



PHIL BREDESEN
THE GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE

28 May 2009

The Honorable Kent Williams
Speaker of the House
19 Legislative Plaza
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: House Bill 962

Dear Speaker Williams:

I am vetoing House Bill 962.

I am a strong supporter of the right to keep and bear arms, as guaranteed by both the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 26 of the Tennessee Constitution. I believe these provisions guarantee an individual right to bear arms, and I am unequivocally committed to preserving this American right.

Americans have also understood for more than two centuries that there are sensible rules that we apply to the exercise of these rights. I have been a life-long supporter of the responsible and appropriate handling and use of firearms. As a young man growing up in a small town, I attended a gun safety class at my high school sponsored by the National Rifle Association. A basic tenet taught at that class was this: "*Guns and alcohol don't mix.*" This seemingly common sense proposition is as true today as it was almost fifty years ago.

In recognition of this basic principle of firearm safety, Tennessee state law has long prohibited the possession of firearms in bars and restaurants that serve alcohol. House Bill 962 would remove this protection in a manner that I, along with many law enforcement officers, believe to be reckless and lacking basic safeguards to ensure public safety. The notion that this bill would permit one to carry a concealed weapon into a crowded bar at midnight on a Saturday night defies common sense, and I cannot sign such a measure into law. As you consider this veto, I respectfully ask the legislature to rethink this issue.

Respectfully,

Phil Bredesen