



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 8, 2013

## Liberty Co Sheriff Arrested, Suspended by Governor

Attention Florida lawmen: You will be arrested for defending the Second Amendment.

The duly-elected sheriff of Liberty County, Florida, has been run out of office, suspended without pay, and arrested for refusing to deprive a citizen in his jurisdiction of his Second Amendment rights.

Earlier this week, Liberty County Sheriff Nick Finch (shown) was arrested after being charged with misconduct based on his alleged altering and destroying of official court documents. Finch, 50, was booked into the county jail but was later released on his own recognizance.



Upon learning of the incident, Governor Rick Scott immediately suspended Sheriff Finch and appointed Carl Causey, an agent in charge of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, as interim sheriff.

According to court documents obtained by *The New American*, the case against Sheriff Finch began when Floyd Eugene Parrish was arrested on March 8 for carrying a concealed weapon. Sergeant James Hoagland of the Liberty County Sheriff's office arrested Parrish after pulling him over and finding a loaded pistol in his pocket. Parrish was booked into a holding cell while administrative officers began working up the processing documents.

The court records released to *The New American* also reveal that after Sergeant Hoagland left the county jail, Sheriff Finch arrived with a member of Parrish's family and was present while the family member visited with Parrish while the latter was still in the holding cell. Sheriff Finch then allegedly seized the arrest documents, released Parrish, and informed him that no charges would be filed against him.

The complaint against Sheriff Finch alleges that Sergeant Hoagland informed Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FLDE) agents investigating the case against Finch that he (Hoagland) talked to Finch about the Parrish case and that Finch said he "believed in Second Amendment rights."

Workers in the Liberty County sheriff's office reportedly told investigators that Finch ordered them to release Parrish's pistol, as well as another gun seized from his car.

According to [records published by the Liberty County supervisor of elections](#), Finch was elected sheriff in 2012, garnering 52.8 percent of the 3,201 votes cast.

In a statement released by his office, [Governor Scott](#) informed Liberty County residents that he believes the interim sheriff "will serve the families of Liberty County well during this interim term."

Governor Scott's confidence in Special Agent Causey's abilities aside, the question remains why a duly elected, constitutional sheriff was arrested for the actions he allegedly took? Why was Sheriff Finch not contacted by the FLDE or the governor and asked to answer the charges against him in a more



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disciplinary and less overtly legally hostile manner?

Furthermore, imagine that Sheriff Finch had released a man arrested and jailed for having openly preached Christianity in a public place. Would Governor Scott have been so hasty to remove Finch from office? Why would the rights protected by the Second Amendment be subordinate to those guaranteed by the First Amendment?

The protection of each of our God-given rights is as crucial to the perpetuation of liberty as any other. Freedom and self-government are threatened just as much by deprivation of the right to keep and bear arms as by a revocation of the right to exercise religion.

Sheriff Richard Mack, celebrated lawman and [founder of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association \(CSPOA\)](#), makes a few similar points in a statement to *The New American* about the case against Sheriff Finch. Sheriff Mack said:

The arrest of Sheriff Finch is totally unheard of. This incident does not rise to the level of an arrest being necessary. It certainly appears that ulterior motives by the Governor are likely. In such cases, if the Governor were to receive a complaint about a Sheriff then a discussion between the two would be in order.

There is absolutely no criminal intent on the part of Sheriff Finch, even if he did what the complaint alleges. Would the Governor have arrested a good Sheriff back in 1955 if he had released Rosa Parks after she was arrested for failing to give her seat to a white man? There is no difference here whatsoever!

The arrestee's rights were violated and good constitutional Sheriff stood and righted a wrong.

Thank the good Lord for such courageous Sheriffs today!

Governor Scott's persecution and prosecution of a sheriff standing up for the Second Amendment rights of citizens of his county is particularly questionable given the hostile climate that threatens the right to keep and bear arms nationally.

So constant is the assault from the federal government (and state governments) on the right to keep and bear arms, several of Sheriff Finch's colleagues in other counties have issued statements and imposed office policies protecting the Second Amendment in their jurisdictions and placing themselves as a shield between citizens and the gun grab being planned and perpetrated by the Obama administration and the United Nations.

As [reported in January by \*The New American\*](#):

Elected sheriffs, as the top law enforcement officers within their counties, work for the citizens and taxpayers in their jurisdictions, not the federal government. Even the Supreme Court [ruled](#) that sheriffs cannot be compelled to follow federal dictates or mandates in a landmark case on gun control. Now, with Obama pushing [hard for new restrictions on gun rights](#) — finding strong support [from some anti-Second Amendment Democrats in Congress](#) and [much of the increasingly discredited establishment media](#) — sheriffs nationwide are putting their foot down to defend the rights of their constituents. [Chief law enforcement officers](#) from Kentucky, Oregon, Texas, California, Missouri, Idaho, Alabama, Colorado, South Carolina, Georgia, Minnesota, Florida, Nevada, Arizona, Ohio, New York, Utah, Oklahoma, and other states have all spoken out already — many of them in unison. It seems that virtually every single day, more sheriffs are adding their voices to the expanding list of prominent lawmen who have vowed to ensure that the U.S.



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Constitution is respected in their jurisdictions.

Regardless of the strength of the case against Sheriff Finch, Governor Scott's haste to remove him from office — an office to which he was elected by a majority of the voters of Liberty County — is compelling evidence that in Florida, political expediency is more valued than fidelity to the Constitution and the fundamental rights guaranteed by it.

In an exclusive interview with *The New American*, Sheriff Finch's attorney, Jim Judkins, reports that his client is resolved to defend himself and regain his office.

"He [Finch] has his jaw set and he's not going to flinch," Judkins said.

Judkins is amazed by the outpouring of support from Liberty County and across the country.

"A lot of people — lawyers, constitutional lawyers, gun rights activists, and those who want government out of their lives — have contacted me to tell me that they appreciate Sheriff Finch's stance," said Judkins.

Judkins reports that he has had no contact with Governor Scott's office, but says the time will come when people will be called to account for their role in pressing these "trumped up charges" against Sheriff Finch.

The story of how the charges came to be filed is shocking.

Sources close to the investigation recount the events of the night before Sheriff Finch was arrested.

At about 11:00 p.m., agents showed up at the jail with search warrants to seize the arrest records. After seizing the records, they subpoenaed employees.

Inexplicably and inexcusably, Sheriff Finch was never contacted by the FLDE and was never allowed to answer questions regarding the release of Parrish or his actions related to it.

This case will continue to gain attention nationwide as it pits a duly-elected sheriff arrested and suspended from office for defending the Second Amendment against a "conservative" governor.

Sheriff Finch is scheduled for an initial appearance in court sometime in July. Meanwhile, liberty-minded groups around the country are uniting to hold rallies and raise money for the defense of a lawman described by Sheriff Mack as "a good man and the real deal [who] has done nothing wrong."

*Photo: Sheriff Nick Finch*

*The title of this article was changed to make it more accurate. It was entitled "Florida Gov. Arrests, Replaces Sheriff for Upholding Second Amendment" — editors*

*Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He can be reached at [jwolverton@thenewamerican.com](mailto:jwolverton@thenewamerican.com)*

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