#).

— *William S. Hahn, CEO of The John Birch Society*



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