

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



MIKE COONEY
LT. GOVERNOR

May 3, 2019

The Honorable Corey Stapleton
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Secretary Stapleton:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto Senate Bill 8 (SB 8), "AN ACT REVISING SCHOOL LAWS RELATED TO PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES; ALLOWING CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO BE INCLUDED AS PARTIAL ENROLLMENT FOR ANB CALCULATIONS; AMENDING SECTION 20-9-311, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

The budget I proposed to the legislature was balanced, maintained a meaningful reserve, and made targeted investments in education, infrastructure and critical services. It is the constitutional obligation of the legislature to pass a balanced budget. Yet in the closing days of the session and after final adjournment, Republicans have sent me bills that entail millions of dollars of unfunded spending, well beyond the capacity of the legislature's own revenue projections. Among those is SB 8, which would have an impact to the General Fund of at least \$250,000 for Fiscal Year 2021 and each year thereafter, as well as an impact to local property taxpayers.

In addition to my concern over the impact SB 8 will have on the budget, I am concerned with the policy implications. Senate Bill 8 uses our K-12 public education funding formula to finance activities that are beyond the statutory definition of a free quality public elementary and secondary schools, such as participation on a football team or afterschool club by students who are not enrolled in a public school. School districts do not receive additional bonus funding for students who are enrolled full-time in their local school district and participate in these activities.

I believe that student participation in extracurricular activities is positive for students and helps to create the well-rounded, team-oriented, entrepreneurial citizens that our state needs to grow and prosper. The same benefits to extracurricular participation apply to students who are not enrolled in public schools, and I support encouraging more school districts to engage these students in these activities. Current law already allows participation in these activities by students who are not enrolled in public school, however, and SB 8 does nothing to change that. Instead, SB 8 creates a special, bonus funding stream for activities that fall outside of the definition of free quality public elementary and secondary education.

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For these reasons, I veto SB 8.

Sincerely,



STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Scott Sales, President of the Senate
Greg Hertz, Speaker of the House