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Statement on Governor Mead's Veto of HB 137

Parkman, WY - On March 14, 2017 Governor Mead vetoed House Enrolled Act 107 (original House Bill 137) the Wyoming Repeal Gun Free Zones Act. In his letter to Secretary of State Murray, the governor explained the reasons for the veto were that the bill was "murky" and subject to interpretation, and that the bill removes local authorities' ability to regulate firearm possession in government meetings. HB137 passed both the House (47-13) and Senate (20-10) with veto-proof majorities.

HB 137 sponsor, Rep. Bo Bite1nan released the follow statement in response to the Governor's veto of the bill:

"The Governor's local control argument is troubling and this is where I respectfully disagree with him. I do not, nor did the majority of either chamber, want to allow local governments the ability to infringe upon a Wyoming citizen's right to self-defense. In fact, Wyoming Statute 6-8-401 (c) expressly prohibits any city, town, county, political subdivision, or any other entity from regulating or prohibiting the use, carrying or possession of firearms. In other words, existing state law preempts local law regarding firearms. It is therefore not accurate to claim that this bill 'removes' local control. State law already prevents local gun control. The intent of this bill was to remove restrictions on concealed carry permit holders and allow them to carry a concealed firearm into any government meeting or meeting of the legislature on taxpayer-owned, public property."

"A fundamental right is a fundamental right regardless of where you live in Wyoming. This bill reaffirmed and enforced Wyoming citizens' fundamental right to keep and bear arms and our natural right to self-defense. As an elected representative of the people of the 51st district, I was disappointed to see this reasonable legislation fall to a veto."

"Lastly, the Governor noted that the lobbying group Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM) opposed the bill. That should come as no surprise given the pro-gun control stance taken by WAM's national parent organization, the National League of Cities. The National League of Cities supports strict gun control measures such as 30-day waiting periods on all firearm purchases, bans on assault "style" weapons, bans on certain types of ammunition and magazines that can hold more than 10 rounds, outlawing the ownership or possession of certain firearms by people under 21 years of age, etc. When it comes to guns, WAM does not share the same constitutional conservative values as most Wyoming folks do."

"I want to thank all of HB137's co-sponsors in the House and Senate for their hard work, dedication to Wyoming and commitment to the cause of liberty. I am disappointed that we came so close to securing this additional freedom for law abiding Wyoming citizens only to fall just short of the goal. I am confident that we can come back next session with an even better piece of legislation and get er' done."
