



Written by [James Murphy](#) on January 9, 2020

## Virginia's Largest City Stands Up in Favor of Gun Rights

When Virginia Governor Ralph Northam called for an [“assault weapons ban”](#) and asked for approximately \$4 million and 18 new paid state positions for new gun-control efforts, he probably understood that there would be pushback in rural areas of the state. But he probably didn't envision that the state's largest city — Virginia Beach with approximately 450,000 residents — might have objections.



On Monday, the Virginia Beach City Council passed [A Resolution in Support of Second Amendment Rights](#) during a special informal session of the council. The vote was 6-4 in favor of the resolution, with both Mayor Robert Dyer and Vice Mayor James Wood voting in support of the measure.

Virginia Beach was the site of a [horrific mass shooting](#) on May 31, 2019 when a disgruntled city employee shot 12 citizens before he could be gunned down by police. Many of Northam's gun-grab proposals are a response to this shooting.

From the text of the resolution: “The City Council is concerned that certain pre-filed legislation for the 2020 session of the General Assembly may threaten the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms guaranteed by the constitutions of the Commonwealth of Virginia and of the United States.”

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Virginia Beach stopped short of becoming a Second Amendment sanctuary city, but the resolution still sends a strong message to Democrats in the state who are promising new, strict gun-control measures in the coming year.

“The City Council hereby expresses its strong support for the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms and urges the members of the General Assembly and the Governor to take no action which would violate the freedoms guaranteed by either the Virginia Bill of Rights or the federal Bills of Rights.”

The council meeting was open to the public, and hundreds showed up to voice their opinion on the subject. When the council chamber became full, a television monitor was set up outside so that the overflow crowd could watch the proceedings.

And that crowd was decidedly pro-Second Amendment. Most wore orange stickers which read “Guns Save Lives,” and spoke without raucousness about their constitutionally protected rights.

Philip Van Cleave, the president of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, said, “This truly is a grass roots movement. I think that's what some on the other side haven't figured out yet. This isn't Bloomberg giving millions of dollars for people to come in and protest. This is not that, this is neighbors talking to neighbors.... The Governor's declared war on gun owners, people like you and me. He's not declared war on criminals.... He admitted that all of the things that he had put in that emergency session ... not one of them did anything to stop the massacre that you guys had here.... It was aimed at people like you and me.”



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Ben Loyola, a Cuban refugee, told the story about how Fidel Castro's government took guns away as a precursor to the brutal tactics the dictator used against the citizens. "Fidel Castro came out of the mountains, promising prosperity to everybody," Loyola explained. "'Give me your guns, and I'll give you bread.' He took those guns away and he imprisoned thousands and he killed tens of thousands in shooting squads."

Loyola went on, "Please don't erode our natural God-given rights to protect ourselves."

The other side of the argument was represented as well. "Tonight, in this assembly, it's sort of a dog-and-pony show," said Conrad Schesventer, a former candidate for the city council. Schesventer argued that the movement to protect the Second Amendment in Virginia was tied to all sorts of left-wing issues.

"And we see the show, this grand illusion, put forth by the [pro Second Amendment] movement itself, this movement elevating firearms to that of idolatry. It is only said as such because this ignores the most important part of the Second Amendment; to secure a free state. And the charlatans want no free state because I watch as they wish to form a militia to guard against gun grabs but not against drug laws, against gay marriage laws, against locking kids in cages, against police brutality for minorities, against corruption of government."

No, Mr. Schesventer, it's all about the guns. Guns are not idols; they are tools. Tools so vital that the Founders felt that the need to designate that importance in the Bill of Rights. People do not idolize weapons, they need them. That is why people become so touchy when governments look to take those weapons away.

In America, we should be able to simply point to our Constitution, which prohibits the infringement of our rights, as the final authority on issues of our basic rights. Unfortunately, politicians, activists, and the media in this country have confused our laws so much that efforts such as the Second Amendment Sanctuary movement have become necessary. The good news is that the movement does exist and it's full of intelligent, well-educated people who are not willing to allow local, state, or federal governments to trample their rights.

*Image: Olga Mendenhall via iStock / Getty Images Plus*

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