



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 3, 2019

California Desert City Looks to Become a 2nd Amendment “Sanctuary”

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Perhaps in an effort to show that the entire Golden State has not jumped off the leftist cliff, a small desert city on the Arizona border has declared itself a “2nd Amendment Sanctuary City.” The “sanctuary” nomenclature is an obvious poke at “sanctuary cities,” which refuse to cooperate with federal immigration policy and continue to harbor illegal immigrants.



Needles, California (population 5,000), a small city in the Mojave Desert that featured prominently in John Steinbeck’s [ode to communism *The Grapes of Wrath*](#), is now looking for unlikely state recognition of its newly declared status as a place where residents and gun owners from other states can be free from many of California’s strict gun laws.

On June 11, the city council made the declaration and ordered the city attorney to draw up a resolution asking the California Legislature to allow registered gun owners from other states the freedom to carry firearms in town and exempt the city from certain California gun and ammunition restrictions.

“All we can do is tighten state law,” said Mayor Jeff Williams. “We can’t loosen it, but we can ask for a change in the law or an exemption.”

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The sponsor of the measure, City Councilman Tim Terral was inspired by friends in neighboring Arizona, who said they avoided going to Needles specifically because of California’s strict gun laws.

“I’m asking them, ‘Why won’t you come to a barbecue at my house? Or, why won’t you come out here and buy X, Y or Z because we can sell it cheaper,’” Terral said. “They said basically it’s because we’re not going to disarm ourselves, and California won’t accept our concealed weapons permits.”

In addition, the city wants relief from a new California gun law that went into effect on July 1. The new law requires gun owners in California to undergo a background check in order to purchase ammunition. The law also prohibits people from bringing ammunition into California from other states.

Since Needles is more than a hundred miles away from the nearest California store that sells ammunition, many in the city buy it in neighboring Arizona. The new law makes that practice a crime.

California Democrats believe the new ammunition law will help authorities discover “ghost guns” that are not registered with the state.

Needles also wants an exemption from the state gun laws for the city and a 65-mile radius around it and



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an acknowledgement that sheriff's deputies do not need to enforce California's gun laws on residents from Nevada and Arizona if they are following their own state's laws.

"[California Democrats] want to pick and choose what they follow," Terral told the AP. "It's 'We're going to shield this person, but we're going to after that person,' And in our opinion, they have violated the Second Amendment of the Constitution in many ways."

The city's push for gun owner rights is part of a larger, [nationwide movement](#) looking to stop government infringement on the Second Amendment.

Jurisdictions, [particularly in Western states but stretching eastward as well](#), have passed declarations or have otherwise declared that they will not follow gun laws that they consider violations of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states that "the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

In Illinois, 65 of the 102 counties in the state have passed Second Amendment Sanctuary resolutions. In Colorado, 38 out of 64 counties have passed gun-friendly resolutions. In New Mexico, 30 of 33 county sheriffs have signed a letter vowing not to enforce certain gun control measures.

Four states, [Alaska](#), [Idaho](#), [Kansas](#), and [Wyoming](#) have passed legislation intended to exempt themselves from federal gun control measures or to protect the Second Amendment from further infringement.

Thus far, Needles is the only jurisdiction in California to call itself a Second Amendment sanctuary.

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