



Gov. Snyder vetoes Michigan bill allowing concealed handguns in schools



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LANSING, MI - Gov. Rick Snyder on Tuesday vetoed legislation that would have allowed gun owners with extra training to carry concealed handguns into public schools, public arenas and other so-called gun-free zones now off limits.

The Republican governor said the bill would have made a number of necessary reforms to Michigan's weapons laws, but he decided to veto it because it only went "part way" in lifting the prohibition on carrying concealed weapons into certain zones in exchange for prohibiting the open carry of pistols in those areas.



Gov. Rick Snyder has announced he'll veto a bill allowing concealed weapons at schools, churches and other public areas.

File Photo

"Unfortunately, the bill did not allow public schools, day care centers, or public hospitals to prohibit persons from carrying concealed weapons on their premises. For that reason, I am vetoing Senate Bill 59," Snyder wrote in a [letter](#) to the state Senate.

Snyder, who already had concerns with the bill before it won final passage from the Legislature late Thursday, came under increasing pressure from opponents of the legislation in the wake of the Friday massacre in Newtown, Conn. School administrators, teachers, hospitals and religious leaders are among those that asked for a veto.

The measure reached his office at 1:03 p.m. Tuesday. He vetoed it shortly after 3:30 p.m.

Citing the Connecticut shootings, Snyder said his administration will review gun violence through a "variety of lenses" - school emergency policies, troubled youth and mental health services.

"The reasons for such appalling acts usually are numerous and complex," he said in a statement. "With that in mind, we must consider legislation like SB 59 in a holistic manner."

Snyder wants state agencies to help identify and intervene sooner with children with mental health, behavioral and emotional issues; review "safe-school plans" across Michigan; and ask K-12 districts to offer practical ways to prevent weapons being brought onto school property.

The legislation would have allowed hidden firearms in gun-free zones, if concealed permit holders undergo extra training. It also would end the little-known - but legal - contradiction allowing permit holders to have guns openly there.

Michigan prohibits people licensed for concealed weapons from carrying them in a concealed way in schools, day care centers, sports arenas, bars, places of worship, hospitals, dorms and casinos.

[The bill](#) - part of a broader effort to modernize the concealed pistol license law - would let private owners in gun-free zones still decide on their own to prohibit concealed handguns.

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A sticking point became what to do about public schools, public hospitals and arenas run or owned by public authorities.

Snyder wanted wording saying they could post signs barring guns under the state's trespassing law. Green and other Republicans said doing so would have opened up Michigan to court rulings saying communities could preempt state firearms laws.

"We cannot have different laws in every community," Green told MLive on Tuesday. "There has to be a standardized state law where every building was the same."

He mentioned that a city like Ann Arbor, for instance, could decide to prohibit concealed weapons entirely if Snyder's proposed amendment had been added.

Also Tuesday, the governor signed [House Bill 5225](#) and [Senate 984](#), which aim to streamline the process for handgun purchases and eliminate restrictions against Michigan residents buying rifles and shotguns in non-contiguous states.

In a statement, the Michigan Catholic Conference applauded Snyder's veto. It had resisted having to post signs barring guns.

"Allowing for an indeterminable number of permit holders to carry concealed in a place of worship was not good public policy to begin with," the Catholic Church's public-policy arm said in a statement. "Churches are meant to be a place of sanctuary for worshippers to gather in peace and free of the threat of gun violence."

House Speaker Jase Bolger, R-Marshall, issued the following statement on the veto:

"As the father of two children, I cannot begin to imagine the heartbreak and horror for those in Connecticut. The sad truth is that signing or vetoing Senate Bill 59 would have had no impact on that tragedy. With regard to this specific legislation, it is unfortunate a compromise was not reached that the governor could support, and I understand the governor exercising his authority. It also is unfortunate that this veto does not make Michigan

citizens safer in gun-free zones. Neither the governor's approval nor his veto will stop evil from preying on innocent people. With this veto, however, open-carry still exists in schools, churches and other public areas, and we know that criminals do not respect gun-free zones. For these reasons, we will continue to work with the governor to best protect our law-abiding citizens' Second Amendment rights, as well as the safety and security of all of our citizens."

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