



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on February 17, 2020

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Saving the Second Amendment

RICHMOND — Scores of thousands descended on the Capitol grounds in Richmond, Virginia, Monday, January 20. On one of the coldest days of the year, they came to stand up for the right to keep and bear arms. They came from all over Virginia and from across the country. Their message was simple: The right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

By 7:00 a.m. — a full hour before the event was to begin — there was already a crowd of thousands. They lined the streets of Richmond all around the Capitol grounds. The jubilant, peaceful crowd chanted patriotic slogans — including a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance — and carried flags, banners, and posters. Despite the reason behind the event — the Democrat-led state assembly’s slate of anti-gun laws aimed at disarming residents of the Old Dominion — the feeling of the rally was one of optimism. Men and women — black, white, Asian, Hispanic, and more — marched together peacefully to show that Governor Ralph Northam has gone too far.

There was a heavy police presence, and guns — usually legal to carry in Richmond and even on the Capitol grounds — were banned by special order by Governor Northam. He had taken the heavy-handed measure after claiming that there was “credible intelligence” of “armed militia groups storming our capitol” and perhaps even using “weaponized drones.” He added, “Let me be clear. These are considered credible, serious threats by our law-enforcement agencies.”

Northam seized the opportunity to invoke memories of the tragic violence of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in 2017 that devolved into a free-for-all clash between neo-Nazis on one side and communists on the other (with the average demonstrator caught in the middle). On the official GovernorVA Twitter account, Northam tweeted, “We have received credible intelligence from our law enforcement agencies of threats of violence surrounding the demonstration planned for Monday, January 20. This includes extremist rhetoric similar to what has been seen before major incidents, such as Charlottesville in 2017.”

Of course, his self-serving doomsday prophecy was proved false. The rally was entirely peaceful. There was no violence and no disruptive behavior from anyone. In a crowd estimated to be between 22,000 and 50,000, with many hundreds of those outside the fence surrounding the Capitol heavily armed with



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handguns, rifles, and knives, the atmosphere was one of peace and unity. Northam's pretended fears of a repeat of Charlottesville were all for nothing.

The single arrest of the day was that of a woman who refused twice to remove a bandanna — her protection against the arctic winds on a day that barely got above freezing — from her face. Her arrest is an oddity in more than one way. Given the freezing temperatures of the day, many of the attendees kept their faces covered by bandannas, scarves, and ski masks. Why this one woman was singled out is not known.

In an obvious attempt at saving face after his prediction proved false, Northam issued a statement, saying, "Thousands of people came to Richmond to make their voices heard. Today showed that when people disagree, they can do so peacefully." The statement went on to say, "The issues before us evoke strong emotions, and progress is often difficult. I will continue to listen to the voices of Virginians, and I will continue to do everything in my power to keep our Commonwealth safe."

Of course, for him that means pushing forward with his anti-gun agenda, despite the overwhelming response of Virginians — scores of thousands strong — braving the cold and traveling from all over the state to "make their voices heard."

This writer was there and met and interviewed dozens of people from as nearby as Richmond and as far away as Texas. Everyone was optimistic that the peaceful turnout would serve as evidence of their claim: Law-abiding gun owners are not a threat.

A common theme that ran through the day was the idea that gun rights are inseparable from other rights. If rights are allowed to be infringed in one area, that infringement threatens freedom in other areas, as well. One woman expressed that idea well, with a sign saying, "Gun rights are women's rights." And while she declined to be interviewed, other women expressed the same idea.

Tori — who declined to give her last name — held a sign that said, "I am unarmed today due to Government oppression." Since she decided to attend the portion of the rally taking place inside the fence surrounding the Capitol grounds, she was forced to come unarmed. Despite that fact, she was excited to be part of a historic moment, standing up for her rights and those of millions of others. She laughed and told me that she had shaken hands with a state senator.

Tori said she came out to "show Governor Northam that we cannot be put down any longer." She added that citizens need to have their rights protected "because we are concerned American citizens."

She was not alone in expressing that view. We also spoke with Julia Glenn, a handicapped senior from Woodbridge, Virginia, who told us that the right to keep and bear arms is tantamount to her ability to defend herself. "I am a single woman, I live by myself. How am I going to protect myself? I'm also handicapped, so if someone were to attempt to attack me, I would be defenseless."

Employing the type of common sense that is sorely lacking in the Democrat-led state assembly, Glenn said that she realizes that there have been some people shot by crazed criminals, but that has nothing to do with the right of law-abiding, peace-loving citizens to keep and bear arms. "The people I have met at these shooting ranges, gun shops, they're peaceful. They want to keep the peace. They want to protect themselves," she told *The New American*, adding, "We're not violent people, so why can't we have our guns?"

Others — including State Senator Bryce Reeves and former U.S. Congressman Scott Taylor —



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expressed the same sentiments. Reeves told us he supports the Second Amendment and does not believe that law-abiding Virginians should have the right to keep and bear arms taken away by radical Democrats.

Taylor — who is running to regain his seat in the House of Representatives — agreed. He called the legislation now being considered “a premeditated assault on the Second Amendment.” As to the crowd present at the rally, he said that even with his two terms as a Virginia state delegate and his time in Congress he has “never, ever, seen the engagement that I have seen here.”

The consensus of those we spoke to was that protecting the Second Amendment in Virginia, where it is now under attack, helps protect it in other states as well.

Kenny Wolfam from Houston, Texas, said he was at the rally to defend the Second Amendment here, before the threat spreads. Sal Gutierrez, from Ashboro, North Carolina, came to show support for Virginians and their right to keep and bear arms. He told us, “These are our rights and we’re going to exercise them.” Gutierrez did exercise his right to keep and bear arms, sporting a rifle on a sling across his chest. He remained outside the Capitol grounds, marching in the streets around Richmond, meeting like-minded Second Amendment supporters.

Jim Young, an 82-year-old Air Force veteran from Youngstown, Ohio, said he was also in Richmond to defend rights in his home state. “I talked this up back home, and I came down here to put my money where my mouth is.” He described the current threat to our God-given rights as “probably one of the most troubling things I’ve experienced in these 82 years.”

And Dave Spicer, a Shelby County, Ohio, deputy, came to show support for any law-enforcement officers who decide to honor their oaths of office and refuse to support infringement on the Second Amendment. When asked about his concerns as a deputy, Spicer — who is also a member of Oath Keepers — told The New American that he worries about “what the government may try to ask me to do.” He added, “I lay awake at night thinking about that.” He was quick to say that his decision has already been made, saying, “It’s obvious; I mean, I’m down here, supporting you Virginians.” He said he is not alone. “Every deputy I work with stands for the Second Amendment.”

Tom, who also declined to give his last name, traveled to the rally from Long Island, New York. He told The New American that he believes the proposed laws in Virginia are worse than those already in place in New York. He was at the rally to support the Second Amendment in Virginia before it erodes even further in New York. “In New York, we already have horrible gun laws, but [this proposed legislation] is much worse than what we have.”

As for the attempt by Governor Northam and the liberal media to portray the event as a “white separatist rally,” Wade, a black Second Amendment advocate, said, “I woke up the same color today as I was yesterday.” He added, “Here I am. These are my people.”

There were also counter-protesters present. While they did engage some gun-rights advocates, those engagements were non-confrontational, due to the peaceful attitude of those who were there to voice their support for the Second Amendment. Members of a Richmond-based Antifa group also attended. In a strange-bedfellows twist, they were there to demonstrate in favor of the Second Amendment. They said they believe in an “armed Left.” They kept a low profile and did not instigate any violence or disruption.



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With the rally having gone peacefully despite Governor Northam's dire — and self-serving — predictions, he and his fellow Democrats might find themselves out of power in the next election. After all, scores of thousands of Virginians just marched on the Capitol to tell them they are out of step.

In fact, one group is looking to have Northam recalled for violating the Virginia Constitution.

Chris Anders, director of Virginia Constitutional Conservatives, told us that his organization had already gained more than 60,000 of the 402,000 signatures needed for a petition to have Northam recalled. By the time we spoke to him around mid-morning, he said his group had already collected another estimated 15,000 signatures.

Anders said that members of his group were there to exercise their First Amendment-protected rights in order to defend their Second Amendment "God-given rights" to keep and bear arms.

As to the petition, Anders said, "In Virginia, we don't have a recall election; we have a recall trial. Northam would go before the circuit court initially, to be tried for his violation of [Article I] Section 13 of the Virginia State Constitution — which is the right to keep and bear arms."

Section 13 reads:

That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state, therefore, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.

As to the heavy police presence, Anders said that with "very peaceful" and "very friendly" gun owners in the crowd — as expected — the heavy police presence "wasn't for public safety" but was "to intimidate patriots from coming out."

Given the loud, proud, peaceful, and large crowd, it appears Northam's attempt failed miserably.

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