

By [NR Staff](#) • January 16, 2015

Starrett raises gun rights issue

Yamhill County Commissioner Mary Starrett announced Thursday that she is looking forward to hearing public testimony at the commissioners' next business meeting, set for 10 a.m. next Thursday in Room 32 at the county courthouse, on a resolution she is proposing in support of gun rights.

Starrett wants the county to adopt a resolution opposing any effort to expand "Oregon's failed background-check system." She said she is expecting the 2015 Oregon Legislature to receive "a flood of anti-gun legislation," and said, "I believe the battle for our rights could come down to county commissioners."

She said several other Oregon counties have either enacted similar resolutions or placed them under consideration, including Eastern Oregon's Wheeler, Baker, Union and Wallowa, and Southern Oregon's Douglas and Curry. She has posted her proposed resolution on the county's website, at www.co.yamhill.or.us for the public to review.

By [Nicole Montesano](#) • Staff Writer • January 23, 2015

Gun rights advocates pack meeting

Thursday morning's county commission meeting featured prayer, Bible reading, fervent testimony about gun rights and an effusive thank you from Commissioner Allen Springer to county voters for electing such a conservatively oriented board.

"This speaks to the conservative bastion that Yamhill County still is, in a liberal state," Springer said. "That's a tremendous thing, 'cause that's a foothold for the citizens, still."

"We can work from that foothold and gain ground, and that's really what the purpose is. We now have a three-member conservative board, and that hasn't happened for a long time in this county."

"I appreciate the effort of a number of the people who are here that have backed these candidates. It's a privilege for me to serve with them and to represent you."

The board voted 3-0 to embrace a resolution opposing extension of Oregon's background check requirement to private sales in addition to the current gun shop and gun show sales.

Extension of background checks to private sales is a step Washington voters took at the polls in November, and advocates are urging Oregon to follow suit via legislative action during the coming session. With Gov. John Kitzhaber signaling at least conceptual support, and his party

augmenting its majorities in both chambers in the November general election, the stage seems set.

The gun rights lobby is countering a push to pass resolutions of opposition in as many counties as possible. They have already found success in a number of counties in the state's more conservative eastern and southern regions, and Yamhill gives them a beachhead in Western Oregon.

Local gun rights advocates were out in force Thursday to testify in favor of the local resolution, offered by Commissioner Mary Starrett. They were joined by Starrett's brother, Kevin, head of the Oregon Firearms Federation.

Springer said he hoped the resolution would have "an impact on other counties in the state" as well as "an impact on the state."

He acknowledged, "We've got an uphill battle, we realize that," given the large majorities Democrats enjoy in both chambers of the Legislature. "But that's what warriors do," he said.

Springer said the board had "been in contact with our representative, Jim Weidner, and the folks in Salem that remain that are conservative.

"We have fewer of them this cycle than we had last cycle. But I hope at some point, with the comments, the resolutions and the groundswell that this represents across the state, that even the liberal lawmakers will listen to reason," he said.

During a period set aside for public comment, 17 people spoke, 16 of them on the proposed resolution. All 16 spoke in favor.

Five of the 16 were from out of county. Joining Kevin Starrett in offering support from outside quarters were a gun shop owner from Washington County, a Jackson County resident who drove four hours for his chance to speak, and residents of Clackamas and Polk counties.

One person spoke about an unrelated matter — Dave Haugeberg of the Parkway Committee. He sought and secured commission approval for transfer of Newberg-Dundee Bypass lobbying responsibility from the Portland law firm of Ball Janik to a firm it is spinning off.

In addition, David Terry of McMinnville objected to the lengthy prayer delivered at the beginning of the session.

When Terry twice interrupted to raise objections, Springer responded, in his capacity as chair, by saying, "We will have order in this room."

After the pastor and audience said a loud "Amen," Terry remarked audibly, "Oh, brother." That drew further remonstrance from Springer.

“We’ll have order or we’ll remove you,” Springer said. “I know we’ve got a big crowd with a lot of opinions, but let’s be respectful.”

Terry, well-known for his libertarian political leanings, later spoke in support of the resolution. He also reiterated opposition to incorporating prayer into government meetings.

Proponents of the resolution argued it is imperative citizens maintain their ability to own guns themselves and trade them privately without government intervention or oversight.

Lee Richardson, a Beaverton resident who owns a gun shop in the Marion County community of Donald, said customers routinely tell him they fear “where they’ve seen this government going, both on the national level and state and local levels,” and they are concerned. He said, “They want to protect themselves when they see hope vanishing of our government protecting us.”

Some contended expanded background checks would make it impossible to share a gun with a son or daughter on a hunting trip, or for a spouse to grab a gun to use in self-defense, if the primary gun owner were injured, though both the new measure in Washington and the drafts circulating in Oregon exempt sharing in family circles or on hunting trips or shooting range visits.

Tom Wright of Sheridan said he teaches a group of 11 to 17-year-old Eagle Scouts about gun safety and gun rights.

“I teach them about infringement” of constitutional rights, Wright said, “and they come to me, and say, ‘How can there be these laws regarding gun ownership when Article Five of the Constitution lays out how it can be changed?’”

“I believe our gun rights are directly proportional to our freedoms,” John Blankenbiller of Newberg testified.

Stephen Pokropowicz of Newberg complained, “We cannot change out our toilets without a permit. We’re told what light bulbs to use, what food to eat. The Left’s biggest fear is the Second Amendment, because at some point, people will say no.”

Joseph Gall of McMinnville read from the Bible, using the passage to instruct commissioners in the importance of following the law.

Gall has a 12-year grievance with the county over property taxes levied on mobile homes, and he asked the commissioners to review his lengthy filings on the matter, which he said could be found grouped into a single file in county records. “If it has again been lost, I will gladly provide additional copies,” he said.

As for the matter at hand, Gall also supported the resolution. “It’s not a Second Amendment issue, but a Fourth Amendment issue,” he said, referring to the amendment protecting citizens from illegal search and seizure. “What will go next,” he said, “making it so you can’t sell a chair to a neighbor without getting permission?”

Henry Stuckey of Newberg told commissioners, "This state is continuing its progressive march to hell." He went on to draw broad applause when he asserted, "Anyone who objects to prayer, or this session, has the opportunity to leave the room."

Commissioner Starrett said she had received many e-mails in support of her resolution, including one from Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer, who asked that it be entered into the official record. With that, commissioners offered their unanimous approval.

IN THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE STATE OF OREGON
FOR THE COUNTY OF YAMHILL

SITTING FOR THE TRANSACTION OF COUNTY BUSINESS

In the Matter of a Resolution Opposing)

Expansion of the Firearms Purchase) RESOLUTION 15-

Background Check System) Board Order 15 -

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF YAMHILL COUNTY, OREGON ("the Board") sat for the transaction of county business in formal session on _____, commissioners Allen Springer, Mary Starrett, and Stan Primozich being present.

Whereas, the Board of Commissioners of Yamhill County is sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America, and Whereas, the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution states that the "right of the *people* to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed," and Whereas, the current firearms purchase background check system results in frequent, costly, time consuming, and unjustified delays and denials of firearms transfers to qualified persons, and Whereas, the current firearms purchase background check system rarely results in arrests of prohibited persons, and Whereas, the current firearms purchase background check system rarely results in criminal prosecutions or convictions of prohibited persons, and Whereas, the current firearms purchase background check system frequently denies or delays the rights of law abiding citizens, and Whereas, the current firearms purchase background check system puts law-abiding citizens in danger by frequently preventing them from being able to legally access self-defense firearms in times of personal danger, and Whereas, the current firearms purchase background check system requires that persons must request permission from the state before exercising a Constitutional right, something that is repugnant to the Constitution itself.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners oppose any expansion of Oregon's failed "background check" system to firearms transfers between qualified, law abiding persons.

ATTEST YAMHILL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BRIAN VAN BERGEN _____

County Clerk Chairman ALLEN SPRINGER

By: _____

Deputy LUCY FLORES MENDEZ Commissioner MARY STARRETT

FORM APPROVED BY:

CHRISTIAN BOENISCH Commissioner STAN PRIMOZICH

Yamhill County Counsel