



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
RICHMOND

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THIRTY-THIRD DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
EDUCATION  
TRANSPORTATION  
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December 30, 2019

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
Governor of Virginia  
P. O. Box 1475  
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor Northam,

I am reaching out to you on a matter of grave concern and utmost urgency; specifically, the need to address widespread apprehensions prompted by speculative and unnecessary comments from two Virginia Members of Congress who suggested that local public officials, including police and sheriffs, should resign or be fired for failure to enforce your firearm proposals, as well as suggesting the possible use of the National Guard to enforce compliance by Virginian citizens.

These congressional comments are of great concern to all Virginians regardless of their opinion on the Second Amendment, the local Sanctuary resolutions or proposed gun legislation. The safety of our citizens and the security of the Virginia National Guard members and Law Enforcement members and their families is of utmost importance.

A constituent of mine and yours from Winchester, Virginia, Michaela Claywell, the wife of an active duty Virginia Guardsman, has alerted me through email correspondence that her family and other families of Virginia Guardsman have been threatened by Facebook posts which appear to condone violence against Guard members and their families. These threats are disturbing the tranquility of the Claywell family and other families of National Guard service members.

I have spoken with Col. Gary Settle, Virginia State Police Superintendent, and was assured that the threatening posts on the Virginia Guard Facebook page are being investigated.

It is my understanding that Michaela Claywell has sent a hard copy of her letter (attached) to you, myself, some members of Congress and state legislators in Virginia imploring elected officials to “Deescalate” the situation which has precipitated these threats.

The threats are connected to the proposed sweeping legislation related to gun ownership and possession in Virginia and questions and statements regarding what mechanisms and which personnel would be utilized to enforce these proposed laws if they were to pass the legislature and be signed into law by you.

Governor Northam, please allow me to emphasize what I expect you are already observing. There is evidence of unwavering resolve being communicated to us through individual Virginians and through local governments that an overreach involving Constitutionally-protected Second Amendment rights will be resisted with strong determination.

The matter has become unsettling to Virginians who are unsure how such gun restrictions would be enforced and by whom. Without knowing the ultimate disposition of the legislation, I can only reassure those concerned that it would not benefit the safety and security of our Commonwealth to have State Police or Virginia Guardsmen actively enforce new gun laws, as such a scenario could have the potential to place neighbor against neighbor in possibly violent confrontations, a scenario I hope you and I agree would be totally unacceptable.

Another unintended consequence I have been alerted to, especially with regards to Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, is that many thousands of workers' jobs and security clearances could be in jeopardy if they were to become the target of a Red Flag Order or a gun-related charge for mere possession of firearms, or even minor parts of firearms, which are currently legal in states across the Nation, including in states which have so-called "assault weapons" bans.

It is incumbent upon you and I, as well as all elected officials, to avoid words or actions that unnecessarily increase fear and or the potential for harm to Virginians whose safety and wellbeing we are entrusted to protect.

For these reasons and many more, I am asking you to act immediately, as requested by the signers of the attached letter, to take public and very visible steps to "Deescalate" this situation by reassuring Virginians, being very clear about your intentions, and to further confirm that there will be no orders made to the National Guard or Law Enforcement to confiscate firearms from Virginians.

I am also asking that you please set up a meeting with Michaela Claywell, as well as the wives of other National Guardsmen or law enforcement officers who have felt threatened, and myself, to discuss the specific actions related to gun legislation which you intend to propose or support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



CC: The Honorable Brian J. Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security