

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



MIKE COONEY
LT. GOVERNOR

May 4, 2017

The Honorable Corey Stapleton
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Secretary Stapleton:

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 494 (HB 494), "AN ACT REVISING CONCEALED WEAPONS LAWS; PROVIDING THAT A PERSON WITH A VALID PERMIT TO CARRY A CONCEALED WEAPON MAY CARRY THE WEAPON INTO A RESTAURANT WHERE ALCOHOL IS NOT THE CHIEF ITEM OF SALE; AND AMENDING SECTION 45-8-328, MCA."

Montanans recognize that guns and alcohol in public places do not mix. Montana Code Annotated 45-8-328, which prohibits a person from carrying a concealed weapon in places where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed, has long been the law of our state. HB 494 proposes to change that long-standing rule. It would allow concealed carry in bars and restaurants where food and alcohol are both served.

Establishments that serve alcohol are often gathering places in Montana. It is not uncommon for a bar to also serve food and for family friendly restaurants to also serve alcohol. HB 494 introduces uncertainty for both concealed weapon permit holders and bar and restaurant owners about which rules apply in which establishments.

I have been and will continue to be a strong advocate for second amendment rights of the citizens of Montana. I had hoped the Legislature would be open to the reasonable compromise I proposed which clarified that a person may only carry concealed in restaurants where alcohol is not served. Without that clarification, I am unable to support this bill.

For these reasons, I veto HB 494.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Steve Bullock, consisting of a stylized 'S' and 'B' followed by a horizontal line.

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Scott Sales, President of the Senate
Austin Knudsen, Speaker of the House