

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



MIKE COONEY
LT. GOVERNOR

May 7, 2019

The Honorable Corey Stapleton
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Secretary Stapleton:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto House Bill 567 (HB 567), "AN ACT CREATING THE MONTANA SCHOOL MARSHAL PROGRAM; PROVIDING QUALIFICATIONS TO BE APPOINTED AS A SCHOOL MARSHAL; PROVIDING TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING SCHOOL MARSHAL DUTIES; PROVIDING DUTIES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES; REQUIRING NOTIFICATION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT; ALLOWING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PAY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAM COSTS; REQUIRING THE MONTANA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY TO DEVELOP A SCHOOL MARSHAL TRAINING COURSE; EXEMPTING SCHOOL MARSHALS FROM CERTAIN CONCEALED CARRY PROHIBITIONS; AMENDING SECTIONS 44-4-401, 44-10-303, 45-8-328, AND 45-8-361, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

House Bill 567 creates the Montana School Marshall Program and authorizes a local board of trustees to appoint either a school district employee or an independent contractor to serve as a "school marshal." These school marshals would be exempt from concealed carry restrictions and considered public safety officers. The bill directs the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to work with school districts to develop a training program for school marshals.

Law enforcement from across the state opposed HB 567, raising serious concerns about the program. I agree with the sponsor and with law enforcement that express a desire to enhance school safety and security, and who want to do everything we can to protect our children from horrific tragedy. However, our responses must be appropriate, safe, and based on facts rather than fear.

Primary among the concerns raised by law enforcement regarding HB 567 is the inadequacy of the training required in the bill. Candidates for law enforcement jobs in the State of Montana complete a 12-week basic training course at the Law Enforcement Academy before returning for up to 14 more weeks of field training in their community. School Resource Officers (SRO) are generally required to have many years of experience and additional training before working as an SRO. However, HB 567 allows for a watered-down version of the academy basic training for school marshals that would last only four weeks.

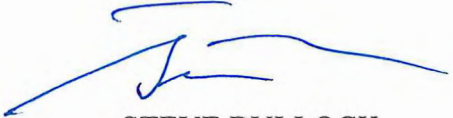
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It is also unclear why these school marshals would need to carry concealed weapons and be exempted from the restrictions on concealed carry not just in a school, but everywhere concealed carry is otherwise prohibited including banks, bars, and state buildings. This is particularly concerning given that it would be school administrators, rather than law enforcement experts with access to criminal justice information and the ability to perform a complete background check, who are charged with vetting and appointing school marshals.

House Bill 567 charges unvetted, potentially inexperienced school marshals with protecting our most vulnerable and most precious citizens – our children – from very difficult situations. Even the most experienced, highly trained law enforcement officers can make mistakes, especially when presented with deadly force. To put armed, poorly trained school marshals in our schools makes little sense and will not enhance the safety and security of Montana schools.

For these reasons, I veto HB 567.

Sincerely,



STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Greg Hertz, Speaker of the House
Scott Sales, President of the Senate