

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

May 5, 2023

The Honorable Jason Ellsworth
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

The Honorable Matt Regier
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear President Ellsworth and Speaker Regier:

The constitutional obligation of government to follow open meeting laws is widely known. This obligation for government transparency extends to all boards, from statewide to local. House Bill 33 was intended to put in place a mechanism for holding unelected board members accountable where they fail to comply with this, and other obligations, by authorizing county commissioners to compel compliance in court.

House Bill 33, however, carves out most, if not all, board members from its scope. Instead, the measure subjects even elected officials—whom voters elected, who are beholden to the people, and who can be recalled by them—to removal from office by a judge should they fail to comply. While House Bill 33 is well-intended, I must veto it.

Therefore, 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 33: "AN ACT AUTHORIZING COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO INITIATE CIVIL PROCEEDINGS, HIRE OUTSIDE COUNSEL, AND RECOVER COSTS; PROVIDING FOR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE FOR VIOLATION OF A WRIT OF MANDAMUS; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 7-4-2110 AND 27-26-206, MCA."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Legislative Services Division
Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State