

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

June 13, 2025

The Honorable Brandon Ler
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

The Honorable Matt Regier
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Speaker Ler and President Regier:

Montana's veterans and their families have made tremendous sacrifices in defense of our freedoms and our way of life. Veterans are a critical part of the fabric of our state and communities.

Over the last four-plus years, we have prioritized and supported Montana's veterans and military forces. This year alone, we successfully worked together to enact House Bill 307 facilitating donations of hunting licenses to disabled veterans, House Bill 566 updating the decennial veterans' long-term care needs study, and House Bill 72 ensuring fair compensation for active duty members of the National Guard.

In 2023, the Legislature passed, and I signed into law, Senate Bill 104 to exempt up to 50 percent of military retirement pay from the state income tax as well as legislation reforming various licensing and educational certifications allowing military members, their spouses, and veterans to make it easier for them to work in Montana.

The Montana Disabled Veterans (MDV) Property Assistance Program provides residential property tax relief to disabled veterans or their unmarried surviving spouses. In 2023, the Legislature passed, and I signed into law, House Bill 189, which expanded the number of veterans participating in the program by increasing the value of homes eligible for the program from \$200,000 to \$350,000.

Current law allows a qualified veteran, whom the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is 100% disabled for a service-connected disability, or his or her surviving spouse to participate in the MDV program.

Senate Bill 424 further expands the MDV program by allowing a veteran, whom the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines is at least 80% disabled for a service-connected disability, to participate.

While I appreciate the sponsor's intent, the MDV program has worked well for the decade it has existed. The reforms we enacted in 2023 brought the MDV's market value limit in line with what Montanans see with their home values. I remain concerned that Senate Bill 424 could be a first step in an ongoing effort to lower the disability requirements, expanding the program to make it unwieldy and further shifting the property tax burden onto other Montanans homeowners.

Finally, we reformed our property tax system this year to cut the property tax rate for Montana homeowners for the place they call home, or their primary residence. Like all Montana homeowners, disabled veterans, regardless of their level of service-related disability, will see their property tax rate go down for their primary residence.

Therefore, 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 424: "AN ACT REVISING THE DISABLED VETERAN PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; PROVIDING ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS WHO ARE RATED 80% TO 90% DISABLED; AMENDING SECTIONS 15-6-301 AND 15-6-311, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE."

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Legislative Services Division
Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State