



For Immediate Release
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**Statement of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families on the
Governor's Veto of Senate Bill 403 – Concealed Carry Legislation**

Madison - The Council on Children and Families applauds Governor Doyle's veto of Senate Bill 403, legislation that would allow citizens to carry concealed weapons. The Governor's action is important to the safety of our children by helping prevent the greater risk for injury and death resulting from the increase in readily accessible firearms.

It is troubling that once again the Legislature wasted time debating the issue of allowing people to carry hidden weapons instead of focusing their attention on the serious issues facing Wisconsin's children and their families. Instead, precious time was squandered on an issue the majority of people in the state do not support and will do nothing protect the health and well-being of children.

A report released last year by the U.S. Census Bureau ranked Wisconsin first in the growth in poverty of all 50 states. This followed a report released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation showing that 14 percent of Wisconsin's children are living in poverty. These statistics reflect a trend since the year 2000 of substantial increases in overall poverty and child poverty. At the same time, the state's median income has stagnated and the number of people without health insurance has risen sharply. The effects of poverty are devastating for children and have long-term implications on their physical, emotional, mental and educational health and development. It is critical to prioritize public policies and investments that will help alleviate the destructive effects of poverty such as; ensuring that all children have access to high quality care and education, to health care and sufficient nutrition as well as ensuring that low-income families have access to affordable housing and the supports necessary to help them become economically secure.

For over 100 years, Wisconsin's law prohibiting people from carrying concealed weapons has been a very effective part of keeping the state's crime rate below that of most other states. There is no compelling reason to change the law and there is certainly not a groundswell of support for a change. Wisconsin citizens value providing children with a safe and nurturing environment, investing in their health and education and promoting secure families. We expect Legislators will reflect those values and rise above the pressures of the national gun lobby and sustain the veto.