



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

January 6, 2006

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 56. This bill restricts state and local governments from bringing civil actions against firearms importers, manufacturers, dealers or trade associations, as well as against gun club or sport shooting range owners or operators. AB 56 also grants, with certain exceptions, these same groups immunity from civil liability in any action for an injury or death caused by a firearm.

The President granted the gun industry sweeping immunity this past October when he signed the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, Public Law No. 109-092. Under the federal law, no civil actions may be filed in federal or state court by individuals or governmental entities seeking relief for injury or death resulting from the criminal or unlawful misuse of a firearm.

AB 56 unnecessarily extends these protections beyond the new federal law, by granting immunity irrespective of whether there is an injury resulting from a criminal or unlawful misuse of a firearm. The bill also extends the immunity to gun club or sport shooting range owners or operators, even though Wisconsin has never seen any such lawsuits filed here. Although I honor the long tradition of hunting and shooting sports in Wisconsin and the value this tradition brings to our state, this bill is not about protecting hunters and other sportsmen and women.

Since President Bush and Congress have already given the gun industry sweeping immunity that no other industry enjoys, I can see no need for the State of Wisconsin to give the gun industry even more protection. It is unfortunate that the Legislature is spending its time protecting the gun industry instead of protecting the environment or taking meaningful steps that would actually enhance the wilderness experience for hunters and other sportsmen and women. It is just one more example of a Legislature that is out of touch with Wisconsin families.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM DOYLE
Governor