EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2/11/15
HB 298

Presentation:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Bill Harris – H A R R I S. I represent House District 29. My district includes most of Fergus County including the towns of Lewistown, Grass Range, Winifred, and Roy, and all of Petroleum County which includes the town of Winnett.

This morning I bring to you **HB 298** "An Act Revising Concealed Weapons Laws; Providing that the Offense of Carrying a Concealed Weapon Does Not Apply to a Person Who is Eligible to Possess a Handgun Under State or Federal Law".

The only change in law is stated in the title. This change brings about uniformity in carrying a weapon concealed in both rural and urban environments.

Having the option of carrying a concealed weapon for a person eligible to possess a firearm is not only consistent with the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, but in many situations vital to our safety and the safety of others.

The example I will use involved a real life event in a movie theatre in Colorado.

An extremely disturbed shooter hiding his weapons under a long overcoat entered a crowded theatre. He walked directly to the front of the theatre, took out a weapon, and began shooting. His victims were innocent people that had, on a quiet afternoon, made the choice to go to a movie. Being the only armed person in the theatre, the shooter had plenty of time to kill and injure many innocent victims. I know this is a horrifying and brutal example, but it could happen anywhere, anytime.

Very serious questions to ask are: Do you think the shooter had applied for and obtained a concealed carry permit? Do you think that among those attending the movie, were children and teenagers unaccompanied by adults? Have you ever allowed your children or teenagers to attend a movie by themselves?

Picture yourself, or your children, seated in a theatre when a crazed shooter begins to kill people in their seats. Now the question to ask is: Would you prefer this to be a gun free zone, knowing everyone there is unarmed, or would you hope that a person or persons eligible to possess a handgun would immediately respond?

In the event that took place in Colorado, if there had been a man carrying a handgun under his coat or a woman carrying a handgun in her purse, they could have immediately returned fire.

This event took place at very close range. The person or persons returning fire could have easily disabled or killed the shooter.

Persons carrying out mass shootings and killings are very cowardice. They seek out the most vulnerable and defenseless. Just knowing that there could be armed people in the theatre may have discouraged the shooter from committing this horrible crime.

Many similar shootings could be prevented or preempted by an armed person or persons with a concealed handgun.

Please support HB 298.