

Office of the Sheriff Cochise County

Mark J. Dannels
Sheriff

Thad J. Smith
Chief Deputy



To my Fellow Citizens of Cochise County and the United States of America,

Recently, I have spoken to several of my fellow citizens in Cochise County who have voiced to me their concerns and fears with the President's recent decision to issue a number of executive orders aimed at gun control. Realizing the importance of this matter, I feel it is necessary to publish my official position on our Second Amendment rights, and what role I and my Office will have in this matter.

First, let me say, my heart goes out to the families and survivors of the tragic event in Connecticut, and to all those who may have lost loved ones in past violent acts. However, if history has taught us anything it is this; solely blaming firearms for acts of violence is not the answer. In my opinion, it amounts to nothing more than a play on emotions in an attempt to pacify the immediate outcry, and is a disservice to those we, as elected officials, are sworn to serve and protect.

As Sheriff, I was elected by the citizens of Cochise County to represent them and their interest. I and my Deputies shall not be used as a surrogate of any government entity to violate the civil rights of the citizens of this great Nation. My loyalty lies within the oath of the Sheriff's Office, which reads, in part, as follows: **"I solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Arizona; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and defend them against all enemies whatsoever, and that I will faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the office of Sheriff, according to the best of my ability so help me God."**

If I have learned anything during my twenty-nine years as a lawman, it is this; education, prevention, and enforcement are the three keys to successful crime prevention. We are a Nation of laws designed to protect our citizens, establish peace and order, and above all preserve the Constitutional liberties of all. With that said, no one person or branch of government can single handedly solve the complex issues of crime prevention. There must be a collaborative effort on the part of Law Enforcement and our Judicial, Educational, Medical, and Legislative partners to develop a comprehensive crime prevention strategy, which takes into account all of the contributing factors, not just the most convenient.

In closing, while I respect our Nation's elected Offices, as the duly elected Sheriff for the citizens of Cochise County, I and my Office will ensure the Constitutional Rights of the citizens of Cochise County are not infringed upon and will not permit any official, federal or otherwise, to attempt to do so.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Dannels
Sheriff, Cochise County