

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Sen. Matt Claman](#)  
**Date:** Thursday, May 4, 2023 10:42:04 AM

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Good Morning Senator Claman,

I am writing today to express my opposition to SB61. This Bill attempts to circumvent the Electoral College by promising Alaska's 3 Electoral votes to whomever wins the popular vote in a presidential election. I won't go into the purpose of the Electoral College and how we are not a Democracy, but a Constitutional Republic. Those things stand for themselves and I would hope you see their importance. I will point out a few major flaws in the arguments for this bill.

1. Alaska still has a small population and this compact will not increase the importance of Alaskan votes to presidential candidates. 300,000+ votes, with a small percentage as undecided voters will not draw candidates to our state for events.
2. The amount of times the Electoral College and the popular vote align is 90%. Only 5 times in 200 years have they not.
3. Circumventing the Electoral College does not necessarily represent Alaskans. My argument is that if 60% of Alaskans vote for candidate A, but candidate B gets the majority of the popular vote based on votes from other places in the country, then our 3 Electoral Votes go to candidate B. SB61 does not eliminate the Electoral College and therefore creates new problems.

I hope that when and if the time comes, you will vote against this bill.

Thank you,  
Michele Bryant

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#)  
**Subject:** opposition to HB61/ SB63  
**Date:** Friday, May 5, 2023 2:24:20 PM

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My name is Irene Bortnick.

I live in Anchorage in House District 14.

While I support the right to bear arms, I urge you to vote against **HB 61/ SB 63**, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions.

My interpretation of **SB 63** is that it in no way adds to the safety of a community experiencing a disaster or emergency. On the contrary, it appears to open up the community to the possibility of uncontrolled gun violence, at a time when rather, increased safety measures are in order. Through this bill, the governor, emergency personnel, local leaders and even law enforcement could be prevented from taking steps to keep the public safe and to keep the situation peaceful.

The section about the ability to bring civil suit is also incomprehensible. It could result in frivolous lawsuits which would take the courts' time away from more serious matters and the suggested punitive damages are out of line.

Please vote **no** on **SB 63**.

Thank you for your service in the Senate.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Lōki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** NO! on HB61  
**Date:** Friday, May 5, 2023 3:15:11 PM

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Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am a grandma, who has been advocating for the passage of legislation to secure guns in our homes to reduce the high number of our children killed by firearms. It's appalling to me that the bill you decide to consider is "Limitation on Firearms Restrictions"! Why is HB61 being fast tracked when so many other bills deserve consideration?

I trust you and our government officials to make the best decisions to protect Alaskans in the event of "disaster emergencies". You should not have prior restrictions on actions to keep us safe. That's just what HB61 does - limits your options.

Thank you for your service and consideration,  
Joyanne Bloom

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Joyanne Bloom

[REDACTED]

Juneau, Alaska 99801

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose HB 61  
**Date:** Friday, May 5, 2023 4:57:47 PM

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Dear Chair Claman and Honorable Members of the Alaska Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am Marian Clough of Auke Bay, Alaska testifying (for the fourth time) as an individual opposing HB 61. I have resided in Alaska for the last 40 years. I am a gun owner (I like to trap shoot), I'm a mom and grandma (with children and grandchildren in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau). I support citizens' rights to bear arms – I am not anti-gun.

I am asking you not to support passage of HB61 as it is currently written for the simple reason that it invites needless expensive and distracting politically-motivated legal battles.

The view point of “equity in commerce” where if any private businesses are open in an emergency declaration such as the COVID pandemic then gun stores and ranges should also be open is understandable.

However, what I do not understand is HB61 at subparagraph (c) at page 2, starting at line 13, allows civil action by “a membership organization consisting of two or more individuals” to bring suit if adversely affected. This section is very concerning to me And, I might add that neither the sponsor nor the invited testifiers at any of the House hearings addressed this section.

This is another example of a disturbing new trend of allowing any politically motivated individual or interest group to act as the legal enforcers of state laws. A prevailing plaintiff would recover punitive damages in the amount of three times their actual attorneys' fees. Is this how the Alaska Legislature believes state laws should be enforced? If so, shouldn't we have similar statutes mandating triple attorneys' fees for groups who feel their interest is being adversely affected by some governmental action? Or, mandate triple attorneys' fees for anyone or any interest group who feels they are adversely affected by official misconduct such as ethics violations? Where does it all end?

This is not about Second Amendment rights which are already protected under state and federal law but rather a litmus test for a special interest group.

Please ensure that our state or municipal agencies have the ability to respond to disasters unencumbered by the political agendas of interest groups. I respectfully request you not pass HB 61.

Thank you for your public service and Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Territorial Legislature which convened on March 3, 1913.

Marian Clough

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** HB 61  
**Date:** Friday, May 5, 2023 8:04:05 PM

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Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Alaska already has a preemption law that prevents local authorities from overriding state policy on firearms, and this bill is an unnecessary narrowing of that law.

This bill sets up individuals or interest groups to act as the legal enforcers of this state law, through civil suit. It is made even more egregious by mandating that a prevailing plaintiff would be due punitive damages of a minimum of three times their actual attorneys' fees, plus repayment of court and attorney fees.

I support the right to bear arms, but I don't see why taking away the authority of state and local governments and law enforcement entities to temporarily restrict firearm possession or use in certain areas, or requiring that gun stores and shooting ranges be allowed stay open, during a disaster declaration makes anyone safer.

It is not at all clear how this law makes Alaskans safer during a disaster. This seems like a waste of legislative time when we have much more pressing issues to address in our state.

Please stop this bill on Monday.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Emily Kane  
Juneau

Be well!

[www.DrEmilyKane.com](http://www.DrEmilyKane.com)

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** OPPOSE HB 61 Limitations on Firearms Restrictions  
**Date:** Saturday, May 6, 2023 1:21:37 AM

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To: Senate Judiciary Committee

I am 44 year resident of Alaska, my family owns a gun used for hunting, and **I oppose HB 61, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions.**

I listened to and testified at the House Committee hearings regarding HB 6. The bill proponents state that their interest is “equity in commerce”, that gun/ammo stores and gun ranges would remain open under a disaster declaration if other commercial businesses were allowed to remain open.

**However, as currently written, the bill goes far beyond that, and includes sections that could threaten public safety in times of disaster.**

First — Bill proponents state that it would not eliminate existing restrictions or prohibitions on gun use and possession during time of disaster. However, that is not really the point of concern. What is critical and potentially dangerous is that the bill **would not allow the Governor, state agencies or municipalities to place any additional, temporary restrictions on gun use and possession during a declared emergency** — including sensible restrictions that may be temporarily needed to protect public safety.

Are you really saying that municipalities or disaster responders running emergency shelters in areas where guns are not currently prohibited (for example, a retail parking lot, a YMCA) would not be allowed to prohibit carrying firearms at those shelters, or even make smart rules about how shelter residents’ firearms are stored? Wouldn’t you agree that some rules about gun possession and use might be needed in that shelter to keep families and children safe in these crowded and potentially chaotic conditions?

**Disaster agencies need to be able to respond to the particular risks and dangers in each emergency to keep us safe.** Tying their hands and taking away needed tools and authorities makes no sense.

Second — It is outrageous that **this law would be enforced by civil suit (including suits by special interest groups) and that those bringing suit could receive triple punitive damages from Alaska’s governments** or disaster response entities. The fear of costly litigation would be a dangerous distraction to state and local officials as they manage rapid disaster response in a crisis situation, and would dampen good decision-making that is in the public interest.

**I am curious if the bill proponents — or members of this Committee — have asked Alaskan municipalities, the Alaska Municipal League, first responders, or disaster relief organizations their views** regarding losing the authority to temporarily and in a limited manner restrict gun use or possession during a disaster, AND the potential that they would be sued and suffer costly penalties if they took such action to protect the public.

I encourage you to fully understand all sections of this bill. Purportedly, the main interest is to keep gun stores open in a disaster. But, this bill goes far beyond ensuring “equity in commerce”. I urge you to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your attention to my comments,

Jan Caulfield  
Juneau, AK

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#)  
**Subject:** HB 61  
**Date:** Saturday, May 6, 2023 6:52:00 AM

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To whom it may concern,

I oppose HB 61 when disaster strikes that last thing we need is to limit the governments ability to protect its people. We pay taxes for a sense of leadership and good will from our elected officials for there people. Taking away their right to protect us from ourselves and other seems short sited. Let's tie our hands behind our backs and then charge forward to the rescue.

I support the right to bear arms, but I don't see how , taking away the authority of the state and local law enforcement to temporarily restricted firearm possessions or how in certain areas requiring gun stores and shooting ranges be allowed to stay open makes anyone safer. It is not at all clear to me how this law makes Alaskan safer during a disaster. It seems like we are fixing problems that are not broken when we have so many real problems to fix. Please spend your time on the big issues facing our great state.

Angie Oberlitner  
Anchorage, Alaska

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Senator.Carhy.Giessel@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Carhy.Giessel@akleg.gov); [Sen. Lōki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** HB 61 Limitations on Firearms Restrictions  
**Date:** Saturday, May 6, 2023 8:12:30 AM

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>> I share with many long-time Alaskans a strong support for the U.S. Constitution and the Alaska Constitution, and also share with many Alaskans across our great state the commitment to responsible use and storage of firearms.

>> Our Alaska Constitution is well crafted, and vests strong authority in the executive, giving our Governor strong authority. One of my objections to this proposed legislation is that it seeks to undermine the Governor's authority, and for the flimsiest of reasons. The Governor should not have limitations of this kind put on his or her ability to ensure public safety and maintain the peace during a state of emergency or natural disaster. In fact, this bill would not only limit the Governor, but also state and municipal government agencies and officials, potentially inhibiting their abilities to support disaster response and protect public safety in the process.

>> I find particularly repugnant the provisions to make it possible for an "injured party" (which at first blush looks like it could include any organization from anywhere with two or more members that is gung-ho about promoting firearms) to be granted standing to file civil suits against the state, and recover punitive damages. Surely only actual individuals and/or businesses in Alaska that would have been affected should be granted such standing, and then only for actual damages.

>> I hope that the Committee will consider its obligations to have been discharged by holding this hearing and that the bill is allowed to move no further. Thank you for your consideration.

>> Laura Fleming  
>> Juneau, Alaska

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** SB63  
**Date:** Saturday, May 6, 2023 10:44:08 AM

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Hello! I am a lifelong Alaskan resident. I am strongly opposed to SB63 because I want my elected government leaders to be able to make important public safety restrictions on firearms should an emergency of any kind arise.

We already have a preemption law which prevents local officials from overriding state policy in this area.

In case of some emergency or natural disaster I would like the authorities to be able to make a temporary call on safety issues as boots-on-the-ground public safety officials. It is not this legislature's job to second-guess public safety measures based on political action committees of the NRA and their minions.

The civil suit aspect of this bill is perhaps the most troubling to me. When law enforcement or government disaster relief people come in to help us they should not fear civil suits brought by citizens who subscribe to anti-government conspiracies and who only have their own personal interests in mind. We elect and employ officials to administrate laws on our behalf because government is the system we use to prevent the chaos of anarchy and vigilante justice.

I come from a family that has owned firearms and hunted and we have firearms in our homes currently. I do not subscribe to the wanton use of guns as advocated by the NRA who sponsors this bill.

This bill does not make me safer and it is only in the best interests of those who would undermine our collective safety for their own individualistic pursuit of what may sometimes be viewed as dubious justice. I believe in the PUBLIC part of public safety and this bill undermines that concept.

Please oppose this unnecessary and possibly very deleterious bill.

Thank you!

Carrie Nash

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Carrie Nash

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Fairbanks, AK 99709

**From:**



**Subject:**

**Date:**



[Sen. Cathy Giessel](#)

HB 61 Limitations on firearm restrictions

Saturday, May 6, 2023 10:46:55 AM

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Hello,

I am a resident of Girdwood, a nurse, a former volunteer firefighter, and a member of the services. I also own 2 guns, and I oppose HB 61.

Restricting gun use in disasters can be necessary for people's safety. Having worked in disasters it is important to be able to establish safe places. If an area without previous restrictions becomes a shelter, disaster relief workers should be able to limit firearms for everyone's safety. The last thing we need to add to the chaos is guns. The chance of civil suit against those who make restrictions is totally inappropriate as well. Why do we need to attack those who are trying to help in a disaster? those types of consequences make professionals hesitant to do anything that might possibly be construed as against this law, which would be a problem.

Gun stores should be able to stay open or close like other types of commerce, but this bill goes much too far beyond that.

I urge you not to oppose HB 61.

Thank you for your service.

Jennifer Harlos

Jennifer Harlos

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** no HB 61  
**Date:** Saturday, May 6, 2023 5:50:14 PM

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Greetings:

I urge you in the strongest terms to vote no on HB 61, which seems ill-conceived and dangerous.

As I understand, it would "prohibit the governor, a state agency, or a municipality from taking any action during a declared disaster emergency to restrict the possession, use or sale of a firearm, firearm accessory, ammunition or other weapon. This needlessly and dangerously ties the hand of the state and city governments and law enforcement who are charged with protecting public safety during a disaster emergency."

I agree with other opponents that: "In disaster situations, leaders must be able to move quickly, respond to unpredictable conditions, and take decisive actions to protect public health and safety. For example, it could be important to limit possession or use of firearms in certain areas to prevent them from being stolen, or to ensure safety in public shelters managed by the military, a government agency or the Red Cross. This bill seems to prevent law enforcement from taking these and other common sense steps to provide for public safety."

Please reject this foolish and dangerous bill.

Larri Spengler

Larri Irene Spengler

[REDACTED]  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** OPPOSE HB 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 9:30:12 AM

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Dear Senators Claman, Kiehl, Kaufman, Giessel, and Tobin,

I am a retired teacher and Alaska has been my home since my parents moved our family to Juneau in 1957. My family has always had at least one firearm in our home, used for hunting. I've followed HB 61 throughout this legislative session and I have testified before several committees in opposition to this bill. I am appalled that HB 61 was passed by the Alaska House and I urge you to prevent its passage from your committee.

It is not appropriate to prevent the governor, a state agency, or a municipality from taking action, during a declared disaster emergency, to restrict the possession, use or sale of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition or other weapon. It does not make sense to stop our elected officials or agencies from temporarily closing gun stores or gun ranges during a declared disaster.

During a disaster emergency, emotions tend to run hot and our leaders might find it necessary to restrict gun use or sales, in order to limit the chaos that can erupt when angry people have easy access to firearms. I believe in the ability of our leaders to decide when such limits are necessary.

Please do not take away a tool that could be used for constructive purposes, to disarm those who might cause harm to others. Guns are not the answer to human strife, especially during a declared disaster emergency. I hope you will prevent HB 61 from passing out of your committee.

I implore you to put your time and energy into constructive legislation, such as requiring secure storage of firearms, or increasing funding for Alaskan schools, rather than crafting unnecessary legislation like HB 61.

Thank you for considering my message.

Sincerely,  
Luann McVey

[REDACTED]  
Douglas, Alaska. 99824

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** HB61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 10:11:19 AM

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## Testimony HB61 May 7, 2023

My name is Frank Rue, I live at 7083 Hendrickson Rd. in Juneau, Alaska. I have lived in Alaska since 1977. I am a gun owner, hunter, and former Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). During my tenure as Commissioner of ADF&G, two indoor shooting ranges, one in Fairbanks and one in Juneau, were completed. I say this only to stress that I support shooting sports, hunting, hunter safety, hunter education and the safe responsible use of firearms.

I do not support House Bill 61 as currently written for the following reasons.

**HB61 does not just address, as some have suggested, parity between liquor stores and gun stores in a disaster emergency.** If the bill was clearly limited to keeping gun stores and gun ranges open during a disaster when other commercial activities are open then I would support the bill and I doubt there would be much opposition. However, I think the bill goes far beyond that stated goal.

**Every disaster emergency will be different** and the impacts felt most severely in the area of the disaster emergency. Local Alaskans will, with the help of state agencies, be best situated to determine what response is needed. I do not think it is in the best interest of Alaskans to tie their own hands as they deal with a disaster. Furthermore, a Governor's disaster declaration has a term of 30 days, unless the legislature extends it. The Legislature can address any unacceptable overreach by the state or local government when it authorizes an extension.

**Will HB61 invalidate existing restrictions?** The Governor is given extraordinary powers under a disaster emergency declaration. Powers to, among other things, relocate all or some of the people from a stricken area; prescribe where people can and cannot travel; commandeer private property subject to compensation; change the duties of state agencies.... etc. But under this bill, even in the extraordinary circumstance of a disaster emergency declaration, the possession, use and transfer of firearms or other weapons, plus all the other actions in Sec.44.99.510(a) (1-4) would be out of the reach of the Governor, state agencies and municipalities.

There is nothing in HB61 that lays out the purpose for prohibiting the Governor, state agencies

or municipalities from taking the actions listed in Sec.44.99.510(a) (1-4) during a declared disaster emergency under AS 26.23.020. What is the purpose for drawing a line between a disaster emergency and non-disaster emergency times? Without such an explicit purpose will this law invalidate existing statute or policy? And could anyone allowed to own a gun or other weapon then be allowed to bring a loaded gun to a school or assembly chamber, for example, during a disaster emergency declaration when in normal circumstances they would not? The bill should have an explicit purpose and clearly state that the existing statutory limits on possessing a weapon in schools, bars, etc. are still in force during a disaster.

**Will HB61 inevitably be declared the law of the land in non-disaster/emergency times?** In normal times the legislature, governor, state agencies and municipalities have prohibited the possession or use of firearms in, for example: the capitol building; public schools; state offices; assembly chambers; public hospitals, or public shelters. Under HB61 during a disaster emergency they could not prohibit any of this (except perhaps the legislature). Without any legislative Purpose/Intent as to why there is a difference between a disaster emergency and any other time, won't all of the prohibitions of Sec.44.99.510(a) (1-4), ipso facto, (inevitably) apply all of the time? If the answer is yes, then it will inevitably be illegal to restrict people legally allowed to own guns and weapons to take guns, ammunition and other weapons to shelters, schools, legislative buildings, and other public spaces whether there is a disaster emergency or not.

This bill does more than "keep gun shops, etc. open when liquor stores are open" during a disaster declaration. I urge you to not support HB61 as currently written.

Thank you

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Sara Hannan](#)  
**Subject:** Please oppose HB 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 10:24:28 AM

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## **Comments on HB 61, Senate Judiciary Committee, May 8, 2023, 1:30 pm**

Dear Chair Claman and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you about HB 61, “An Act relating to restrictions on firearms and other weapons.” I understand this hearing is for invited testimony only. I hope you will schedule an opportunity for public comment on HB 61 in the near future if you intend to move the bill forward.

I am a 46-year resident of Alaska and a gun owner. I have serious concerns about HB 61 and its potential negative impact on the ability of the governor, state agencies and local governments to protect the public health, safety and welfare in the event of a declared disaster emergency.

By definition, times of emergency are unpredictable, chaotic, and full of stress and uncertainty. Communications are often disrupted. Keeping the public safe often requires fast and decisive action. State law gives officials broad powers that would not apply under ordinary circumstances for good reason.

Why would we want to arbitrarily limit the ability of the governor and state and municipal officials to respond to unique disaster emergencies in the most effective way to protect life and safety? Enacting a blanket prohibition on any kind of restrictions on possession and use of firearms and other weapons during a disaster second-guesses the frontline local and state officials who know best what is happening on the ground.

Although sponsors say this will not affect existing restrictions on carrying firearms in currently prohibited locations such as schools, hospitals, and shelters, I would like to see a specific clause added to that effect.

If this bill is enacted, what happens when an emergency shelter is set up in another location? Will first responders and local emergency officials be

prohibited from restricting a person from bringing in firearms and other weapons? Will families with children be sheltered with a lot of stressed out, exhausted people with loaded firearms and 'other weapons?' Can we expect that volunteers from the Red Cross and other organizations will feel safe volunteering in this environment?

My second major concern is in Sec. 44.99.510(c), providing for civil action by a person who thinks they have been adversely affected, or "a membership organization consisting of two or more individuals eligible under (1) of this section that is dedicated in whole or in part to the protection of the rights of persons who possess or use firearms or other weapons." Giving such a particularly described organization the status of a 'person' is troublesome at best. Allowing triple punitive damage awards will invite costly and likely specious lawsuits. At worst, this section will create confusion, and could have an extreme chilling effect on first responders, state and local emergency services officials, and volunteers trying to do their job of protecting the public under difficult circumstances.

I urge you to consider the real implications and unintended consequences of this bill in real disaster emergencies. It is not simply a benign bill about "equity in commerce" as the sponsors and supporters purport.

I urge you to oppose this bill. If you choose to move it forward, please at least address the substantial deficiencies that have come to light prior to moving it forward. And I hope you will make time to hear testimony from the public.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Rue  
Juneau



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Vote NO on HB 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 10:42:21 AM

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My mailing address is:

[REDACTED]

Wasilla, Alaska 99654

I've been in Alaska since 1977 and am a retired public school music teacher.

On Sun, May 7, 2023 at 10:40 AM Shonti Elder <[shontielder@gmail.com](mailto:shontielder@gmail.com)> wrote:

HB 61 is not at all necessary, and could be counterproductive.

In emergencies, local authorities have much more important things to worry about than keeping shooting ranges open!

Law enforcement needs to be able to ensure safety in public shelters, and other common sense matters. Alaska already has a preemption law which prevents local authorities from overriding state policy on firearms.

Again, HB 61 is not needed. I encourage legislators to focus on more important issues like raising the BSA for Alaskan students and raising that in line with inflation.

Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#)  
**Subject:** SB 63  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 10:56:55 AM

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Dear Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to SB 63. The points of this bill do not represent my wishes or opinions. I want to feel safe in my state. If this bill becomes law, I will worry about my safety. The part about keeping gun stores open during a state of emergency does not make sense. People who want to go out and by guns to "defend themselves" put my life in danger. When people feel nervous or afraid, they do not think clearly. I would be worried that they might act impulsively, which put lives in danger in the presence of a firearm.

Thank you for reading my comments. Please oppose SB 61.

Sincerely,  
Sally Donaldson  
[REDACTED]  
Juneau, AK 99801

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#); [Sen. Scott Kawasaki](#)  
**Subject:** Corrected SB61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 3:52:47 PM

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Sen, Scott,

Sorry if I had the Bill No.s confused. Thanks for correcting me! And yes, though I'm not a gun owner, I too support, "staunchly," the Second Amend. simply for its subsistence value, though I'm not so sure about the tissue toxins in a militarily-weapon, lead-rattled caribou, moose, wild-turkey, or any carrion carcass. This message was incomplete because I was just beginning to address your noted disclaimer, of which you indeed responded-about, but hastened a quick response to a request from my coalition lead on the gun-violence issue.

"Sen. Kawasaki & Senate Judiciary,

I would be "remiss" if I didn't say that my initial reaction to Sen. Kawasaki's drafting & sponsorship of SB63 wasn't, to put it lightly, "discouraging;" but to put it more poignantly, I guess, I was literally "shocked!" I am dismayed that a personality thought to have a firm grasp on the vicissitudes of our current existential cultural conditions -- an electorate emotionally charged by the unduly promoted platform of a 'wind-sock' blowing in the wind of effortless self-promotion; and a sociopath who "could shoot a man on Fifth Ave. in broad daylight" and yet not be held accountable -- so many purportedly reasoned-thinkers cannot grasp the *a priori* value that recognizes, as the old adage warns, "Live by the sword, die by the sword!" After dispelling that contradiction in your, what I must assume to be, 'pretended posture' on this issue (I say "pretended" because my *a priori*, "self-evident truth" knows you to be a human-being and as one, must know that the more bullets blazing anywhere, at any time, means more organic tissue will be shredded and more 'rights' to life impeded, or straight-out terminated! However, I did relent some bit when I read you'd hoped to place blame on the often-overlooked mental health warnings."

John Sonin, Douglas

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** House Bill 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 4:25:17 PM

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Dear Senators:

I am writing in opposition to HB 61. I simply cannot contemplate a valid reason for tying the hands of state or local government officials who could some day find themselves in an emergency situation where such temporary action would be deemed necessary to protect the public. While it may be unlikely (and I pray it never happens) that a situation--whether domestic, military, natural disaster or other catastrophe-- would arise requiring such restrictions, does it make any sense to tie the hands of those tasked with protecting the public? Why wouldn't we support the ability of public officials to take a limited action IF deemed vital for public safety? Our officials know that most Alaskans support reasonable gun rights. I support reasonable gun rights. Why assume public officials are going to ride roughshod over values that their constituents support? This does not seem like the kind of legislation that should become law. Please vote no.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susi Gregg Fowler

[REDACTED]  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose SB63  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 5:06:58 PM

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Dear Senators,

I am writing today to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 63. This bill is a distraction from the work the legislature should really be focusing on: coming up with a sustainable fiscal plan, increasing public education funding, addressing public safety in rural communities, building a robust mental health system, and creating reasons for our youth to stay in Alaska long term.

Senate Bill 63 would prevent the governor, state agencies, and municipal governments from taking any action to prevent the use, possession or sale of firearms, firearm accessories, ammunition or other weapons during a declared disaster emergency. Alaskans have experienced any number of crazy emergencies in the past few years: a massive earthquake, Typhoon Merck, giant wildfires, a global pandemic, floods, and landslides. Government officials should be focused on helping citizens be safe during these emergencies. Their hands shouldn't be tied by a law like this. When we offer cold weather shelter during the winter months, municipal officials **should** be able to say that people cannot bring guns and knives into the shelter. When the COVID pandemic began and we were desperate to prevent further spread of the virus and we all hunkered down for a few weeks, it was the right thing to do to close businesses - including gun ranges, gun stores, and big box stores that sell ammunition and firearms. Threatening to penalize public officials with damages three times the attorney's fees of any successful plaintiff would simply complicate and delay any emergency response. I want the governor, state agencies and municipal governments to be able to take the actions they deem necessary to help communities recover from disaster.

Put this bill out to pasture and focus on the topics that Alaska needs to thrive.

Thank you for your service to the people of our state.

Sincerely,  
Alix McKee

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99502

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose HB 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 5:51:23 PM

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Dear Chair Claman and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

A little less than a year ago, a shooter massacred 19 students and two teachers, and injured 17 others, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. Since the beginning of 2023, there have been more than 192 mass shootings in the U.S. (using the conservative definition for "mass shooting" adopted by the Congressional Research Service). We can't seem to catch our breath between one gun massacre, such as the one at the Covenant School in Nashville in March, and the next -- the latest being yesterday's slaughter of shoppers at an outlet mall in Allen, Texas.

With deaths by gun violence reaching stratospheric heights in our country and with guns being the leading cause of death for children and teens in Alaska, it is particularly disturbing that the Alaska Legislature is not focusing its energy on reducing gun violence, but instead is considering ill-conceived bills like HB 61, which would senselessly eliminate some of the little power our public officials have to respond when an emergency calls for limitations on gun carry and use. Please do not approve this bill.

I am a retired attorney and long-time resident of Juneau AK. Much of my work as a lawyer involved advising Alaska school districts. That work spurred my desire to advocate for laws that will help keep our kids safe. I don't own a gun myself, but I come from a family of gun owners and support the reasonable use of guns for hunting, recreation and defense. That use, like the use of any other potentially dangerous piece of equipment, requires some limits in order to be reasonable. HB 61 would unreasonably interfere with government officials' ability to set some reasonable limits.

First, HB 61 would tie the hands of our governor and local officials when they most need flexibility to respond to catastrophes. When there is an earthquake, flood or fire governments often need to restrict access to specific areas or impose curfews to protect people's safety and prevent theft. First responders need to set up shelters, field hospitals and soup kitchens. Limiting the carrying and use of firearms in those times and places can be an important, common-sense tool for promoting public safety and maintaining order. I think if we were to prohibit our leaders from using that tool we would come to regret it later.

Sometimes it's not safe for people to drive their cars or trucks during an emergency. Sometimes it's not safe for them to carry their guns. We need to make sure our leaders have the ability to respond quickly and impose reasonable rules during natural disasters and other emergencies to keep everyone safe.

Second, HB 61 would give favored status to commercial enterprises like gun shops and shooting ranges. I understand that this bill was prompted by complaints that these businesses were not considered "essential" and were subject to temporary closure at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The types of services that are considered essential can vary depending on the nature of an emergency and even on the nature of a particular pandemic. I can't fault our leaders for closing most shops and services to try to contain the spread of Covid 19, especially in the early days when we didn't know exactly how it was transmitted. Car and boat dealers didn't make the list of essential businesses, nor did health clubs. Why should a gun shop get favored status over a car or boat dealer? Why should a shooting range get preference over a health club? Please don't make decisions driven by economic protectionism.

Finally, I object to giving "a membership organization...dedicated...to the protection of the rights of persons who possess or use firearms..." special status as a "person" entitled to sue

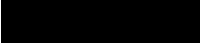
under this proposed law and to collect treble punitive damages if they're successful. This is a particularly offensive form of economic protectionism for the NRA and similar gun rights organizations. It would encourage needless litigation and the wasteful use of state funds to defend litigation where no actual person has been harmed and is motivated to sue.

HB 61 would do nothing to protect public safety or promote the public interest. Please do not approve this bill.

Thank you for your service to our State. Sincerely, Ann Gifford

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Ann Gifford  
Juneau, Alaska



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** HB 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 5:58:32 PM

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To: Senate Judiciary Committee

I am a 46-year resident of Alaska. Collectively, my husband and I have worked in education for 59 years, we have raised 3 children here, and we are deeply committed to our state. We are also gun owners.

**I am writing in strong opposition to HB 61**, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions. Specifically, I am addressing my concerns from the perspective as a Disaster Mental Health worker.

HB 61 would **not** allow the Governor, state agencies or municipalities to place any additional, temporary restrictions on gun use and possession during a declared emergency. This aspect of the bill is dangerous, reckless, and could lead to tragic outcomes. I am sure that is not what you, or anybody else in our communities, would want.

I have volunteered with the Red Cross as a mental health volunteer for 6 years including 3 years as the Statewide Lead. I have responded to numerous disasters here in Alaska as well as across our nation. Working in shelters is demanding and at times chaotic. Individuals living in disaster shelters are often in shock, mentally unstable, angry, and confused. Frankly, the thought of unrestricted access to firearms in these shelters is terrifying.

If such a bill is passed, with all the potential ramifications of unrestricted firearm access, I would be unwilling to volunteer in a shelter. Additionally, I am very concerned that this bill could potentially affect the safety and wellbeing of other volunteers and shelter residents. This viewpoint is my own: the Red Cross does not endorse political stances but works to alleviate suffering in the face of disasters.

I urge you to oppose HB 61 for the safety of all Alaskans.

Thank you for hearing me,  
Respectfully, Anne Caulfield



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition to HB 61  
**Date:** Sunday, May 7, 2023 9:30:57 PM

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Hello Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maria Crawford and my husband and I live in Senator Tobin's district. We strongly oppose HB 61, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions.

This bill, prohibiting the governor, state agencies, or municipalities from taking action(s) during a declared disaster emergency that would restrict the possession, use or sale of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition, or other weapon — including not allowing the temporary closure of gun stores or gun ranges during a declared disaster.

As Alaskans, we are used to having to be prepared for all sorts of weather challenges and natural disasters. I grew up in Cordova, and will always remember the whole community practicing tsunami drills and gathering at the post office since it was high ground. Now, my husband and I live a block away from the Fairview Community Recreation Center. Not only is it a community gathering place but during natural disasters like the 2018 earthquake, or large residential fires, it has served as an emergency shelter.

In all of these potentially stressful or volatile situations, I cannot imagine it would be a good idea to limit the ability for local leadership or law enforcement to make common sense steps in providing for public safety, like perhaps limiting the possession or use of firearms in an emergency shelter. HB 61 does not do anything to actually increase public safety during a disaster. How would requiring gun stores and shooting ranges be allowed to stay open during a disaster declaration, increase public safety?

Being flexible, preparing as much as possible, and working together are skills that we all develop as Alaskans to meet the challenges that we face living in the most beautiful state.

During a state of emergency, the focus should be on actions that protect public safety, not limiting state and local government's power to maintain order and safety.

I urge you to please oppose HB 61.

Thank you,

Maria Crawford  
(she & her)

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** Vote no on HB 61/ SB 63  
**Date:** Monday, May 8, 2023 8:30:07 AM

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Hello Senator Claman and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Rochelle Parker and I am a constituent of Senator Claman in West Anchorage. I am a volunteer with the Anchorage Chapter of Moms Demand Action, and I strongly oppose House Bill 61/Senate Bill 63, Limitations on Firearm Restrictions. To me, it does not make any sense to restrict a government's ability to make decisions in the interest of public safety in a disaster situation when there are so many unknowns to consider.

New restrictions on use or possession of firearms may be necessary to protect public safety during an emergency — for example, if a shelter is established in a place that doesn't currently prohibit guns, the government may need to add a restriction to protect people there. As a mother of young children, I would be concerned about the safety of families who might be living in these crowded, high-stress situations if guns were allowed unchecked.

This bill is an unnecessary broadening of Alaska's preemption law that already prevents local authorities from overriding state policy on firearms and it would expose the State to costly lawsuits.

Please vote down this bill. Guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens in Alaska and across the nation, so I would instead urge you to support legislation that would prevent gun violence and gun suicide in our communities, including the secure firearm storage bill and the Extreme Risk Protective Order bill recently introduced in the House.

Thank you,  
Rochelle Parker

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage AK 99502

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Bert Stedman](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose HB61, Limitations on Firearms  
**Date:** Monday, May 8, 2023 8:30:18 AM

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Dear Committee Members:

I have lived in Alaska for 40 years and my husband has been here for nearly 50 years. We have rifles that we hunt to provide food for our family and we have a handgun that we carry for bear protection when hiking remotely. We believe in common sense gun laws and we are opposed to House Bill 61. This law does not make Alaskans safer during a disaster and likely would have the opposite effect. The bill would not allow the Governor, state agencies or municipalities to place any additional, temporary restrictions on gun use and possession during a declared emergency which means that emergency shelters crowded with people under high stress would not be able to prohibit the entry of guns to these spaces during an emergency. How is that helping public safety? It does the opposite. This bill prevents common sense steps to provide for public safety and ensure peace during a disaster. It seems to be a narrowing of existing Alaska law and would allow individuals or special interest groups to act as the legal enforcers of this state law through civil suits. It is a dangerous approach to enforce this by civil suit and ridiculous to mandate that a prevailing plaintiff would be due punitive damages of a minimum of three times their actual attorneys' fees, plus repayment of court and attorney fees.

The bill would not allow the Governor, state agencies or municipalities to place any additional, temporary restrictions on gun use and possession during a declared emergency, with the potential to decrease public safety. In this gun-loving state the imposition of those temporary measures would mean there were real safety concerns for the public and first responders. Trust your local governments and on the scene emergency personnel to make the best decisions for public safety during a disaster. Do not support this poorly conceived bill. We have much more immediately pressing issues to address in our state, drop this please. As gun owners we ask you to oppose HB61.

Thank you,

Victoria OConnell Curran and Richard Curran  
Sitka, Alaska

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Tory O'Connell Curran  
Grateful to live on LÍngít Aaní

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Judiciary](#); [Sen. Matt Claman](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Löki Tobin](#)  
**Subject:** HB 61  
**Date:** Monday, May 8, 2023 11:34:43 AM

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Please accept these comments in opposition to HB 61:

So sorry to see HB 61 consuming precious legislative time and resources when you have so many real issues to address. HB 61 addresses a non-existent problem. As someone who has been on the front line of several natural and man-made disasters in Alaska, I can report that worrying about keeping everyone armed is not on the top of the list when people's homes and lives are endangered by extreme weather or oil is washing up on shore.

This bill is also an insult to Alaskans serving both as paid or volunteer first responders who, again, need to quickly, efficiently manage disaster response without some bureaucratic added layer.

Please table this and get back to work on real problems.

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Sue Libenson

[REDACTED]

Haines, AK 99827

[REDACTED]