



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

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TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I am vetoing SB 403 in its entirety for many of the same reasons that I vetoed a similar concealed carry bill last session.

Wisconsin is one of the safest states in the country and boasts one of the lowest crime rates nationwide. In fact, Wisconsin was ranked in the top ten safest states to live in 2005. It is a testament to the people of Wisconsin that our state is not only one of the safest places to live in the country, but also has a proud tradition of responsible gun ownership and use. Wisconsin has long been known for the world class hunting and sport shooting opportunities available to Wisconsin citizens and tourists from other states. Just as our state's ban on concealed weapons has not interfered with these Wisconsin traditions, Wisconsin's gun owners will not be harmed in any way by rejection of this legislation.

Perhaps these traditions are among the reasons why those we most entrust with protecting our safety—our highly trained law enforcement officers—still overwhelmingly oppose lifting the ban on the carrying of concealed weapons.

SB 403 endangers public safety by allowing individuals to carry concealed weapons into many public places, including shopping malls, banks, movie theaters, numerous government buildings including the State Capitol, fair grounds, concert venues, parades, parking lots, farmers markets, parks, and so on. The bill even allows a person to carry a concealed weapon while consuming alcohol and puts Wisconsin's children at risk by creating a variety of instances in which it would be legal for an individual to carry a concealed weapon within a school zone.

In addition, SB 403 carves out an unjustified new loophole in Wisconsin's open records law to prevent the public from knowing who has concealed weapons. It is absurd that under this bill, hunting and fishing licenses would be subject to open records, but not licenses to carry lethal weapons into shopping malls.

SB 403 even limits law enforcement's ability to access information. Under the bill, a police officer would only be aware of whether or not a person is carrying a concealed weapon for specified purposes related to routine traffic stops. Therefore, police officers responding to a call from a house or business, or following a suspect on foot, will not be aware if any of the people involved have a license for a concealed weapon. In addition, police officers following a suspect who has a warrant out for his or her arrest and who is not breaking any traffic laws will not be able to learn whether or not that

person has a license for a concealed weapon. This makes the job of law enforcement increasingly difficult and dangerous.

The bill's exemption for private businesses is also highly unworkable. In order for business owners to prevent anyone carrying a concealed weapon from entering their stores, the bill not only requires businesses to post warning signs at their front doors, but also requires the businesses to "personally and orally" warn that concealed weapons are not permitted on site. A business owner would actually have to approach each and every person suspected of carrying a concealed weapon and personally ask that person to leave the premises. SB 403 also creates a significant liability disparity between businesses that allow concealed weapons on their premises and those who wish to restrict them. Under the bill, employers that allow their employees and customers to carry concealed weapons have immunity from liability, but business owners who prohibit concealed weapons from their premises would not have immunity under the law.

This veto does not result in an absolute ban on the carrying of concealed weapons in one's home or private business, which the Wisconsin Supreme Court has upheld as constitutional, nor does this action eliminate any existing rights of Wisconsin citizens. Instead, this veto seeks to protect the safety of the citizens of Wisconsin, and the police officers working to ensure that safety, by maintaining the balance of responsible gun control designed to keep guns out of the wrong hands, with the right of every citizen to bear arms. I continue to stand with the majority of Wisconsin law enforcement in my belief that lifting the state's 134-year-old ban on the carrying of concealed weapons is neither warranted nor appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM DOYLE
Governor