



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 24, 2021

Florida County Considers Establishing Itself as a “Bill of Rights Sanctuary”

We’ve heard of “sanctuary” cities that protect illegal immigrants, “sanctuary” cities to protect the unborn, and “sanctuary” cities for guaranteeing the right to own and carry firearms, but now one Florida county is considering making itself a sanctuary for the entire Bill of Rights.

At a contentious meeting on Tuesday, the Collier County Board of County Commissioners (CCBOCC) voted to consider approving a new ordinance that would protect county citizens from any federal law that violates an individual’s God-given rights as outlined in the U.S. Constitution.



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The fact that Collier County is considering an ordinance instead of a resolution is the main point of contention between the five county commissioners, who eventually voted 3-2 in favor of postponing a final decision on the measure until July 13. While a resolution is, basically, a strong signal of opinion on the matter of the Bill of Rights, an ordinance would codify and make law the protection of freedoms outlined in the Constitution.

Commissioners Rick LoCastro, Burt Saunders, and vice-chairman William McDaniel, Jr. voted in favor of advancing the ordinance, while commissioner Andy Solis and chairwoman Penny Taylor voted against it. A simple majority would be enough to make the new ordinance a law in Collier County.

Solis, an attorney, was particularly troubled that the proposed ordinance could put Collier County at odds with the federal government.

“Let’s say there’s federal legislation,” Solis speculated about a hypothetical situation where a federal law might be found unconstitutional “three years from now.”

“The way this is written,” Solis concluded, “we could all be sued for that.”

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The meeting was an especially contentious one with Taylor, the other negative vote on the ordinance, [ordering](#) that there be no “clapping or cheering” during the meeting and threatening to have anyone who disregarded that order removed from the room.

“At this point we are not going to have any clapping or cheering. If there is, you will be removed,” Taylor told the assembly.

Solis and Taylor both voiced concern about who in the county would be responsible for determining what is and isn’t constitutional and what the penalties for running afoul of the new ordinance would be.

Despite Taylor’s directive against clapping and cheering, some speakers earned a few plaudits for their support of the new ordinance. Recent high-school graduate and grandchild of Cuban immigrants Jacob



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Waggoner was particularly concerned about the First Amendment.

“It scares me that the First Amendment is okay for some but not for all,” Waggoner told the commissioners. “That’s my biggest problem, especially for conservatives in the era of cancel culture. It’s really scary what’s going on in this country.”

Representative Byron Donalds (R) of Florida’s 19th District, which includes a portion of Collier County, made a surprise appearance at the meeting, speaking in favor of the ordinance.

“I will tell you,” Donalds said. “Those on this [Republican] side of the political aisle are constantly forced to deal with legislative pushes that seek to undermine various aspects of the Bill of Rights.”

Donalds argued that the entire Bill of Rights was in danger; not just the Second Amendment. “It goes much further,” the congressman said, “and these are not just talking points and speeches at rallies. These are legislative ideas that are coming from the other side of the aisle.”

“Being a congressional representative, I will tell you there are moves to try to strip elements of the Bill of Rights as they exist in the United States Constitution,” Donalds warned, “and being the lawful authority here in Collier County, I see no reason why you can’t align yourself, not only with the United States Constitution but also Florida’s Constitution.”

Collier County Sheriff Ken Rambosk was also a fan of the proposed ordinance. “The Constitution very clearly designates the powers entrusted to the government by the consent of the people,” Rambosk reminded the CCBOCC. “By virtue of my duties and responsibilities as Sheriff, I recommend supporting this ordinance.”

In the end, the CCBOCC voted to table the matter for further study. The new ordinance will be taken up again at the July 13 meeting of the council.

Whether or not the ordinance finally passes, the bigger issue might be the fact that a county in one of America’s states feels threatened enough by the current federal government that it feels the need to reaffirm the Bill of Rights — one of America’s founding documents, which defines and codifies our God-given rights.

And Collier County, Florida, is not the only county in these United States that feels that way.



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