



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 20, 2016

Major Media Takes Notice of Constitutional Sheriffs and Their Campaign

The Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA), which *The New American* has been reporting about for at least five years, has come to the attention of the major media. In an April 18 news report, NBC News reposted an article about the group originally published by The Center for Public Integrity, a Washington, D.C.-based investigative news organization, headlined, “The army to set our nation free.”



The title is a direct quote from former Graham County, Arizona sheriff Richard Mack, founder of the CSPOA, who used it to describe his organization. The article linked to Mack’s webpage, in which he described his mission. Among his statements:

Right now, it is vital that we restore the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. The greatest threat we face today is not terrorists; it is our own federal government. If America is conquered or ruined it will be from within, *not a foreign enemy*. [Emphasis in original.]

Mack summarized his purpose as follows:

I am deeply committed to the belief that **government should exist to protect the freedoms of the individuals whom it serves**. We must return to those principles that our country was founded upon! [Emphasis in original.]

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The Public Integrity article started with the story of Liberty County, Florida Sheriff Nick Finch, who became embroiled in controversy back in 2013, when he ordered the release of a man who had been arrested for carrying a concealed firearm without a license. Finch justified his action by saying: “I know what law rules the day, and it’s the U.S. Constitution.”

After his deputy complained about his actions, Republican Governor Rick Scott ordered Finch’s suspension.

Following that suspension, Mack and his CSPOA rallied to Finch’s defense. *The New American* published several articles about Finch’s ordeal: “[Liberty Co Sheriff Arrested, Suspended by Governor](#)”; “[Trial of Liberty County, Florida Sheriff Nick Finch Begins](#)”; and “[Sheriff Nick Finch Acquitted, Immediately Reinstated by Governor](#).”

The last of those articles, published on October 31, 2013, described Finch’s vindication:

Justice has been served.

Minutes after noon on Thursday, October 31, an eight-person jury acquitted Sheriff Nick Finch of both charges against him. Finch, the sheriff of Liberty County, Florida, was accused of official misconduct and falsifying records. Finch maintained that he was simply standing up for the right of the people to keep and bear arms as protected by the Second Amendment.



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The jury agreed, reaching its verdict in fewer than 90 minutes. Within minutes of being found not guilty, Sheriff Finch spoke with Governor Rick Scott, who reinstated Finch within hours.

In an interview with *The New American* afterwards, Finch said: "I am so grateful for all the support from patriots all across the country. I am thrilled to be back to work."

Finch continues to serve as Liberty County's sheriff.

The Public Integrity article said that his support on behalf of Finch "wasn't the only occasion in which Mack, a former public relations director of ... Gun Owners of America, has intervened on behalf of someone who prominently contested the enforcement of laws." The article noted:

Mack first made it to the national stage in 1996 as a sheriff from Arizona, when he and a sheriff from Montana challenged a provision of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act before the U.S. Supreme Court. Using attorneys subsidized by the National Rifle Association, they argued it was unconstitutional for the federal government to require local chief law enforcement officers to run background checks on prospective gun buyers — and won, in a 5-4 ruling that struck down that provision of the act.

The article noted that during CSPOA's 2014 annual convention, Finch and 40 other sheriffs signed a resolution declaring that they would not tolerate any federal agent who attempted to register firearms, arrest someone, or seize property in their counties without their consent. This declaration represented the very essence of the concept of federalism.

Over the past few years, *The New American* has reported about the activities of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association on many occasions, since CSPOA has often taken a position on controversies between local and federal officials. In one such [article](#), Mack granted an exclusive interview with *The New American*.

In that interview, Mack highlighted the successes that members of his organization had in resisting unconstitutional challenges by the federal government and declared that with these successes, "We are taking back America one county at a time!"

Among the sheriffs across the country who are CSPOA members and who have kept their oath to uphold, defend, protect, preserve, and obey the U.S. Constitution have been:

- **Sheriff Tony Desmond** of Schoharie County, New York, a champion of the Second Amendment, who said: "If you have an assault weapon which under the state's [new] SAFE act is considered illegal, I don't look at it as being illegal just because someone says it is."
- **Sheriff John Cook** of Weld County, Colorado — one of nine sheriffs who sued the state of Colorado over its draconian gun control laws passed in 2013, who insisted: "It's not [legislators'] job to tell me what I can and can't enforce. I'm still the one who has to say, 'Where do I put my priorities and resources?' And it's not going to be there [enforcing gun control laws]."
- **Sheriff Tony DeMeo** of Nye County, Nevada, who told his deputies that cattle seizures by federal agents were prohibited and that any federal agents attempting to confiscate cattle from Nye County resident Wayne Hage's ranch would be arrested. Shortly thereafter BLM agents arrived at Hage's ranch, whereupon one of DeMeo's deputies informed them that they could not seize any of Hage's cattle. When federal Bureau of Land Management agents told DeMeo's deputy that they would arrest the sheriff and use armed force to take Hage's cattle, Sheriff DeMeo advised the federal agents that their SWAT team would be faced with DeMeo's own SWAT team if they proceeded. DeMeo explained



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that his deputies were empowered to refuse unlawful orders if the orders violated the U.S. Constitution, the Nevada state constitution, local laws, or policies.

The feds apparently took DeMeo's words seriously because they never pursued their armed confrontation.

As *The New American's* interview with Sheriff Mack concluded, he noted that in every case in which a constitutional sheriff or peace officer has challenged federal authorities, the federal authorities have stood down. He couldn't recall a single instance in which any member of CSPOA was forced to stand down in the face of unconstitutional federal pressure.

While the Center for Public Integrity's article was by no means supportive of the CSPOA's mission (and even tried, in places, to associate their work with certain violent elements within the "sovereign citizen" movement), the fact that the article was picked up by NBC News will help publicize the sheriffs' work and perhaps attract other constitutionalist law-enforcement officers to their ranks.

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