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In front of a standing-room-only crowd, Putnam County lawmakers approved a resolution making the county a Second Amendment sanctuary.

The Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously in favor of the measure, which drew so many people to Tuesday's meeting that more than 100 could not fit into the chambers.

Before the resolution was passed, Putnam County residents were invited to share their stance on the subject, with the majority of the 300 people in attendance in favor of green-lighting the measure.

Becoming a Second Amendment sanctuary means if restrictive gun laws are passed on the state or federal level, the sanctuary could reject the laws if they appear to violate Second Amendment rights, according to thetrace.org, a gun-rights website.

"The entire Constitution is in jeopardy," Putnam County resident Mike Perry said. "If the day should come that we must defend our (Second Amendment) rights, Putnam County will not be a sanctuary. Putnam County will be a fortress."

More than 20 people spoke in favor of the resolution being approved, while only three spoke out in opposition. The dissenting remarks were met with smirks and chuckles from the crowd.

Putnam County resident Sheryl Smith disagreed with the resolution, saying she was worried about the safety of children when semi-automatic guns with multiple rounds are kept. They have no point in hunting and those number of rounds aren't needed to defend yourself, she said.

"I know we need weapons for defense," Smith said. "I'm more worried about people, especially our children, who cannot defend themselves. We need to be able to stop the people that can hurt them. ... We have got to have some changes in laws to take care of that."

Another resident, Barbara Jackson, responded to Smith's dissent saying Putnam Residents need to defend themselves.

"To say we don't need this because of our small kids is totally asinine," Jackson said. "All kinds of things happen. ... We have to be able to defend ourselves. Criminals and those idiots out there are going to have weapons no matter what kind of laws we have."

Although almost 300 people showed up to the meeting, only about 200 were allowed in the meeting room at a time and some people waited over an hour to get inside. Cars filled the parking lot at the government complex on Crill Ave.

Putnam County resident Tim Knowles waited 40 minutes to speak in favor of the sanctuary and said there has become a "corrosion of our normal values."

“My concern is why are we having to have these kind of discussions,” Knowles said. “We want to protect our families.”

People who waited in the lobby started petitions both in favor and against the sanctuary passing. 79 signatures were in favor and two were against the sanctuary.

Local resident, Earnest Moody, compared taking away guns to the reign of Hitler during World War II.

“The first thing Hitler did (was) disarm his nation so they couldn’t fight back,” Moody said. “A nation can turn the wrong way if not guided.”

He also said, however, a time will come when someone is too old or unable to use a weapon anymore, and it is the job of the Putnam County Sheriff’s Office to disarm people if they see fit.

Some residents had concerns regarding the stance local law enforcement took on the sanctuary. Sheriff’s Office Col. Joseph Wells said county law enforcement is for the sanctuary.

“We reaffirm our commitment to reserving rights of law-abiding citizens to possess and carry firearms,” Wells said. “We promise that we will use our relationship with lawmakers to fight against legislation deemed at restricting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens.”

Residents wanted the sanctuary enacted to make sure they can protect themselves and their loved ones. It is a constitutional right that shouldn’t be taken away, residents said.

Some supporters even suggested the Second Amendment is a God-given right and provided scripture to back it up.

“In Luke 22:36, (Christ) advised many of his disciples if they did not own a sword, to sell their cloak and buy one,” Resident George Cunningham said. “Whether you’re aware of it or not, the short sword was the personal defense weapon of the day. It was the Glock 9 mm of the day.”

Every commissioner was in favor of the sanctuary before the meeting, but the vote was pushed back specifically for public comment. The board had originally planned to approve the measure in the consent agenda during the Jan. 14 meeting.

“I wanted just what we had here, for people to voice their opinions,” said Commissioner Buddy Goddard, who presented the idea in the fall. “We’re going to stand our ground here. I know these people (in Putnam County), they would have stood ground with or without this resolution.”

At 10:35 a.m., more than an hour after the discussion began, the decision was made, and Putnam County was declared a Second Amendment Sanctuary.

Goddard said he doesn’t believe federal gun laws will affect Putnam County, but the sanctuary resolution makes sure residents still have their Second Amendment rights.

“We encourage all citizens who wish to carry a firearm to do so and encourage all of our citizens to become and remain proficient in the safe use of firearms,” Wells said. “There’s no better protection against an armed assailant than an armed citizen.”

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