

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



ANGELA MCLEAN
LT. GOVERNOR

April 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 hereby veto House Bill 587 (HB 587), "AN ACT REQUIRING THAT CERTAIN MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT WHEN PERFORMING OR PROVIDING CERTAIN ABORTION SERVICES TO A PREGNANT WOMAN; AND PROVIDING A PENALTY."

As a father, husband, and son, I stand firmly opposed to restrictions on a woman's ability to make deeply personal medical decisions in consultation with her medical provider, family members, and spiritual leaders. As elected officials, we should all be working together to expand access to health care services in Montana. Unfortunately, House Bill 587 and several other bills proposed this session seek to do just the opposite, particularly for women and families living in the more rural parts of our state.

HB 587 does more than just restrict access to health care; it would actually criminalize medical professionals for using their best medical judgment in providing safe and legal prescriptions via telemedicine. As a safe, effective, and efficient method of delivering health care to underserved regions of Montana, we should be embracing the use of telemedicine, not criminalizing it. I join the Montana Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in opposing HB 587 as an "unprecedented burden on Montana's physicians and patients."

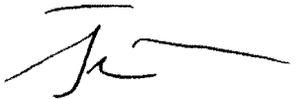
Furthermore, as the Legislature's own staff has noted, HB 587 raises serious constitutional issues by infringing on women's right to privacy as guaranteed in the Montana Constitution.

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Montana's elected officials have no business substituting their personal beliefs for the sound medical judgment of our healthcare professionals or the deeply personal medical decisions of their constituents.

For these reasons, I veto HB 587.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Bullock', with a horizontal line above it.

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Legislative Services Division
Secretary of State