

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Bruce Kato <kato-owen@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 9:03 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Cc:** Bruce Kato  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Support for SB 206

I strongly support SB 206 for the implementation of a firearm storage grant fund for families in schools. This unique distribution system would be an effective way to reduce firearm injuries and deaths in Alaska, particularly suicide deaths

Alaska's gun death rate and gun suicide rates are among the highest in the nation. Nearly three quarters of Alaska gun deaths are by suicide and over half the suicide deaths are by firearms.

Safe and secure storage of firearms is a key prevention strategy. Among children and youth, gun deaths are nearly twice the number of motor vehicle deaths posing substantial risk.

Almost a quarter of Alaskan high school students have seriously considered suicide, and among those 59% report they could access a loaded gun (2023 YRBS)

Please support this bill to increase secure gun storage and decrease access to loaded firearms especially among youth to prevent suicide and accidental gun injuries and deaths.

Thank you! I am a lifelong Alaskan and mother and grandmother.

Patty Owen  
Juneau  
Sent from my iPhone

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Robin Smith <robinsmith1410@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 11:37 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* 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 Hadlaczký, *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

Archived - \*\*\*\*\*

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Rachael McPherson <rach.mcph@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 22, 2026 11:32 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Cc:** Sen. Cathy Giessel  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Support of SB 206

Hi Health and Social Services Committee -

I am writing in to show my support of SB 206, which will give more people the tools and ability to help prevent suicide in Alaska. We already lose too many of our youth, with Alaska ranking #3 in the nation.

This is not about taking away rights, just helping keep our kids alive.

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,

Rachael McPherson  
Alaskan  
Mom  
District N Constituent

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Rachael McPherson  
she/her

## Ariel Harbison

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**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:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* 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

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** john sonin <sojohn61@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 9:49 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* SB 206 – Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund

Friends of AK Senate; Health & Social Services, We all know how children are naturally curious, and many downright mischievous, but this is especially so up here in the last frontier. With the frighteningly high level of childhood deaths by unsecured misfires, optioning available funds providing responsible gun owners with devices to safeguard their ballistic elements when not legitimately in use would help preserve the diversity of our future generations. Please forward to the full Senate a "Do Pass" recommendation on SB 206.

John Sonin  
Douglas, AK

**Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Westley Cheryl R <cheryl.westley@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:04 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB 206

As a long time supporter of gun safety legislation to prevent as many unnecessary deaths as possible, I strongly support SB 206. This legislation will help educate people about secure gun storage and provide free gun lock devices. I have volunteered to hand out gun locks at various events and people are EAGER & HAPPY to receive their own devices to protect their children and grandchildren from unintended accidents or from sudden suicidal thoughts which may turn quickly into actions. Please protect our Alaskan families, friends, and communities and pass this legislation.

Cheryl Westley

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Anchorage, AK 99501

907.700.1170

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Sally Donaldson <sallyanndonaldson@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 6:06 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** sb206

Honorable Health and Social Services Committee Members,

I am Sally Donaldson, Juneau, writing in favor of SB206.

A parent and retired school counselor, I have met with numerous students and their families as they grappled with children's suicidal thoughts, actions, some of them resulting in death. Senator Gray-Jackson's bill would offer an effective tool in safe storage of guns and ammunition. Please support this powerful bill and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,  
Sally Donaldson

Sent from my iPhone

## Ariel Harbison

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**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

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Bill Tremblay <brtrembla@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 11:33 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Please support SB 206, specifically the Firearms Safety

Dear Senate Health and Social Services Members;

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

907.465.1234

www.billtremblay.com

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## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Pamela Samash <christloveheals123@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 6:55 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** No on SB 206

Please add to public record

Good afternoon

I am writing to ask that you vote no on SB 206.

I do not support any laws that include threatening gun rights for Alaskans or for grants that can be used against our rights.

Thank you

Pamela Samash

Nenana AK

## Ariel Harbison

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**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

## Ariel Harbison

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**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,

## **Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Irene Bortnick <ibortnick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 2:03 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Cc:** Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Alyse Galvin  
**Subject:** SB 206 support

**Please support SB 206 – School Suicide Policies; Firearm Storage.** This bill goes a long way to helping to protect vulnerable students who are having adverse experiences at school. It goes a step further than other policies that may already be in place in schools by providing safe storage options for firearms. We know that keeping weapons are locked up and harder to access saves lives. Please vote yes on SB 206.

Thank you for your work for Alaska.  
Irene Bortnick

## Ariel Harbison

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**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  
631 Saint Anns Avenue  
Douglas, AK 99824

**Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Joyanne Bloom <joyanneb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 10:39 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** In strong support of 206

Dear Committee Members,

Guns are the leading cause of death for Alaska children and teens. All gun manufacturers should supply safety locks with their weapons, but they don't. That is why passing this legislation is so critical for saving lives and injuries of the Alaskans you represent.

Please support his critical bill,  
Joyanne Bloom

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Joyanne Bloom

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** jetta whittaker <jettainalaska@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 10:24 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Support SB206

### [SB 206](#) – Info to support your comments in support of the bill

I strongly support SB 206, and I hope you will too. If it becomes law, it 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.

Please act to pass SB206 out of committee, so you will be known as taking steps to save lives by providing time between suicidal thought and action.

thank you,

## **Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Angela Imholt <angieimholt@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 10:15 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**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.

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Sandra Garity <aksandy612@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 21, 2026 11:40 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB206

To the Committee;  
Please support this important bill. SB206  
Thank you  
Devry Garity  
Homer, AK

## **Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Sandra Garity <aksandy612@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 21, 2026 11:33 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB206

As a concerned Alaskan, I totally support SB206.

This is such a simple thing to place a gun lock on the trigger or place in a safe storage unit.

If this could save one life it is more than worth it.

Please support this bill.

Thank you

Sandra Garity

Homer, AK

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** odetteedgar@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 11:14 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** FW: Support for SB 206 - Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund

My apologies, I sent the email below without providing my full name and address.

Odette Edgar

Jur

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**From:** odetteedgar@gmail.com <odetteedgar@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 11:07 AM  
**To:** Senate.Health.And.Social.Services@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** Support for SB 206 - Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund

Dear Chairman and committee members,

I urge you to hold hearings on SB 206 because it can prevent gun deaths by children accessing firearms in their homes.

Thank you,

Odette

## **Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** odetteedgar@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 11:07 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Support for SB 206 - Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund

Dear Chairman and committee members,

I urge you to hold hearings on SB 206 because it can prevent gun deaths by children accessing firearms in their homes.

Thank you,

Odette

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Michele Champion <akmichelechamp@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 7:08 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB 206

Lease vote in favor of this bill. We need to make safe gun storage easy.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

**Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Bridget Smith <bridgetannsmith49@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 1:04 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB 206

To the members of the Senate Health and Social Services committee, I support this bill.

Bridget Smith

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Larri Spengler <larri.irene.spengler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 12:23 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** YES on SB 206!

Greetings:

It is simple common sense to provide safe storage devices (such as lockboxes, cable locks) to 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.

This bill will do that.

Please support it.

Larri Spengler

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**Larri Irene Spengler**

 [Larri.Irene.Spengler@gmail.com](mailto:Larri.Irene.Spengler@gmail.com)

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Jodie Gatti <jodiemariegatti@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 11:45 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Jesse Kiehl  
**Subject:** Please Support SB 206

Dear Members of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee,

I am writing as a Juneau parent to ask you to support SB 206.

As a parent, I think often about the things that keep kids safe. Seatbelts. Car seats. Bike helmets. **Safe firearm storage belongs in that same category. It is not about politics. It is about prevention.**

In Alaska, too many families have been impacted by suicide, especially involving young people. *We all know someone.* Providing lockboxes or cable locks to families, especially those with youth who may be struggling, is a simple and practical step that can save lives. Sometimes creating just a little time and distance between a moment of crisis and a firearm makes all the difference.

***This bill does not take anything away from responsible gun owners.*** It simply gives families tools and education so they can make safer choices in their own homes.

As a parent raising children in this state, I want to know we are doing what we reasonably can to protect them. SB 206 is a thoughtful and measured step in that direction.

Please move this bill forward.

Thank you for your time and your service to our great state!

Sincerely,

Jodie Gatti

Juneau, Alaska

## **Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Laura Stats <laurastatsdaugherty@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:59 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** I support SB 206

Dear Healthy and Social Services Committee-

I support SB 206. We live in a state with a large number of gun owners, our family is one of them. Safe storage of firearms is a basic responsibility. One of the saddest cases our community endured was an accidental death of a teen by an unlocked firearm.

I encourage you to pass this smart bill. SB 206 does not interfere with gun ownership though advocates safe storage.

Laura Stats  
Juneau

**Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Joyanne Bloom <joyanneb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:10 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB206 has my strong support

Dear Committee Members,

Alaska ranks #3 in gun suicides in the US, has a gun suicide rate more than double the national average, and guns are the leading cause of death of our children and teens. We can so easily do something about this tragedy. Pass SB206 and get those gun safety locks out to all gun owners!

Thank you,  
Joyanne Bloom

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Joyanne Bloom

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Karla Hart <karlahart@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 9:49 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB 206 – Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund

I support this legislation that would provide tools/resources to help save lives from accidental deaths and suicides.

I have personally known youth whose lives were forever changed by accidents in homes with guns that were not securely stored. Both the life lost, and the youth who pulled the trigger.

Alaskans have guns in our homes. Let's be sure that they are safely stored.

Karla Hart  
Juneau

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Mark S. Johnson <markjak646@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 8:25 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB 206, Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund

Dear H&SS Committee Members,

I urge passage of SB 206. Studies have shown that many kids are seriously injured or killed when they have unsupervised access to firearms. Increasing the availability of safe storage devices will undoubtedly help reduce the number of these preventable tragedies.

Thank you.

Mark S. Johnson  
Juneau, AK

**Ariel Harbison**

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**From:** Claire Richardson <snowoman60@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7:41 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Common sense w/ SB 206

**I support the US Second Amendment.**

**I also support good old fashioned common sense.**

**This bill addresses a real problem with a modest solution to reduce unintended deaths and death by suicide.**

**Please support this bill.**

**Sincerely,**

**Claire Richardson**

**Juneau**

**SB 206 – Firearm Safe Storage Device Grant Fund** to provide safe storage devices (such as lockboxes, cable locks) to 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.

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Emily Kane <dremilykane@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7:23 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** I support SB 206

There surely can't be any reasonable controversy about storing lethal weapons safely! Please pass this bill to help protect lives.

**Emily Kane**

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

*My primary care practice is closed.*

[Fullscript.com](http://Fullscript.com)

**Be well!**



**Written Testimony on Senate Bill 206 - School Suicide Policies; Firearm Storage  
Senate Health and Social Services Committee**

**Submitted by:**

**Lon Garrison**

Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)

Chair Dunbar and members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

For the record, my name is Lon Garrison, Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards. AASB represents Alaska's locally elected school boards serving students and families in communities across our state—from our largest urban districts to small and remote village schools.

The Association of Alaska School Boards supports the intent and policy direction of Senate Bill 206. This legislation aligns closely with the priorities adopted by Alaska school boards through AASB's 2026 Legislative Priorities and our statewide policy framework, *Where We Stand 2026*. At the same time, we respectfully ask the committee to consider the practical implementation impacts on school districts to ensure the bill does not unintentionally create unfunded operational mandates.

**Alignment with AASB Legislative Priorities**

Senate Bill 206 most strongly advances AASB's legislative priority to **Support Student Achievement and Wellness**. Alaska's school boards recognize that safe, supportive, and connected learning environments are foundational to academic success. Students who feel safe and supported are more likely to attend school regularly, engage in learning, and graduate prepared for their futures.

The bill's emphasis on early reporting of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, along with improved coordination between schools and child advocacy centers, reflects AASB's long-standing commitment to prevention and early intervention. These concepts are embedded throughout our resolutions, *Where We Stand*, including:

- **Resolution 3.17 — Student Wellness**, supporting policies that address students' mental, physical, and emotional well-being;
- **Resolution 3.9 — Safe, Caring, and Connected Schools**, which calls for learning environments where students feel secure and supported;
- **Resolution 3.8 — Suicide Prevention, Education, and Treatment Efforts**, recognizing the importance of coordinated prevention strategies; and

- **Belief Statement B.15 — Prevention and Early Intervention**, emphasizing that early identification and partnership among schools, families, and communities reduces long-term harm to children.

SB 206 also strengthens **family engagement**, a principle supported by **Belief Statement B.13**, which recognizes parental involvement as one of the most important contributors to student success. Allowing districts to notify families when students experience bullying or show signs of suicide risk promotes shared responsibility between schools and parents during moments when timely communication can make a life-saving difference.

Finally, the creation of the firearm safe storage grant fund aligns with **AASB Resolution 5.36 — Safe and Secure Storage of Firearms**, supporting practical community-based approaches to reducing accidental injury and youth suicide risk. Providing safe storage devices through a state-administered program represents a prevention strategy consistent with evidence-based public health practice.

## **Respect for Local Governance**

AASB appreciates that SB 206 preserves local decision-making authority. The bill allows, rather than mandates, school districts to adopt parental notification policies. This flexibility respects Alaska’s diverse communities and aligns with AASB’s foundational belief in local governance as articulated in **Belief Statement B.1 — Local Governance**.

## **Unfunded Mandate Considerations**

While AASB supports the goals of SB 206, we encourage careful attention to implementation impacts.

Many education policies carry limited direct fiscal costs but create significant **operational responsibilities** for districts. SB 206 is likely to increase:

- administrative coordination with child advocacy centers,
- staff training requirements,
- documentation and reporting responsibilities,
- parent communication obligations, and
- counseling and follow-up workload resulting from increased reporting.

For large districts, these duties may be absorbed within existing systems. For small, rural districts—often operating with a single administrator or limited counseling staff—the additional responsibilities may represent a significant increase in workload. And, with the incredibly thin resources school district have today, some districts may simply not be able to comply.

AASB’s **Belief Statement B.8 — Unfunded Mandates** urges policymakers to consider the cumulative effect of statutory requirements placed upon school districts without accompanying

implementation resources. Alaska schools are already managing staffing shortages, rising operating costs, and constrained budgets. Even well-intended legislation can create strain when implementation capacity is not addressed.

We therefore encourage consideration of strategies that support successful implementation, such as:

- statewide training resources or standardized guidance materials;
- coordination through existing state safety or mental health programs;
- technical assistance for rural districts; or
- recognition within fiscal notes of administrative impacts at the local level.

Our goal is not to slow the bill's progress, but to ensure its success in practice.

## **Conclusion**

SB 206 reflects values Alaska school boards strongly share: prevention, partnership with families, community collaboration, and the protection of student well-being. The legislation advances multiple AASB priorities and resolutions by strengthening early intervention systems and reinforcing safe learning environments.

With thoughtful attention to implementation capacity and avoidance of unintended unfunded mandates, SB 206 can become an effective tool supporting both student safety and local school governance.

On behalf of Alaska's locally elected school boards, AASB appreciates the committee's work on behalf of Alaska's children and respectfully supports the intent of Senate Bill 206 while encouraging continued attention to the impacts on district implementation.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to Alaska's students.

**Lon Garrison**

Executive Director

Association of Alaska School Boards

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Luann McVey <luannmcvey@me.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 2:45 PM  
**To:** Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Robert Myers; Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Support SB 206

Honorable Chair Dunbar and members of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify about SB206, which creates a **firearm safe storage fund** within the Alaska General Fund. **I strongly support this bill.** The fund will allow school districts to offer gun storage education and safe storage devices to Alaskans. It addresses the critical need to fight the following horrifying statistics: firearms are the leading cause of death of Alaskan children and teens - and our state has the third highest rate of gun suicide in the country, more than double the national average. This bill will help us to be vigilantly proactive about protecting against this scourge.

Alaska's 2023-2027 Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan advocates for reducing access to lethal means during times of crisis. Because suicide attempts by firearms lead to death in nine out of ten firearm suicide attempts, a family's careful use of lockboxes, cable locks, and gun safes can thwart the impulse to take one's life with a gun. Providing time between the suicidal thought and the action can make all the difference and that is the intent of this bill.

As our state's '23-'27 Suicide Prevention Plan states,  
"...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 commend Senator Tobin for introducing SB 206 and I urge you to pass it out of your committee. It is a solid first step at reducing Alaska's suicide rate and protecting our precious young people.

Sincerely,

Luann McVey  
Retired Alaskan Teacher

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Megan McBride <megamcb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 1:24 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** SB 206- support gun safety

Senate Health & Social Services Committee,

In Alaska firearms are the leading cause of death of kids and teens. Education about safe storage will save lives. Please support SB206.

Thank you,  
Megan McBride  
West Anchorage

## Hahlen Behnken

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**From:** Emily Leak-Michie <leak.emily@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:28 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin  
**Subject:** Statement of Support for SB 206 – Gun Safety Education

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 206 and to highlight the critical importance of gun safety education in Alaska.

I come from a multigenerational family of hunters and gun owners. Firearms have always been a part of our lifestyle, and with that came a deep and unwavering commitment to safety. Gun safety education was ingrained in me from the time I can remember. It was not optional in our household. It was foundational. We were taught respect, responsibility, and the understanding that firearm ownership carries serious obligations.

Access to comprehensive firearm safety education is especially critical in Alaska, where we have the highest rate of gun ownership in the country. In a state where firearms are so common, ensuring that individuals of all ages understand proper handling, storage, and responsibility is not just beneficial. It is essential.

My support for this bill is shaped not only by my upbringing, but also by personal experience. I was in first grade when the Columbine school shooting took place in my school district. My teacher's daughter was inside Columbine High School during the shooting, in the cafeteria when Harris and Klebold took the lives of her classmates. The entire district went into lockdown. I will never forget my first grade teacher receiving the news that her child was inside the school during the attack and witnessing her reaction as a parent facing unimaginable fear.

Today, I am also a parent. My son will be entering kindergarten this fall, and I think deeply about the environment he will walk into each day. His safety, and the safety of all Alaska's children, weighs heavily on my mind. While no single policy can prevent every act of violence, we can take meaningful steps to reduce risk. Investing in firearm education and developing clear processes to address access to weapons during times of crisis are responsible measures that respect both constitutional rights and public safety.

**Gun ownership and gun safety are not opposing values. In Alaska, they must go hand in hand. SB 206 represents an important step toward strengthening that balance.**

I am submitting this testimony as an individual. The views expressed here are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on behalf of Alaskans.

Emily Leak-Michie

## Hahlen Behnken

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**From:** Westley Cheryl R <cheryl.westley@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:10 AM  
**To:** Sen. Forrest Dunbar  
**Subject:** SB 206

### Senator Dunbar

As a long time supporter of gun safety legislation to prevent as many unnecessary deaths as possible, I strongly support SB 206. This legislation will help educate people about secure gun storage and provide free gun lock devices. I have volunteered to hand out gun locks at various events and people are EAGER & HAPPY to receive their own devices to protect their children and grandchildren from unintended accidents or from sudden suicidal thoughts which may turn quickly into actions. Please protect our Alaskan families, friends, and communities and pass this legislation.

Cheryl Westley

## Hahlen Behnken

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**From:** mrbojangles@alaskan.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 12:00 PM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Löki Tobin  
**Cc:** Rep. Genevieve Mina  
**Subject:** SB 206

Dear Alaska Legislators:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 206 which will help educate Alaska's youth about the importance of secure firearm storage that will not only help prevent suicide but will also provide free gun lock devices.

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 also the most lethal among suicide methods, so it is particularly important that during a time of crisis they are either removed or locked very securely.

The high school age son of a long-term friend of mine had easy access to guns in his home, and he used one to take his own life. His life needlessly ended and a life-long torment for his parents began. We have the means to do better and save more lives that are lost when they are going through a vulnerable time. Making access to guns more difficult can slow the process down or stop it, saving lives.

Please support and help pass SB 206.

Thank you,  
Sheri Whitethorn (Retired RN)  
Anchorage

## Hahlen Behnken

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**From:** Jon and Ruth Ewig <ewig4him\_7@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 3:28 PM  
**To:** Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Robert Myers  
**Subject:** WE OPPOSE SB 206 which violates our 2nd Amendment and our Parental Rights

This bill violates our Second Amendment Rights and our Parental Rights.

Neither of which is state government business.

Our God through the Church body (not the government) provides our moral standards. This bill does not consider the "common good."

With the exception of one committee member, the rest of you are thieves. Why do you think you could walk away with our state money allocated for our permanent fund, and give it to the NEA?

You have proven that you are disrespectful to our governor and know nothing about balancing a budget. There is no character in you.

Jonathan (Jon) and Ruth Ewig

907-6/

## Hahlen Behnken

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**From:** Therese Lewandowski <thereselew@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 8:58 AM  
**To:** Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Gary Stevens  
**Subject:** SB 206 Firearm storage grant fund & bullying behavior

Senators,

Thank you for hearing this bill, thank you sponsors Senator Tobin and Senator Gray-Jackson.

Gun rights advocates have nothing to fear from this bill.

The stats are there - youth suicide is off the charts in Alaska.

Establishing a grant to provide school districts gun storage devices and education is the best idea!

Education is the key to so much. And the tools to go with it - safe storage devices would be such a gift to so many struggling families and families that just don't think about safely storing their guns.

The other part of this bill - reporting incidents of bullying and harassment is also incredibly important. Many of our youth suffer with depression and suicide thoughts due to being bullied or marginalized. This needs greater reporting and also more education in the schools and to the parents on addressing it.

Stopping bullying behavior at a young age is critical. Our children should not grow up being afraid. More importantly they should not grow up believing being a bully is the way to be.

A young bully grows up to be a dangerous adult bully.

Please support and pass this bill!

Thanks,

Therese Lewandowski

## Hahlen Behnken

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**From:** Lei B <lxb312@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 4:50 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

Thank you Madam Chair and respected committee member for hearing me out during telephonic testimony. I am sending this email in case any of the senate members were not present at the hearing. I would like to thank you for your time to consider and hear my thoughts regarding the benefits of SB 206. As a licensed mental health professional in Alaska, the number one concern that is in the back of my mind daily, is someone losing hope completely and ending their life. My whole career and professional dedication is focused on helping people avoid getting to that point. Or if unfortunately, they are there already, helping them turn the other way and start feeling more empowered to feel better.

Studies show that time between suicide ideation and action is an effective tool in preventing death. It allows for a moment of hesitation which can provide space for alternate options. I believe this bill would be another step in ensuring our youth are residing in a healthier society than we have found it.

Teaching our community members including parents and kiddos to set themselves up for success by educating them on safe storage of firearms AND giving them the resources to practice that safety is crucial. I believe SB 206 would assist in ensuring that goal is achieved.

I urge you to pass SB 206. I appreciate your time and attention.

Thank you,

Lejla Berberovic, LCSW  
Anchorage AK 99515

## Ariel Harbison

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**From:** Alaska Gun Rights <info@AlaskaGunRights.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2026 1:27 AM  
**To:** Senate Health and Social Services  
**Subject:** Petition: Reject SB 206 - Stop This Trojan Horse Attack on the Second Amendment

Senate Health & Social Services Committee,

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 Administration, 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:

Benjamin Notter

Zip: 99669