

Hahlen Behnken

From: Diane DeSloover <dianedesloover@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 4:40 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: SB 206 Testimony

Dear Members of the Social Services Committee,

In Alaska, where the gun suicide rate is more than double the national average, we have the responsibility to save lives. That is why I strongly support the passage of SB 206.

My three children grew up in Juneau among peers who had many assets: strong family support, caring teachers and bonds with friends with whom they participated in sports and other activities. Yet all three of my kids had classmates who died by firearm suicide. Roughly a fifth of Alaska high school students polled said they had, themselves, seriously considered suicide. This is a red flag!

Access to firearms is a major contributor to suicide deaths. Nine out of 10 firearms suicide attempts are successful. Guns take an impulsive moment and make it permanent.

SB 206 makes Alaskan schools important leaders in the mission to reduce teen suicide deaths. This bill enables school to educate about and provide resources to parents for secure arms storage. The grant fund established by SB 206 will provide firearm safe storage devices such as gun locks or safes at no cost to families. When firearms are unavailable or harder to access, it can make the difference between life and death. A delayed impulse can be a defused impulse. The use of public funds to save vulnerable lives is well worth it. Please vote yes on SB 206.

I appreciate the way Alaska State Senators and Representatives work together regardless of party affiliation for the good of the people. Thank you for the important work you do.

Sincerely,

Diane DeSloover

Hahlen Behnken

From: Victoria OConnell Curran <victoria.oconnell@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2026 8:38 AM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Support SB206

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello,

I have lived in Sitka since 1982. My two daughters were born and raised here and now my two granddaughters are as well. We own guns, relying on venison for our primary meat source. **I strongly support SB 206, creating a firearm safe storage grant fund within the Alaska General Fund.** Secure gun storage education and free safe storage devices are the very least we can do to reduce the risk of youth suicide – an epidemic in Alaska. Firearms are the leading cause of death of children and teens in our state. Alaska has the third highest rate of gun suicide in the US more than double the national average! Alaska Native/American Indians have the highest gun suicide death rate by race in Alaska.

Alaska's 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that among high school students that have seriously considered suicide, nearly 60% could access a loaded gun. One in five high school students in Alaska had seriously considered suicide in the past year. As legislators an important part of your job is ensuring public safety. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides and make those who do attempt more likely to survive.

Every Alaskan I know has been touched by a youth who has killed themselves with a gun. Sitka lost a wonderful young man just a few years ago. This continues to be a devastating loss to his family, friends, and our community. I stop at his memorial every day when I walk on the cross trail. SB 206 will save lives by providing invaluable time between suicidal thought and action. Suicide attempts using a firearm are almost always lethal— nine out of 10 firearm suicide attempts result in death. It is heartbreaking to think this young man would still be with his family if he had not had ready access to his father's gun. Research shows that more than 90% of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide – but if their first attempt is with a gun, they do not usually get the benefit of a second chance at life.

Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027, Goal #3, states: "Firearms continue to be the leading means of suicide in Alaska, and properly educating people about safe and responsible gun storage can greatly reduce someone's odds of dying by suicide. Firearms are the most lethal among suicide methods, so it is particularly important that during a crisis they are removed...or they are locked very securely."

You have the power with your vote to impact the outcome for many of our youth. Please support SB206.

Thank you,

Tory O'Connell Curran
Sitka, Alaska

Hahlen Behnken

From: Annette Marley <marley.annette@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 7:26 AM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Support SB 206

Dear members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee:

As a public health professional working in Anchorage and a mother of four children, I urge you to support SB 206. It is a proactive approach to protecting at-risk youth from gun suicide. Alaska has too long had the dubious distinction of leading the nation in gun suicides. Especially for Alaska Native communities this provision for safe gun storage options means lives can be saved and communities can be spared the tragic loss that comes with suicide.

I hope you can also see the public health merits of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Annette Marley, MPH

Sent from my iPhone

Hahlen Behnken

From: Laura Stats <laurastatsdaugherty@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 12:38 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Please pass HB 206

Dear Members of the Health and Social Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views on HB206. I strongly urge you to support this bill. It is common sense legislation that serves the people of Alaska especially our youth and those who may become vulnerable with depression. Or accidental deaths because of unlocked firearms storage.

SB 206 creates a firearm safe storage grant fund within the Alaska General Fund, to be administered by the State. Gun suicide is the highest form of suicide in AK and the most lethal. If any of you have experienced a friend, neighbor or family member die from any form of suicide, one often thinks how they wished they had paid more attention, how they wished they had said or done something differently to help the person. I see HB 206 as a tangible, preventative measure that will benefit the entire state by making it more safe.

I encourage you to pass HB 206.

Sincerely,
Laura Stats
Juneau AK

Hahlen Behnken

From: Morgan Stonecipher <morgan.d.stonecipher@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 12:55 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Support for SB 206

Hello,

I am writing to voice my support for SB 206, which will educate families of Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide and provide free gun lock devices. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides and make those who do attempt more likely to survive. Having worked in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault most of my adult life, beginning with a focus on youth engagement, I know well how vital such legislation is to helping reduced violence inside the home, especially with our most vulnerable youth.

Thank you for listening and I sincerely hope you will vote to ensure the success of SB 206.

Thank you,
Morgan Stonecipher

Hahlen Behnken

From: Michele Champion <akmichelechamp@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 1:24 PM
To: Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: please support SB 206

Safe gun storage is essential to decrease teen suicide and other harms done by guns. Many Alaskans are gun owners since many of us hunt and fish to help feed our families. Please support SB 206 which will provide education and easy access to methods for safe gun storage.

Thank you,
Michele Champion

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Hahlen Behnken

From: Rochelle Parker <rochelle.m.parker@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 2:31 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Support for SB 206 Creating Firearm Safe Storage Grant for Schools

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 206, which would create a firearm safe storage grant fund to provide secure gun storage information and safe storage devices, like cable locks and lockboxes, to vulnerable youth through school districts.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for Alaskan children and teens, and more than half of the gun deaths for these kids are suicides. Because firearm suicide is uniquely lethal, it is so important that we increase our education efforts and access to secure gun storage to put critical time and space between a person in crisis and a deadly weapon. Often a delay of 10 minutes can save a person's life.

I have been a volunteer with the Be SMART for Kids (besmartforkids.org) program for the past several years, sharing information about secure storage with school districts across Alaska and offering cable locks to families in need. We have met school counselors, school nurses, and administrators from Anchorage to Ketchikan to Kalskag and beyond who have requested educational literature encouraging secure gun storage and cable locks for their students. However, this effort has largely been limited by the small number of volunteers we have to do the work and whether schools are even aware of the secure storage resources that are available to their students. This bill would institutionalize these efforts, providing more equitable access to secure storage education and low-cost devices like cable locks. It falls in line with the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan.

If we have the ability to save a young person's life, especially a young person who may be experiencing bullying or harrassment at school and considering suicide, we have the responsibility to do so. I applaud Senator Tobin and Senator Gray-Jackson for introducing this bill and encourage you to move it forward.

Thank you,
Rochelle Parker

Hahlen Behnken

From: Mary Richey Sell <maryrichey57@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 2:33 PM
Subject: Support for SB206

I strongly support SB 206, which will educate families of Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide and provide free gun lock devices. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides and make those who do attempt more likely to survive.

SB 206 creates a firearm safe storage grant fund within the Alaska General Fund, to be administered by the State. Through school districts, this grant fund will provide secure gun storage education and free safe storage devices (e.g., lockboxes, cable locks, safes) to Alaskan families upon request – with a focus on youth at higher risk of suicide.

In Alaska, firearms are the leading cause of death of children and teens. Alaska has the third highest rate of gun suicide in the US, and has a gun suicide rate more than double the national average. Alaska Native/American Indians have the highest gun suicide death rate by race in Alaska.

Alaska's 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that among high school students that have seriously considered suicide, 58.6% could access a loaded gun. One in five high school students (22.6%) in Alaska had seriously considered suicide in the past year.

thank you,

Hahlen Behnken

From: maria crawford <mariacraw4d@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 2:38 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Support for SB 206

Greetings to the Senate Health and Social Services Committee members,

My name is Maria Crawford. My husband and I live in the Fairview neighborhood of Anchorage and we are neighbors with, and constituents of Senator Tobin.

We urge you to support SB 206.

By supporting increased communication and preventative action between students, school staff, and the adults responsible at home for a student's welfare, SB 206 will help save lives, especially the lives of young people who may be at risk for self-harm and experiencing suicidal ideation. We know that easy access to a firearm greatly increases the risk of suicide by firearm. The data in Alaska shows that firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens, and that Alaska has a gun suicide rate more than double the national average.

SB 206 aligns with Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan by providing grants that school districts can use to educate families about the importance of safe gun storage at home to prevent youth suicide and provide those homes with free firearm lock devices. Knowledge is power, and by educating and empowering families to safely secure their firearms, it will greatly reduce the odds of someone in crisis dying by suicide with a gun. Our communities need legislation like this.

Support SB 206!!!

Thank you for your consideration,

Maria Crawford
(she & her)

Hahlen Behnken

From: Cindi Lagoudakis <trembladakis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 12:45 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Senator.Loki.Tobin@ak.leg.gov
Subject: SB 206 Support

I am writing in favor of SB 206, which I strongly support. The effect of the bill is to educate families of Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide, and to provide free gun lock devices. Alaska's tragic record of youth gun deaths needs to be addressed, and this is an effective step in that direction.

As a family impacted both by a fatal gun accident involving two young teens, and by a gun suicide, this measure is important to me. Education about and facilitating secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides, and make those who do attempt more likely to survive. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis.

I thank you in advance for supporting this bill, and taking a positive step in protecting our most important resource: our children and youth.

Cynthia Lagoudakis
Petersburg, AK

Hahlen Behnken

From: odetteedgar@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 3:01 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Support for SB 206

SB 206 – Info to support your comments in support of the bill

Dear Members of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee,

I urge your support for SB 206, and especially section 4 which creates a firearm safe storage grant fund. The fund will do important things to reduce youth suicide, which is tragically high in Alaska. It will enable school districts to educate Alaska families about securing their guns safely plus provide free devices such as lockboxes, cable locks and safes. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis.

Sadly, in Alaska, firearms are the leading cause of death of children and teens. Alaska has the third highest rate of gun suicide in the US, and has a gun suicide rate more than double the national average. Alaska Native/American Indians have the highest gun suicide death rate by race in Alaska.

SB 206 will save lives by providing time between suicidal thought and action. Suicide attempts using a firearm are almost always lethal—nine out of 10 firearm suicide attempts result in death.

Thank you for your attention.

Odette Edgar
Juneau, Alaska

Hahlen Behnken

From: Angela Imholt <angieimholt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 10:16 AM
To: Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: SB 206

I strongly support SB 206, which will educate families of Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide and provide free gun lock devices. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides and make those who do attempt more likely to survive. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis.

Hahlen Behnken

From: Jeanne Rynne <jeanne_rynne@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 11:24 AM
To: Jeanne Rynne
Subject: IN SUPPORT of SB 206

Dear Senators,

I strongly support SB 206, which will educate families of Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide and provide free gun lock devices. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides and make those who do attempt more likely to survive. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis.

Furthermore, I support any legislation that reduces gun violence in Alaska and the United States. I grew up when active shooter lock-down drills were not something I had to practice in elementary school. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for my grandson who is in second grade. I look forward to a day when we can send our kids to school without fear of them getting shot in the classroom.

Thank you for helping move us closer to this goal with your support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Jeanne Rynne



Hahlen Behnken

From: Robin Smith <robinsmith1410@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 11:37 AM
To: Senate Health and Social Services
Subject: Testimony for SB 206: SCHOOL SUICIDE POLICIES; FIREARM STORAGE

My husband and I urge you to vote for SB 206.

For many years Alaska has had a teen suicide crisis. Our rate of teen suicide is nearly 3 times the national average. Our state has done little that has had any positive impact on these numbers.

Gun access is a key component. Guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens in Alaska, with over half of these deaths being suicides. Anything to do with guns is controversial in our state. SB 206 should be a bill we could all agree on.

My understanding is if you can delay the urge to commit suicide by 5 minutes, the impulse can pass. (Dr. Gergö Hadlaczky, *The Power of Time*, "creating time—even just a few minutes—can change the trajectory of a suicidal crisis.")

SB 206 will educate families of harassed Alaskan youths about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide and provide free gun lock devices if grant funding is available. (The VA has gun locks that are available for free as does MOM's Demand Action). Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis.

Thank you for considering our thoughts.

Robin Smith and Eric McCallum



February 21, 2026

Chair Senator Forrest Dunbar and the
Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee
120 4th Street, Room 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Dunbar and Committee Members,

The League of Women Voters of Alaska urges you to support Senate Bill 206 relating to the Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund. We understand that the Bill will result in safe storage devices (such as lockboxes, cable locks) for Alaska's school districts, allow districts to distribute these free devices to families, with priority for families of at-risk youth, and support education on the importance of secure firearm storage as a proven suicide prevention strategy.

The League believes that protecting the health and safety of Alaska's children and communities is a core responsibility of state government. While we respect the right of law-abiding Alaskans to own firearms, Alaska continues to experience high rates of firearm injury and death, particularly among youth. Secure firearm storage is a practical, preventive step that can help save lives.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. Please don't hesitate to contact me at mariannemills@msn.com or (907)723-0226 for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marianne Mills".

Marianne Mills, Co-President

Hahlen Behnken

From: Laura Fleming <laura.fleming06@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 8:08 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin; Senator.Carhy.Giessel@akleg.gov
Subject: SB 206, re: Firearm Safe Storage Grant Fund

Testimony supporting passage of SB 206, relating to reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying involving students and threats of suicide by students, and establishing the firearm safe storage grant fund

Dear Chair Dunbar and members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on SB 206, and taking public testimony on the bill. I urge you to pass it our of committee with a favorable recommendation, and I look forward to the day when its provisions are enacted into law, for it will surely reduce the number of deaths by firearm in Alaska. A terrible price is being paid in terms of lives lost, particularly young people's lives. Firearms are the leading cause of death for Alaska children and teens.

Please enact this measure to educate the public and parents about the importance of secure firearm storage, and reduce deaths by suicide. Alaska has the country's third highest rate of suicide. Alaska has a gun suicide rate of more than twice the national average. It doesn't have to be this way. We can do better. Thank you for considering my testimony. Please include it in the written record of testimony on this measure.

Laura Fleming
Juneau, Alaska

Hahlen Behnken

From: Karen Wilson <kwilson@wileng.net>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 6:07 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: SB 206

I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 206. It will save precious lives!!

Sincerely,
Karen Wilson
Juneau

Hahlen Behnken

From: Joclyn Reilly <joclynreilly@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 9:47 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Cc: Rep. Julie Coulombe; Sen. James Kaufman
Subject: Support for SB 206

I strongly support SB 206, which will educate families of Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage to prevent suicide and provide free gun lock devices. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides and make those who do attempt more likely to survive. This bill implements Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 – which calls for reducing access to lethal means, including firearms, during times of crisis.

SB 206 creates a firearm safe storage grant fund within the Alaska General Fund, to be administered by the State. Through school districts, this grant fund will provide secure gun storage education and free safe storage devices (e.g., lockboxes, cable locks, safes) to Alaskan families upon request – with a focus on youth at higher risk of suicide.

In Alaska, firearms are the leading cause of death of children and teens. Alaska has the third highest rate of gun suicide in the US, and has a gun suicide rate more than double the national average.

Alaska's 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that among high school students that have seriously considered suicide, 58.6% could access a loaded gun. One in five high school students (22.6%) in Alaska had seriously considered suicide in the past year.

Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027, Goal #3, states: "Firearms continue to be the leading means of suicide in Alaska, and properly educating people about safe and responsible gun storage can greatly reduce someone's odds of dying by suicide. Firearms are the most lethal among suicide methods, so it is particularly important that during a crisis they are removed...or they are locked very securely."

SB 206 will save lives by providing time between suicidal thought and action. Suicide attempts using a firearm are almost always lethal—nine out of 10 firearm suicide attempts result in death. Research shows that more than 90% of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide – but if their first attempt is with a gun, they do not usually get the benefit of a second chance at life.

Thank you,
Joclyn Reilly, LCSW

Hahlen Behnken

From: Bill Tremblay <brtrembla@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 11:34 PM
To: Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Please support SB 206, specifically for Firearms Safety

Dear Senator Dunbar;

I am a gun owner and support this legislation, specifically in regards to firearms safety. I am also a victim of gun violence and know first hand the effects of having an unsecured firearm in a home.

In 1969, two weeks before Christmas, my younger brother was killed by his best friend. His friend found his dad's gun, thought it wasn't loaded, and fired it at my brother. My brother was 14 and had been best friends with the shooter since the 2nd grade.

While this happened some time ago, I can tell you for a fact that I can remember every minute of that evening. More than that, I reflect on my brother's death every time I hear of a shooting in the news, which is too often.

Educating people about gun safety and providing resources to help people secure firearms at home is a worthy cause. Alaska has one of the highest gun death rates in the U.S., with approximately 175-182 deaths annually, frequently ranking within the top five states. Roughly 70-74% of these fatalities are suicides, driven by high rates among men, Indigenous populations, and seniors. Guns are the leading cause of death for Alaska children/teens, with ~17-20 annual deaths.

Please do what you can to make our State a safer place to live.

Bill Tremblay

Hahlen Behnken

From: Emily Kane <dremilykane@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 4:13 PM
To: enate.Health.And.Social.Services@akleg.gov; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel;
Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: SB 206

I support this bill. My closest friend's son was shot and killed by another teen at age 15. She will never recover fully from this completely avoidable tragedy.

Gun owners must be held responsible for safe storage or risk contributing to illegitimate gun violence.

Dr Emily Kane

www.DrEmilyKane.com

My primary care practice is closed.

Fullscript.com

Be well!

Hahlen Behnken

From: Jan Caulfield <janiceacaulfield@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 5:03 PM
To: Rochelle Parker
Cc: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Re: Support for SB 206 Creating Firearm Safe Storage Grant for Schools

Excellent!!

On Feb 23, 2026, at 2:31 PM, Rochelle Parker <rochelle.m.parker@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 206, which would create a firearm safe storage grant fund to provide secure gun storage information and safe storage devices, like cable locks and lockboxes, to vulnerable youth through school districts.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for Alaskan children and teens, and more than half of the gun deaths for these kids are suicides. Because firearm suicide is uniquely lethal, it is so important that we increase our education efforts and access to secure gun storage to put critical time and space between a person in crisis and a deadly weapon. Often a delay of 10 minutes can save a person's life.

I have been a volunteer with the Be SMART for Kids (besmartforkids.org) program for the past several years, sharing information about secure storage with school districts across Alaska and offering cable locks to families in need. We have met school counselors, school nurses, and administrators from Anchorage to Ketchikan to Kalskag and beyond who have requested educational literature encouraging secure gun storage and cable locks for their students. However, this effort has largely been limited by the small number of volunteers we have to do the work and whether schools are even aware of the secure storage resources that are available to their students. This bill would institutionalize these efforts, providing more equitable access to secure storage education and low-cost devices like cable locks. It falls in line with the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan.

If we have the ability to save a young person's life, especially a young person who may be experiencing bullying or harrassment at school and considering suicide, we have the responsibility to do so. I applaud Senator Tobin and Senator Gray-Jackson for introducing this bill and encourage you to move it forward.

Hahlen Behnken

From: Janice Caulfield <janc@gci.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 11:34 AM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: SUPPORT SB 206

Mr. Chair and members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

I strongly support SB 206, which will empower school districts to provide free gun lock devices (lock boxes, cable locks, safes) and education about the important of safe gun storage to families. Secure gun storage in the home will reduce the number of youth suicides in Alaska and make those who do attempt more likely to survive.

Our state public health data shows that the risk of suicide by gun is high for Alaska's youth. Guns are the leading cause of death of Alaska's children and teens. Alaska has the third highest rate of gun suicide in the US – a rate more than double the national average. Alaska's 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that one in five high school students (22.6%) in Alaska had seriously considered suicide in the past year. Among these students, 58.6% said they could access a loaded gun.

As Senator Tobin emphasized in her presentation to this committee on February 10, this bill will save lives by providing time between suicidal thought and action. Suicide attempts using a gun are fatal nine times out of 10. Research shows that more than 90% of people who survive a first suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide in the future. But, if their first attempt is with a gun, they do not usually get the benefit of that second chance at life.

Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan for 2023-2027 prioritizes reducing access to lethal means, including guns, during times of crisis. Goal #3 of the plan emphasizes: "Firearms continue to be the leading means of suicide in Alaska, and properly educating people about safe and responsible gun storage can greatly reduce someone's odds of dying by suicide. Firearms are the most lethal among suicide methods, so it is particularly important that during a crisis they are removed...or they are locked very securely."

I urge this Committee to listen to Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Council -- and to the Alaska Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, that supports this bill – and pass SB 206.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments,

Jan Caulfield

Hahlen Behnken

From: Alaska Gun Rights <info@AlaskaGunRights.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 8:00 AM
To: Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Petition: Reject SB 206 - Stop This Trojan Horse Attack on the Second Amendment

Senator Dunbar,

Below is a petition opposing Senate Bill 206.

Whereas: SB 206 embeds firearms into a school harassment and suicide reporting framework, falsely equating lawful gun ownership with violence and self-harm;

Whereas: SB 206 invites state agencies and schools to pressure families about how they access and store firearms—without any allegation of wrongdoing or due process;

Whereas: SB 206 establishes a new firearm safe storage grant fund and grants open-ended regulatory authority to the Department of Public Safety, creating the infrastructure for future mandates and enforcement;

Whereas: SB 206 normalizes government involvement in private firearm decisions and lays the groundwork for compulsory storage laws, inspections, and penalties;

Whereas: SB 206 shifts firearms from a constitutionally protected right into a “public health risk” category, undermining the Second Amendment and Article I, Section 19 of the Alaska Constitution;

Therefore: As your constituent, I urge you to REJECT SB 206 and stand for liberty by opposing this Trojan Horse attack on the right to keep and bear arms and the rights of Alaska families.

Signed:

Gabriel West