

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK  
GOVERNOR



ANGELA McLEAN  
LT. GOVERNOR

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Austin Knudsen  
Speaker of the House  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620

The Honorable Debby Barrett  
President of the Senate  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Speaker Knudsen and President Barrett:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I do hereby veto House Bill 203 (HB 203) "AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ENFORCEMENT OF A POTENTIAL FEDERAL BAN ON FIREARMS AND MAGAZINES; PROVIDING PENALTIES; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

House Bill 203 is very nearly identical to a bill I vetoed during the 2013 legislative session. I now veto HB 203 for the same reasons. This bill puts law enforcement officers in the position of violating laws they have sworn to uphold. When public safety officers graduate from the Montana Law Enforcement Academy, they take an oath to "enforce or apply all laws and regulations appropriately, courteously, and responsibly" and also to "work in unison with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice." HB 203 would subject our law enforcement officers and other public officials to criminal sanctions for upholding the oaths that we ask them to take.

Just as with the bill last session, HB 203 is completely unnecessary. There has been no action in Congress to enact a ban on firearms or magazines. I am and always have been a staunch supporter of our Second Amendment rights. This bill however, is unnecessary political theater and puts law enforcement in an untenable position.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you sustain my veto of HB 203.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Bullock".

STEVE BULLOCK  
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division  
Secretary of State