

Symbolic gun rights vote by Itasca County draws mixed feelings from rural Minnesota

Citizen Comment:

So all these people in Itasca County are furious the item wasn't on the agenda

> and trust me, many of these same ilk are just as upset at the CWC Board for
> the same reason.
>
> However, don't forget how back in 2020, the Left's fearless leader, the
> esteemed Steve Barrows, did virtually the same thing.
>
> The agenda did include: "Second Amendment," but Commissioner Barrows directed
> county staff to "not" include his watered-down version of the 2A Resolution.
>
> The resolution Barrows presented was contrary to what was posted on the
> County's website for the public to weigh-in on.
>
> So after a month of public comment, Barrows read aloud his watered-down 2A
> Resolution which essentially did follow the 2A according to the U.S.
> Constitution, but in no way did it push back against-any proposed tyrannical
> legislation from tyrannical Democrats in the Twin Cities.
>
> Barrows was of course the hero of the Left here in CWC, which tells you
> everything you would want to know about just how watered-down his 2A
> resolution was.

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>
> Jeff

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>Articles on the Itasca Issue:

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> Symbolic gun rights vote by Itasca County draws mixed feelings from
> rural Minnesota
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> Residents voice concerns about how the resolution was passed
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> @b3467-20230307-people-talk-at-board-meeting02-webp1762.jpg
> Supporters of a "Second Amendment dedicated county" resolution pack a meeting
> Feb. 21, 2023, for an Itasca County Board of Commissioners work session.
> Screenshot of meeting video
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> ByDan Kraker / MPR News
> March 08, 2023 10:04 AM
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> DULUTH – Last month, a standing-room only crowd packed an Itasca County Board
> of Commissioners work session to urge the board to declare Itasca County a
> “Second Amendment dedicated county” – a symbolic but controversial resolution
> to uphold county residents' gun rights, and “oppose any infringement on the
> right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms.”

>
> It's similar to Second Amendment "sanctuary" resolutions approved by hundreds
> of counties around the country in recent years – including several in
> Minnesota. Those include language declaring they won't use local resources to
> enforce laws believed to infringe on the constitutional right to bear arms.
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> After the resolution was read aloud, Board Chair Burl Ives invited supporters
> of it to address the board.
>
> One by one, 25 people approached the microphone and adamantly backed the
> proposal, citing the need to preserve hunting traditions, protect the
> Constitution, stand up against a "tyrannical" government, and push back
> against gun rights measures under consideration at the state Legislature.
>
> Then Ives invited opponents to speak. "Going once, going twice, I'm going to
> go three times," he said.
>
> No one came forward. The board unanimously approved the resolution.
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> 'No inkling'
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> Cyndy Martin, chair of Itasca County DFL, was watching from home. She said
> there was good reason why no opponents spoke at the meeting.
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> "I had no inkling that was coming up whatsoever," she said.
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> The board added the resolution to its agenda a couple hours before its meeting
> began. That's legal, and Martin said she has seen the board add agenda items
> in the past.
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> "I've never seen them put something controversial on, though. I was shocked,
> and disappointed. We deserve a right to have a voice," Martin said.
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> A week after Itasca County acted, the Crow Wing County Board passed an
> identical resolution by a 3-2 vote. Theirs also was not on the published
> agenda, but was added at the start of the meeting.
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> "What's going on here is unfair shenanigans," said Larry Jacobs, a professor
> of politics and government at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of
> Public Affairs. "The way our policy is supposed to work, including at a county
> level, is there's an agenda, it's widely shared, it allows citizens on either
> side to come forward and make their case. It's kind of the basic rule of
> transparency."
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> For and against
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> Itasca County Commissioner John Johnson said several constituents had
> contacted him ahead of the Feb. 21 meeting, asking the board to take up the
> matter.
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> He said he consulted with Itasca County Sheriff Joe Dasovich. Johnson told the
> meeting the resolution includes language "in support of our Second Amendment
> rights, as well as in support of law-abiding citizens having freedoms relative
> to firearms."
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> Supporters of the resolution at the meeting spoke passionately on its behalf.
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> Many highlighted the importance of hunting. Terry Hopkins, of Grand Rapids,
> said he spent years in the woods with his father and grandfather, and now he's
> passing on that tradition to his grandkids.
>
> "It's a very important part of the fabric of Itasca county," he said.
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> Others thanked the board for standing up on behalf of the Constitution.
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> "I appreciate the fact that all of you and our sheriff are taking steps that
> should have never been necessary in the first place," said Renee Kern, Grand
> Rapids.
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> Several spoke of the need to have an armed citizenry, in the event it's needed
> to stand up against a tyrannical government.
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> "And what we are seeing coming down at the state and the federal level, we are
> seeing a tyrannical government," said Addie Best, Deer River.
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> Still others, including Gabriel Hager, of Grand Rapids, suggested that rural
> Minnesota should separate from the Twin Cities metro area.
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> "They've got 4 million people down there voting for Democratic rule, and the
> rest of us suffer because of it," Hager said.
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> A second packed house
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> After that meeting, Martin, the local DFL chair, helped organize people to
> attend the following week's board meeting. That session was also packed, this
> time with people angry at the board's actions.
>
> "You failed me and many other Itasca County citizens with legal deception and
> lack of transparency," said Pam Dowell, Grand Rapids.
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> "Because of the obvious controversial nature [of the resolution], the ethical
> way of handling it would have been to table it, and notify the public that the
> resolution would be on the agenda at a future meeting," said former Grand
> Rapids City Council member Rick Blake.
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> "It looked like an attempt to avoid an informed public debate on something
> that we all know is a very divisive and controversial resolution, and a topic
> that has really very little to do to your work as county," added Bernadine
> Joselyn, Grand Rapids.
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> At the end of the second meeting, several commissioners apologized for their
> handling of the issue.
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> "It's a very tough topic," said Commissioner Casey Venema. "I apologize for
> how we handled it. I'm sorry. Hopefully over the next four years I can do
> something to make it up."
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> "We could have done better on the transparency piece," admitted Commissioner
> Terry Snyder.
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> But they didn't change their votes.
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> Four of the five commissioners did not respond to requests for an interview.
> Commissioner John Johnson, who brought forward the resolution, declined comment.
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> Potent issue
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> At the meeting, Johnson said Itasca County is the 21st Minnesota county to
> pass a Second Amendment sanctuary or "dedicated county" resolution.
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> Many of those were passed during the run-up to the 2020 presidential election.
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> These new versions are spurred in part by several gun rights bills proposed
> during the current state legislative session, including red flag legislation
> and a bill cited by several people at the Itasca County meeting that would
> require firearms to be stored separately from ammunition.
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> "As we fight these anti-gun bills at the legislative level, leadership from
> counties and municipalities asserting themselves in defense of our
> constitutional rights is especially crucial," Republican state Sens. Steve
> Green and Rob Farnsworth wrote to the Itasca County Board in support of the
> resolution.
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> The U of M's Larry Jacobs said Second Amendment resolutions are strictly
> symbolic. Counties don't have the power to override state laws.
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> Last month, an Oregon court ruled that local governments can't ban law
> enforcement from enforcing gun laws.
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> Still, Jacobs said Second Amendment resolutions are a potent political issue,
> especially in greater Minnesota.
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> "This is not politics as usual. There's tremendous intensity and a sense that
> fundamental rights are being threatened. It's about rallying the base,
> speaking to the converted," he said.
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> Jacobs said he is not in any way minimizing the passion behind these efforts.
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> "It's more kind of a reality check," he said. "Does this go anywhere? Does it
> have any impact in terms of law? The answer is clearly no at this point."