



GUN OWNERS OF AMERICA

**800 N. 3rd St., Suite 402 | Harrisburg, PA 17102
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Val W. Finnell, MD, MPH
Pennsylvania Director

June 25th, 2022

Sheriff Lance Benedict
Susquehanna County Sheriff
P.O. Box # 218
Montrose, Pennsylvania 18801
sheriff@susqco.com

VIA ELECTRONIC– and FIRST CLASS– MAIL

Dear Sheriff Benedict:

We are writing regarding our concerns with your office’s administration of Pennsylvania’s License to Carry Firearms (LTCF) applications within Susquehanna County, particularly concerning several illegal practices: (1) selective prohibition on nonresident applications or (2) requirement for property ownership within Susquehanna County.

Susquehanna County is not permitted to discriminate against nonresident applicants based upon their location of residence or status as property owners within your County, as this is a clear violation of our Constitutional guarantees as both a matter of privileges and immunities as well as equal protection. *See generally*, U.S. Const. art. IV § 2 & amend. XIV § 1. No arbitrary categories of nonresidents may be created to allow some to exercise rights while denying that same right to others. You may not, therefore, deny non-resident LTCF applications based upon either of these criteria.

Further, we wanted to take the opportunity to advise you that it is a violation of the authorizing statute for Susquehanna County to contact references. *See* 18 Pa. C.S. § 6111 (i) (Confidentiality). Section 6111 prohibits the Sheriff’s Office from disclosing any information to any third-party provided by an LTCF applicant including their name or identity. *Id.* Contacting a reference would be a disclosure of information regarding an LTCF applicant, which would subject Susquehanna County to civil damages of no less than \$1,000 per occurrence, which previously resulted in the City of Philadelphia paying a \$1.4 million dollar settlement in 2014. *See Doe v. Philadelphia*, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas (Feb '12) No. 0375.

We have no doubt that you recognize the importance of the Second Amendment and Article I Section 21 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, particularly given the Supreme Court’s recent affirmation of our right to defend ourselves outside the home. *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*, 597 U.S. ____ (2022). Therefore, we expect that you will promptly act to revise your process to comport itself with Pennsylvania law. We would be happy to work with you to address these issues, but Susquehanna County should make these changes within 30 days, otherwise our organization will seek to make the necessary changes via the legal– and electoral– processes available to us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Val W. Finnell', written in a cursive style.

Val W. Finnell, MD, MPH
Pennsylvania Director, GOA
val.finnell@gunowners.org