

Uli Gebhard
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Here is an update on the situation in Orange County regarding appointed Sheriff Hutchens, who decided to revoke 40% of the CCW's that her predecessor issued.

Key concern for her must have been the Department of Justice database. By law a revoked CCW has to be entered into the system. It will hence show up when a patrol officer runs the name of a person that has been pulled over. It will also show up when people like pilots file for security clearances. In either case, the result will likely be very unpleasant for the person who has this blemish on his or her record.

This would also be the only point that would likely leave Sheriff Hutchens open for a lawsuit. That would explain her swift action to remove this obstacle before continuing with her own agenda.

Sheriff Hutchens contacted the DOJ and requested a change in the database to reflect that the permit was revoked without any wrongdoing of the holder. Unfortunately for CCW holders, the DOJ responded that the permits can be listed as "expired" which has no negative stigma attached.

What does this mean for the 400+ people of Orange County whose CCW's are currently under intent to revoke?

Let's look back at how Hutchens handled her approach in the past: To weeks after her appointment she stated: "I'll tighten the requirements a bit, but not as much as people might think". 120 days later she told the board of county supervisors that to that date no CCW had been revoked. She conveniently left out that several hundred letters would be mailed, more than 100 on that particular day.

Summarizing things up to this point, Hutchens tried to conceal the full scale of her agenda until she would be able to create facts. She did not count on the CCW holders of Orange County being persistent and passionate about keeping their best defensive tool intact.

Her past actions in mind, it is entirely possible that Sheriff Hutchens will send the final revocation letters so that they will arrive during the Christmas holidays. This way, the first wave of anger and outrage will have nowhere to go since all government offices will be closed until the New Year. It would fit her pattern of the past.

During the Board of Supervisors meeting on November 18, 62 people from the public, myself included, most of them CCW holder's voiced their concerns, stretching the board meeting beyond eight hours.

At the end of this meeting, the board unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Sheriff to be more lenient.

This recommendation and the voices of the public, the people whom she took and oath to protect, fell on deaf ears. Hutchens' latest statement regarding the supervisors was that "we're going to get to a point where we have to respectfully agree to disagree."

I'm the father of three toddlers and this reminds me of my three-year old son not getting his will and standing in the corner with an angry face, stomping his feet, ready to defy the world.

She chooses to ignore all the input from her constituents. She currently has the power to set the criteria when CCWs can be issued. She also knows that most likely there will be no immediate consequences to her actions.

"I'm the Sheriff, I can do what I want." Is a quote attributed to former Sheriff Carona. He is under indictment for bribery – one form of corruption. It seems three of our five supervisors replaced a Sheriff corrupted by money with a Sheriff corrupted by power.

How can we resolve this situation? The local resources are exhausted. The board of Supervisors, lead by Chris Norby, did what they could to convince her to change course. Even the three supervisors who appointed her, Moorlach, Nguyen and Bates (who cast the deciding vote) are now urging her to stop the revocation process.

Our local government has no legal authority over the Sheriff. This means that we have to direct our concerns to Sacramento. My goal is to get a minimum of 5,000 complaints about the Sheriff Hutchens to the Governor. 1,100 CCWs in Orange County. Each holder should be able to get four people in his or her support.

Here is the address:

Governor's Office:

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-445-2841
Fax: 916-558-3160 (new number)

I'd recommend writing a fax and a letter. Paper is not as easily ignored as an e-mail that can be deleted with a click of a mouse. Mark the envelope "personal".

Sheriff Hutchens has demonstrated an outstanding willingness to defy her constituents and the board of supervisors that appointed her. The only way that we can get her to revise her policy is by building up as much pressure from as high up as possible.

I'm not happy to go that route. I would much rather see things resolved amicably here, but we are being stonewalled and that is not acceptable. Sheriff Hutchens was appointed by .001% of the people for whose safety she is responsible. Yet she is bold enough to almost completely ignore all concerns (except for those that could cause costly lawsuits) – if there is another choice, I don't see it.

How can I tell my kids that cops are the good guys when the chief LEO for the county tries to remove the most effective tool that I have to keep them safe – without me doing anything wrong?

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