

Alaska Chapter

Incorporated in Alaska

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

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Senator Jess Bjorkman
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Elvi Gray- Jackson
Senator Kelly Merrick
Senator Forrest Dunbar

Re: SB 173—Incentivizing Arming Teacher

Dear Senators Bjorkman, Bishop, Gray-Jackson, Merrick and Dunbar

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter strongly opposed the passage of SB 173, Incentivizing Arming Teachers. This bill could increase the risk of unintentional shooting in schools in Alaska as well as place an unnecessary financial burden on school districts.

At present, Alaska law allows a school's chief administrative officer to give permission to an individual to carry a gun on school grounds. School districts may participate if they wish, but it is not mandated. The new bill would compel districts to arm teachers, staff or volunteers even if they do not feel it is necessary in their district. It does not appear that there is an option to opt out.

The current rule comes without a financial burden on schools. The new proposed bill would increase costs to districts around the state. In addition, at a time when schools are fiscally struggling, it is unfair to compel schools to pay for training for those chosen to carry weapons.

Lastly, programs such as this have been shown to be less than ideal. A teacher or school faculty member cannot be expected, no matter how much training they receive, to transform into a law enforcement officer. In a time of duress and confusion, like a possible school shooter incident, these individuals are still "civilians". The individual may be harmed and they could accidentally harm innocent children in their care. Nationwide, there have also been several incidences of children accessing the guns of the identified individual. As you are aware, children are smart and curious. A gun momentarily left in a bag, purse, backpack, bathroom or desk or taken from a distracted individual busy teaching could have tragic consequences.

The AAP Alaska Chapter had been closely following this legislation. There seems to be a lot of public opposition for this bill, including from 2nd Amendment advocates. What the opposition seems to have in common is a concern for the wellbeing and safety for our students.

Sincerely,
Anna Ogena, MD, FAAP
Jody Butto, MD, FAAP
Kevin Kollins, MD, FAAP
Patricia Clay, MD, FAAP
Dale Knutsen, Executive Director

Konrad Jackson

From: Ann DeLong <anndelo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:17 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: SB173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[Senate Bill 173](#) is a **dangerous guns in schools bill** that would require all schools in Alaska to assign certain teachers, staff, or volunteers the duty of carrying a gun at school. It would also make it harder for victims and survivors to get justice if someone gets hurt or killed by these guns being forced into schools.

Please do not pass SB 173. This would be a horrible onerous task for staff. It is not certain that this would prevent violence and it likely will cause more problems. Having more guns= more deaths regardless of who has them or the intent of the gun owners. Accidents and unintended consequences are a real thing.

Ann DeLong
Fairbanks, AK

2024-25 ANS
Camp 70
Officers



Alaska Native Sisterhood Glacier Valley Camp 70

P.O. Box 20212 Juneau, Alaska 99802

February 11, 2024

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Dear Senator Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Sisterhood Glacier Valley Camp 70, I am writing to strongly oppose SB 173, "An act requiring school districts to grant qualified persons an assignment to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds..."

The Alaska Native Sisterhood has a long history of advocating for public education and supporting high quality, equitable, and safe schools, where all children can succeed and feel welcomed, safe and secure. Requiring schools to grant school staff or 'volunteers' an assigned duty to carry guns in schools creates serious risks and puts students and staff in danger. This is not an effective or realistic way to increase school safety for the following reasons:

- It puts the armed staff or volunteers in danger of being mistaken for a shooter by responding law enforcement.

- It creates a financial burden on school districts to spend scarce resources on writing policies, paying for training, monitoring training.

- It's a distraction from their primary duties of educating students and creating safe, caring schools where students can learn and feel connected.

It is imperative that schools are safe for our children and staff and requiring school districts to arm school staff and volunteer, is NOT the answer. We hope you will strongly oppose SB 173.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Desmona Stevick, President
Alaska Native Sisterhood, Glacier Valley/Camp 70

Konrad Jackson

From: Barbara Brown <barbbell71@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:30 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: oppose SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello, Senators,

Please oppose SB 173 which will make Alaska schools more dangerous places for our children and teachers.

Do not be seduced by the risky and false idea that arming teachers and school staff will make our schools safe. An armed teacher cannot, in a moment of extreme duress and confusion, be expected to transform into a specially trained law enforcement officer. An armed teacher is much more likely to shoot a student bystander or be shot by responding law enforcement than to be an effective solution to an active shooter in a school.

As our representatives, I urge you to create an evidence-based intervention plan that addresses what we know about school gun violence. For more information about evidence-based school safety solutions, visit everytownresearch.org/school-safety to learn about the following ways to prevent a mass violence attack in Alaska:

1. Enact and Enforce Secure Firearm Storage Laws (HB 164)
2. Pass Extreme Risk Laws (HB 162 and SB 229)
3. Raise the Age to Purchase Semi-automatic Firearms
4. Require Background Checks on All Gun Sales
5. Foster a Safe and Trusting School Climate
6. Build a Culture of Secure Gun Storage
7. Create Evidence-Based Crisis Assessment/Prevention Programs in Schools
8. Implement Expert-Endorsed School Security Upgrades: Entry Control and Locks
9. Initiate Trauma-Informed Emergency Planning
10. Avoid Practices That Can Cause Harm and Traumatize Students

My thanks,

Barb Brown
Kodiak, Alaska
barbbell71@gmail.com
(907) 539-5606

Konrad Jackson

From: Ben Muse <ben.muse@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 7:42 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: I oppose parts of SB 173 allowing guns in school

Dear Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

I oppose the parts of SB 173 that allow concealed carry of guns in Alaska schools.

More guns in schools won't make children safer. They will increase the chance of injury or death from carelessness or accidents.

They are not likely to be very effective in deterring or stopping a shooter. Deterrence is unlikely if the intruder is intent on suicide, as so many seem to be. Moreover, an intruder will have the advantage of surprise and pre-planning. Not many people have the skill and self-possession to engage in combat on short notice with minimal training.

I've been an Alaskan since 1977, sent my children to school in Alaska, and currently have five grandchildren in schools in Juneau and Anchorage.

Please do not move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Ben Muse
Juneau

Konrad Jackson

From: Bill Tremblay <brtrembla@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 3:47 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: janc@gci.net; sen.bert.steadman@akleg.gov
Subject: Strongly opposed to AK SB 173

Dear Senate Committee Members

I am a gun owner and a victim of gun violence (My brother was killed when his best friend "showed" him a loaded gun 55yrs ago; the memory of that night has never faded).

While I know that the use of guns in Alaska are important for subsistence, feeding ones family, for sport, or for protection; the LAST place more guns are needed are in a school or classroom. The potential for accidental, or intentional harm is elevated just by having a more guns available.

If you are serious about the safety of schools, there are other things to consider;

- Provide more funds to evaluate schools concerning the potential and then provide more funds to invest in addressing those shortfalls
- Do more to support "red flag laws" that allow the court to take firearms away from someone who may be a threat to others or themselves.
- Do more to promote the safe storage of weapons in the home.

It's depressing to read about all of the school shootings that continue to be a plague on our nation. Guns Are the #1 killer of our youth today (More than drugs, vehicle accidents, or illness). Having more guns in school will add to the problem, not stop it.

Sincerely,

Bill Tremblay
P.O. Box 662
Petersburg, AK. 99833
907-772-4461

Konrad Jackson

From: carolyn V Brown <cvbrown1937@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:41 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173 - This is Dead Serious
Attachments: guns sb 173 - 29 feb 2024.pdf

Whether this is my first or tenth reading of SB 173, I am incredibly appalled, saddened beyond words, horrified, terrified and afraid for children, teachers, administrators, families, police and citizens that we have come to this SB 173 as a proposed way to "solve an issue". What has happened to our moral compass?

I am absolutely and unabashedly against passage or further consideration of SB 173. I have embedded my comments into the attached SB 173 and respectfully ask that you read this seriously as though you are a parent, spouse, teacher, administrator, family member, police officer or citizen. What in the name of reason and humanity are we doing to and against each other?

I believe there are some basic questions to be addressed:

- What are the responses of the law enforcement agencies across Alaska?
- What are the "certain conditions" required of "certain qualified persons"?
- Does the "concealed gun on the person" include a gun in a desk, purse, brief case, coat pocket, lunch pail, paper sack or desk top?
- Who decides who is a "qualified person"?
- The stringents applied to physical and mental attributes required that are written "may" not be less stringent. Should they be "equal to or more" stringent than of the Alaska Police Standards Council?
- For the teachers and others who do not accept the assigned duty, will they be fired, relegated to other work, harassed or labeled as pariahs of the system?
- How long is "continuing employment"?
- Are "storage lockers" the same as "on the person" carrying? How "safe" is "safe"?
- Is the "active shooter plan" a shoot to kill, injure, maim, frighten, scare, harm or just what? How can we know? Will somebody else be "killed, injured, maimed, frightened or harmed" in this "active shooter plan"?
- Secrecy for the named "qualified person" is almost always an issue to try to hide. Do you agree?

I respectfully ask that you please consider the following:

- Anxiety on all sides of ideology leads to fear.
- Fear can lead to anger.
- Anger can lead to rage.
- Rage can lead to loss of reason and cognizance.
- This is too often followed with a "world of hurt" for whoever is in the way - regardless of that ideology on either side.

- Dead is dead. What's left is the carnage of the mutilated, injured, emotionally destroyed and the hopelessness of trying to gather life together for those who are left.
- Why are we doing this? We can do better than this. Together we can create more humane solutions. If we do not ask the questions, we most probably will not get the answers.

I ask that you work with your own reason, intelligence, sense of justice with all possible kindness, humility and action. This will far surpass SB 173.

Thank you for this consideration.

carolyn V Brown MD MPH
1640 S>econd Street
Douglas Alaska 99824-5211 USA

907-364-2726 home
907-364-2727 fax

907-321-0784 cellular

cvbrown1937@yahoo.com

Raymond Matiashowski

From: carolyn V Brown <cvbrown1937@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 1:52 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: guns in our schools - SB 173

I so strongly oppose SB 173. I have been involved with medicine and health care for 64 years - most of it in Alaska. I've seen and been involved with the good - bad - ugly of health - illness - violence - injury - suicide - dying - death:

- Suicide (25,000 per year) is real, final, personal, painful and unforgettable.
- Children, teens and young adult deaths from guns are a catastrophic issue for Alaska.
- Domestic violence and guns are a monster contribution to the growing problem.
- We live in a violent and friable time in our state.

Why are we now so polarized to have guns in our schools? We seem to live in our "bubbles of fear and ideology" to the extent we are unable to develop workable, humane and ethical solutions for this issue. Are we afraid we won't win? Nobody wins with a dead child, teacher, policeman, parent or friend.

I respectfully ask that you address alternative possibilities besides agreeing to guns in our schools:

- Background checks on all guns with appropriate documentation, follow up and monitoring.
- Continue with and implement HB 164 and HB 162.
- Develop strategic advocacy for decreasing the reprehensible violence on television and social media.

This historical proverb is worth repeating and updating:

- "If we live by the sword, we shall die by the sword."
- "If we live by the gun, we shall die by the gun."

I sincerely request and plead that SB 173 is defeated. We can "pay now or pay later". Thank you for this consideration.

carolyn V Brown MD MPH
1640 Second Street
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SENATE BILL NO. 173

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATORS HUGHES, Shower, Myers

Introduced: 1/16/24

Referred: Labor and Commerce, Judiciary

What does the Police Dept's think of this?

Carry
never a gun
in hand or
house
Will teachers
lose jobs

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

be clear
what are these

1 "An Act requiring school districts to grant qualified persons an assigned duty to carry a
 2 concealed handgun on school grounds under certain conditions; relating to standards,
 3 training, and continuing education in firearms training for qualified persons granted an
 4 assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds; relating to
 5 communication of school districts with state and local law enforcement; and relating to
 6 school crisis response plans."

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 * Section 1. The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
 9 to read:

10 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Safe Schools Act.

11 * Sec. 2. The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
 12 read:

13 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that the concealed carry of

1 firearms on school grounds by certain qualified persons augment responses by law
 2 enforcement during a crisis.

3 * Sec. 3. AS 11.61.210(c) is amended to read:

4 (c) The provisions of (a)(7) of this section do not apply to a

5 (1) peace officer acting within the scope and authority of the officer's
 6 employment; or

7 (2) qualified person granted an assigned duty under AS 14.03.170
 8 to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds.

9 * Sec. 4. AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to article 1 to read:

10 Sec. 14.03.170. Granting qualified persons an assigned duty to carry a
 11 concealed handgun on school grounds. (a) A school district shall: *which are?*

12 (1) grant one or more persons who meet the requirements of (b) of this
 13 section an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on the person on school
 14 grounds for defensive use unless there is no person available *(who meets the*
 15 requirements of (b) of this section; *so - what is there* *is no available person?* *be clear*

16 (2) adopt a written policy relating to granting a qualified person an
 17 assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on the person on school grounds; the
 18 written policy must, at a minimum, establish the standards and requirements that must
 19 be met before granting the assigned duty, and the standards, requirements, and
 20 procedures for documentation of initial and continuing education in firearms training
 21 for a qualified person to carry a concealed handgun; the physical and mental standards
 22 established may *or must?* not be less stringent than the physical and mental standards the
 23 Alaska Police Standards Council has established for the employment of police officers
 24 under AS 18.65.240(a)(2);

25 (3) pay the fees for the training and continuing education required by
 26 this section of a qualified person who is an employee of the district and compensate
 27 the qualified person for time spent attending training and participating in on-site drills
 28 as time worked; and

29 (4) pay or reimburse the fees for the training and continuing education
 30 required by this section of a qualified person who is a volunteer for the school district
 31 and requests payment or reimbursement.

(b) A school district shall grant an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun under this section to a person who

(1) agrees to accept the assigned duty;

(2) has obtained a permit to carry a concealed handgun under AS 18.65.700 - 18.65.790;

(3) has completed a training course that is equivalent to a nationally recognized firearms training course, nationally recognized training course for school resource officers, or the Faculty and Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response training program offered by the Buckeye Firearms Foundation; *time - sufficiency - which is?*

(4) meets the physical and mental standards established by the district's governing body under (a)(2) of this section; *which are?*

(5) has completed any training required by the district's insurance policy to be eligible for coverage; and *paid for by?*

(6) has committed to a period of continuing employment if required by the school district under (c)(1) of this section. *how long?*

(c) A school district may

(1) require a person to commit to a period of continuing employment with the district before granting the person an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun under this section; *how long?*

(2) revoke or suspend a qualified person's assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun at the discretion of the district or at the request of the qualified person; and

(3) install lockers with biometric identification locks in each school for storage of handguns by qualified persons, the costs of which may be eligible for reimbursement by the state. *I thought this was "on the person" carry...*

(d) Not later than July 1 of each year, each school district shall provide to local and state law enforcement agencies

(1) the district's active shooter plan for each of the district's school buildings; *Will this be shoot to kill, injure, harm, scare?*

(2) the floor plan for each of the district's school buildings; the floor plan must identify locked and unlocked entrances, accessible windows, safe huddle

1 areas, the location of any gun-storage lockers, and the room assignment of each
2 qualified person, if applicable;

3 (3) contact information for each qualified person; *and next of kin!*

4 (4) the dates in the academic year on which each school building and
5 all school employees will be available for training or on-site drills; and

6 (5) the dates outside of the academic year on which all school
7 buildings, school administrators, and qualified persons will be available for training or
8 on-site drills.

9 (e) The state or a political subdivision of the state, a school board or an
10 individual member of the school board, a principal, or a qualified person is immune
11 from liability that might otherwise be incurred as a result of an injury caused by a
12 qualified person's act or failure to act during a crisis. This subsection does not apply to
13 an act that constitutes gross negligence. *oh, me!*

14 (f) This section does not affect a person's ability to lawfully possess a weapon
15 on school grounds without violating AS 11.61.210(a)(7) or (8). *what is that*

16 (g) In this section, *law?*

17 (1) "qualified person" means a person who meets the requirements of
18 (b) of this section and is granted an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on
19 school grounds; *how to keep up with mental health and physical health in these people?*

20 (2) "school grounds" has the meaning given in AS 11.71.900.

21 * Sec. 5. AS 14.33.100(c) is amended to read:

22 *Is this a* (c) Each district shall annually review and update as appropriate each school's
23 *"uni-plan"?* crisis response plan. A copy of each school's crisis response plan, as annually updated,
24 shall be retained by the district and a copy provided to each local agency that has a
25 role in the plan. Notice of completion of the annual review and update and the location
26 of a school's crisis response plan shall be posted at each school in the district. A school
27 crisis response plan shall be printed and available for inspection by the public. The
28 portions of a school crisis response plan relating to floor plans, locked and
29 unlocked entrances, accessible windows, safe huddle areas, the location of any
30 gun-storage lockers, and the identity and location of a qualified person under
31 AS 14.03.170 may not be made available to the public.

1 * **Sec. 6.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
2 read:

2 read:

3 APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to a contract or collective bargaining agreement

4 that becomes legally binding on or after the effective date of this Act.

to whom

Barclay Brown
29 February 2024

Konrad Jackson

From: Chad Bartlett <chad@northerntechnologies.biz>
Sent: Saturday, February 03, 2024 12:42 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Shelley Hughes
Subject: Support SB 173

Hello--

I support SB 173. We want our kids to stay safe in school against active shooters.

Chad Bartlett
Palmer, AK

Konrad Jackson

From: Cheri Ruiz <cherimruiz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 02, 2024 8:53 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Shelley Hughes
Subject: SB 173 Support

Good evening,

I support SB 173. I support conceal carry staff member to protect our kids while in school!

V/r,

Cheri M. Ruiz

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Konrad Jackson

From: Christy Hamblen <christyhamblen89@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 03, 2024 7:42 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

Christy Hamblen

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Chuck Cohen <kodzoff@alaskan.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 12:28 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Fr: Charles W. Cohen
PO Box 20670
Juneau, Alaska 99802

Re: SB 173 (2024)

Letter in Opposition to Act Requiring Local School Districts to Permit Designated Volunteer Teachers To be Armed in Public Schools.

Dt: January 24, 2024

I am strongly opposed to the portion of SB 173 requiring local school districts to permit certain teachers who volunteer to do so carry firearms in schools. My experience informs me this is a dangerous, high liability - low potential benefit idea without any evidence the benefits would outweigh the substantial risks to our school children and other teachers and school personnel. In addition, this proposed law mandates conformity statewide against the fair judgement and concerns of local, home rule municipalities and borough school districts opposed to the idea.

Experience:

- Alaskan resident (47 years)
- Lawyer, Alaska Bar Association, (46 years)
- Business owner & commercial fisherman
- Former Alaska Assistant District Attorney
- Former commercial and maritime lawyer (retired)
- Former University of Alaska Instructor – Business Law
- Life Member NRA
- Former Firearms Instructor, including Handgun and Concealed Carry Permit
- Former Distinguished Expert Small Bore Rifle, Expert High-Power Rifle, Expert Handgun
- Present competitor in Rifle, Pistol, Trapshooting

- Life Member Juneau Gun Club
- Former President and member Juneau School Board
- Supporter of firearms safety training for children in public schools, including Juneau
- Father of Juneau School District Children
- Grandfather of Alaska public school children

Before further consideration of this “good guy with gun” fantasy, I suggest members of the committee, and especially the sponsors of this bill and anyone who thinks it’s a good idea, go take the required hand gun training to become an armed teacher volunteer. If after, see if you believe yourself ready to simultaneously be a teacher and an armed guard. Then, think a bit more about how the current school crisis plans would be improved in an elementary school with 250 children. Imagine an angry parent with a semi-automatic rifle, a couple 30 round banana magazines, and a handgun in a classroom with another teacher and 25 terrified children. Then, think what you, the armed volunteer teacher who has just been notified (as have been the police) plan to do. Perhaps not really knowing anything, you decide to abandon your class of 25 children, be transformed into the Lone Ranger, and confront the situation. Then, imagine the police, not knowing who is the armed adult is, arrive. Now what? Then, as a legislator, consider the cost of this program.

Then compare a better, simple idea. Appropriate additional funding to each community to hire a couple more day shift police officers to better patrol our schools.

Good teachers don’t carry guns – they nurture and teach children - a tough job.

Police officers serve and protect our communities – another tough job.

Nobody can do both jobs well.

Konrad Jackson

From: Dave Peck <dlp1951@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 9:20 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Senate Judiciary
Cc: Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: SB-173

I'm writing to confirm my support for SB-173. It may save lives if an unexpected tragedy strikes. At least it provides staff a fighting chance to save their own lives and the lives of our children. Please pass it out of committee for further consideration.

Thank you
Dave Peck
Kenai

Konrad Jackson

From: Debbie S. Miller <debbiesmiller2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:20 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: SB 173 Safe Schools Act

Dear Senate Members of the Labor and Commerce Committee:

As a former teacher and visiting author who has traveled to many elementary schools across Alaska and the U.S., I'm opposed to SB 173.

Principals, other administrators, teachers or school volunteers should not be allowed to carry or store guns in our schools. In reading the language of SB 173, this legislation would require school administrators to oversee the training and monitoring of staff members or volunteers who might be qualified to carry and use firearms, using standards adopted by the Alaska Police Standards Council.

We have police, state troopers, and trained security guards to carry out that safety mission. Not school teachers. Some school districts have contracted trained security guards who stand outside by the one-point entrance of a school, welcoming students and monitoring all suspicious activities and strangers. I've visited numerous schools that have reconfigured their entrances to make them safer with two sets of locking doors, and a mandatory intercom to announce any school visitor. As a visitor, I always have to announce myself to enter the school and sign-in. In recent years, I can't think of a case where I was allowed to just freely show up and walk into a school, through an unlocked door, unannounced.

Section 14.03.170 (d) (2) requires that schools provide a yearly floor plan showing locked and unlocked entrances, accessible windows, and so on. While this is important information, the goal should be to have no unlocked entrances, no side doors left ajar, no accessible windows. Since Columbine, many schools have renovated their entrances and buildings so that people can only use the front entrance, a highly visible area that is monitored all day long by the front office and/or a security guard outside. All other building doors are locked with key passes for staff.

Schools across the nation have worked very hard to make their buildings secure. I've participated in a number of active shooting drills and experienced one lockdown. Some schools have conveyor belts checking for firearms in backpacks and purses. There are many deterrents, safety measures and precautions that can be enacted without teachers and staff carrying guns, with the risk of those guns falling into the wrong hands or the added risk of accidental shootings.

I do support the idea of making our schools as safe as possible with a one-point entrance to the building, and if desired, a trained security guard at the door. But let the police or state trooper academy do the training and monitoring, not the principals. They have enough to worry about without monitoring staff with guns inside the building.

While I'm opposed to SB 173, I do support HB 164, the Alaska Child Access Prevention and Secure Storage of Firearms Act. Anyone who owns a gun should be required to safely secure and store it out of children's reach. Trigger locks are readily available to prevent a child from picking up a gun and shooting it. These simple measures can save countless lives over time.

Thank you,

Debbie S. Miller

Debbie S. Miller, Author
www.debbiemilleralaska.com
debbiesmiller@hotmail.com
P.O. Box 2808
Sitka, AK 99835
415-373-2236
Facebook: debbiemilleralaska

New children's book:
Glaciers Are Alive, illustrated by Jon Van Zyle (Charlesbridge, 2023)

Latest adult book:
A Wild Promise: Prince William Sound (Braided River, 2018)

<http://braidedriver.org/wild-promise>

Konrad Jackson

From: Dj C <djc6989@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 9:49 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I fully support SB 173. We want our kids to be safe in their schools against active shooters.

Diana L Canady

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Konrad Jackson

From: Diane DeSloover <dianedesloover@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 10:58 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: SB 173 hearing, 3/1/24

March 1, 2024

To the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee:

I am a retired public school elementary teacher, my daughter and son-in-law are currently Juneau School District teachers and I have four grandchildren attending Juneau public schools. On behalf of us and all of my teacher friends who are still providing caring learning environments for their students I am asking you to reject SB 173.

According to the language of this bill “*a school district shall grant one or more persons who meet the requirements of (b) of this section an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on the person on school grounds for defensive use . . .*” This appears to grant anyone who has a concealed carry permit to present that qualification and be allowed to carry a gun on school grounds without limit. It’s bad enough to allow even one gun on school premises, but to put guns in the hands of multiple persons who are not extensively trained in confronting an active shooter seems very wrong. We all know that guns can be misplaced or mishandled and get into the wrong hands. This poses a risk to students and school personnel.

If you research the facts of past mass-shooting tragedies in our country you will learn that even trained police officers have been unable to repel such events. In reality, even highly trained SWAT teams have had limited success in such cases. Once an assailant opens fire with a high powered assault rifle it is almost impossible to prevent multiple casualties. It is not reasonable to assume that one or more insufficiently trained individuals would be able to succeed where others more skilled have failed.

As an alternative to SB 173, this body also has SB 229 to consider. SB 229 would help prevent school assaults by providing a process for temporarily removing firearms from individuals who are identified by a court of law to be at high risk of engaging in this kind of behavior. This proactive approach works to prevent school shootings rather than just reacting to them.

No to SB 173 and Yes to serious consideration of SB 229, the Extreme Risk Protective Order Bill. I urge you to hold hearings on SB 229 and let your constituents weigh in on this issue that affects all of us deeply.

Respectfully,
Diane DeSloover
Juneau resident since 1977

Konrad Jackson

From: Inspector Donna <inspectordonna@protonmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 03, 2024 8:40 AM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes; Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173

I support SB 173. I want our kids safe in schools against active shooters.

Alaska isn't immune to the rise in violence we often hear about in the rest of the nation. School age children are at risk without a highly trained, stable, responsible, armed person to watch over them. Every school needs an armed security officer to help deter the actions of an intended shooter.

In the event of a shooter incident, an immediate response is needed and there isn't time to wait for local police or Troopers, both of which we have too few.

Please push through this legislation to help protect our children and grandchildren.

Blessings,
Donna Ranson
c-907-441-2433
5260 E Dunbar Dr
Wasilla AK 99654

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Konrad Jackson

From: Dustin Connor <cnrdb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 1:40 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: sb 209

To those in the senate. As a disabled combat veteran, small business owner in Alaska, and provider as a husband and father, respectfully; We don't need more government oversight in our businesses, especially our struggling commercial fishing operations in coastal and often rural areas. There is little useful data that has been gathered or used from the current observer programs. To add another financial burden and business hurdle for an already overburdened industry to fund government funded work programs and force unnecessary government oversight is ludicrous and not in the best interest of our state and Alaska's residents. As responsible elected officials please for the sake of freedom and free commerce, shut this bill down.

Dustin Connor
Petersburg, Alaska
907.518.4369

Dustin Connor
1201 Haugen Dr.; Ste. 1372
Petersburg, AK 99833
907-518-4369

Konrad Jackson

From: Sally Donaldson <sallyanndonaldson@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 2:38 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: SB173

I am Sally Donaldson, address 530 Park Street, Juneau. Retired from the Juneau School District in 2014, I served 27 years as a school counselor in elementary, middle and high schools. I am here to testify against SB173.

It was during my tenure as school counselor in Alaska that Juneau schools developed and implemented crisis intervention plans which include establishing staff communication lines, safe in-school practices in case of an intruder, and drills. It was during that same time period (1997) that the school shooting happened in Bethel, where two people lost their lives to a shooter who had shared plans with others.

Guns have no place in a school full of children and youth. Weapons in school increase the risk of children gaining access to the weapon and harming themselves or others. I adamantly disagree with SB173, that teachers and/or other school personnel would be appointed to take on the role of confronting an active shooter. The majority of teachers, parents, students and law enforcement across the United States oppose arming school personnel. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association oppose arming teachers.

In many school shootings, there are examples of how teachers and school staff have protected students without the use of firearms. While I was counselor in one of Juneau's middle schools, a teacher reacted swiftly when a gun fell out of a student's pocket. The student picked up the gun and ran out of the classroom. Teacher locked the door, informed her students, ushering them to a designated area of the classroom. She called the office immediately, and in less than a minute, the school was in lockdown. Police arrived, the student was found and taken into custody.

As an Alaskan, a former school counselor, past president of the Alaska School Counselor Association, parent of two Juneau School District graduates, neighbor and friend of Alaskan children and teachers, I urge you to vote no on this bill. It is a short-sighted way to make schools safer. Instead, you could support HB162, Extreme Risk bill, and/or HB164, the Secure Storage of Firearms bill. Thank you for taking public testimony today.

From: Sandra Garity <aksandy612@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:55 AM

To: Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov; Sen. Kelly Merrick <Sen.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson <Sen.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Senator.Jesse.Bjoorkman@akleg.gov

Subject: SB173

Senators,

I am writing in opposition to SB173 and asking you to oppose this bill as well.

I believe the presence of guns in schools is traumatic and frightening to children. I am aware of a child that is traumatized by doing gun shooting drills. For them to see real guns in addition to this could be terrifying to the children.

I also think there could possibly be mishaps with these guns in the schools.

I would ask that instead you support Secure Gun Storage laws HB164 and Extreme Risk laws HB 162. I believe this to be a much safer approach to protect our precious children.

Thank you

Sandra Garity

Homer, AK

Konrad Jackson

From: emily stark <emilystark261@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:02 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I oppose SB173
NO guns in schools!
Emily Stark
5814 Grand Teton Loop
Anchorage, Ak99502
907-5296388

Konrad Jackson

From: AK Homestays <gsinne@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 5:39 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: I support bill SB-173

This is a common sense approach to the unfortunate reality of school shootings these days. As someone who has taken a concealed carry course and have been to the range numerous times I believe that in responsible and trained hands a handgun can help deter and potentially stop a threat on school grounds. I also believe that it is silly that we have the right to bear arms but not when it comes to certain places such as schools and other public spaces. Unfortunately for someone who wants to cause a lot of damage a "gun-free" zone is the perfect place to do it since the police usually show up after the damage has been done as has been the case in past shootings. Please move this bill out of committee and onto the floor for debate.

Thank you
Garrett Ennis

Konrad Jackson

From: Gloria Jean Thompson <thomps@alaska.net>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:19 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Gun Control

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Please vote NO on Senate Bill 143. More guns is NOT the answer to gun safety in schools.

What an outrageous decision to even consider more guns. We need fewer guns in our state and country to keep our children from being killed by guns.

The number ONE cause of death of children in the richest country in the world is by guns. This is a travesty.

Sincerely,

Gloria Jean Thompson
Anchorage, AK 99507

Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Janice Norman <jnorman@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 04, 2024 10:04 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173

Senate Labor and Commerce,

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

Janice Norman, Wasilla
907-373-3961

Konrad Jackson

From: Jean McBrien <jnogma@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 8:22 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Cc: Sen. Jesse Kiehl
Subject: American children do not need to grow up in an armed camp!

For many reasons, including the following, SB 173 should be thrown out immediately:

- Bringing firearms into a school environment can increase the risk of accidents, misuse, or theft, putting students and staff in danger.
- Teachers are trained to educate, not to handle firearms in high-stress situations. Police and military are trained not only in the use of firearms, but also in de-escalation techniques and in crisis management.
- The psychological impact of having armed teachers can create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among students. It may also affect the mental well-being of teachers, who would feel reluctant to use lethal force against a student.
- The legal and liability issues are complex and insurmountable. Accidental discharges, mistaken identity, or misuse of firearms could lead to legal consequences for both the school and for the individuals involved.

Overall, attention should be given to improving **preventative measures** in each and every school building. Every building should be locked after the pupils enter. Entrances and/or controlled access to each building needs to take place. Classroom doors should be lockable from the inside. Surveillance cameras should be abundant in every building and should be monitored in real time. Each child should be made to feel safe and secure when they are in a school building. Armed guards walking around or standing in front of the classroom are not comforting to a child - it only tells them that going to school is a risky endeavor. Security measures should be as transparent as possible to children.

American children do not need to grow up in an armed camp!

Konrad Jackson

From: jennifer sampson <jacronk@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 8:23 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Schools

Dear SLAC,

I work in a school in Fairbanks. We just had an ALICE training. It would such a benefit to have an armed person or persons in our school in the tragic case of a gunman. Think of the children's lives that could be saved.

Please support SB 173
Kind Regards,

Jennifer Sampson
Fairbanks, AK
US

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Jess Stanley <sablin05@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 3, 2024 9:04 PM
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Opposed to SB 173

Hello,

My name is Jess Stanley and I am a teacher in Juneau. I am emailing to voice my EXTREME opposition to SB173. The day it is required to carry a gun in school is the day myself, and many other teachers will quit. Expecting teachers to protect students in this way is inappropriate and invites insurmountable risk to our classrooms and schools. The way to prevent gun violence is not with more guns.

Instead, I support proactive measures to decrease the risk of school shootings as presented in HB 164 and HB 162.

Thank you.
Jess Stanley

Konrad Jackson

From: JESSICA MITCHELL <mysticsea23red@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 8:37 PM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes; Senate Judiciary; School Board; Executive Assistant To the Superintendent; Superintendent
Cc: Senate Labor and Commerce; Fairbanks North Star Borough School District; Kiwico Mail Kustomerapp Support
Subject: SB 173 - please Support

Good Evening, My name is Jessica Wagner and I have a 6 year old at Hunter Elem. in Fairbanks.

Mental Health has always been an issue for our state and our country. Resources for those people who struggle with mental health has only deteriorated. For this reason we would be negligent if we were not more prepared to keep people safe, especially our children.

We've already had incidents here in Fairbanks regarding false alarms, students bringing weapons, and people communicating threats. If or when a situation happens seconds will count. If someone was threatening your child/family with a gun wouldn't you want a gun to protect them?

I ask the superintendent to proactively protect our children by asking those trained adults in our school system to conceal carry. Hopefully SB173 passes. If not, I hope superintendent Meinert takes up this responsibility and sets an example, showing our community how much we are willing to protect our children. It is our responsibility to keep them safe.

Thank you for your time, Jess Wagner

SB 173: "An Act requiring school districts to grant qualified persons an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds under certain conditions; relating to standards, training, and continuing education in firearms training for qualified persons granted an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds; relating to communication of school districts with state and local law enforcement; and relating to school crisis response plans."

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Konrad Jackson

From: Jim Eymann <cruznak@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 06, 2024 12:20 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good afternoon,

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

Thank you,
Jim Eymann

Sent from my semi-smart phone; please excuse typos, brevity and autocorrect.

Konrad Jackson

From: John Clough <jcloughak@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:47 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Testimony re SB 173

TESTIMONY OF JOHN CLOUGH RE SB 173

My name is John Clough. I am a retired attorney who has lived in Juneau since 1974. Unlike most of the people presenting testimony, I have personal experience using my own firearm as a civilian to apprehend and arrest two armed and dangerous felons. I am here today to testify against SB 173.

I believe SB 173 is flawed in many respects. Let me briefly address the most significant issues.

First, the bill is *mandatory*. There are few more important education safety issues than the question of having people carrying concealed handguns in our children's schools. This is an issue which parents, teachers and school administrators should be entitled to debate, to make their own determination as to whether that is appropriate for their school district. SB 173 denies the local community – the people who will actually be effected by the action – any input, much less control over such a vital issue. That is wrong.

Second, the bill is an *unfunded mandate*. We are all aware of the funding crisis facing our Alaska school system – you have been living that issue these past few weeks. There are no funds available for districts to hire full time properly trained outside professionals to fulfill this mandate. Instead the districts will be compelled to primarily rely upon either volunteer members of their existing workforce – who were not hired for this purpose – or outside volunteers. The issue of volunteers is troublesome. How are they to be vetted? By whom? Yet the bill requires that they be brought on board if the minimum statutory requirements are met. To me that is a recipe for disaster. For example, Section 5 of the bill – which I support – is clearly intended to protect against the situation where a potential school shooter went into the public records to obtain information which could help them commit a heinous atrocity. Yet that same person could “volunteer” to carry a concealed firearm inside our schools and the district would be required to accept them if the minimum criteria were satisfied.

Finally, *the firearms training requirements in Section 4 of the bill are inadequate*. A “nationally recognized firearms training course” may include all of the appropriate standards for *how* to safely operate a firearm. But that is not our primary concern here. Instead, if we are to allow numerous people to carry concealed firearms in the schools alongside our precious children and grandchildren the focus must be on *when, if and in what manner* deadly force is used within our school facilities. For example, to join the Juneau Police Force an accepted applicant must complete the program at the State of Alaska Law Enforcement Training Academy in Sitka. It is a rigorous seventeen week course. In addition to classroom work the curriculum includes many hours of firearms range practice, extensive work with force action simulators and numerous intensive live action scenarios. That is the vital type of training such a person must have, not a run of the mill gun safety course. It is one thing to know the mechanics required to safely handle a firearm. It is something else entirely to know when and how to use a gun in a crisis situation. I learned that lesson the hard way in 1983 and have never forgotten.

Thank you all for your service to our state and for taking the time to read this testimony.

Sent from my iPhone

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Joyanne Bloom <joyanneb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 5:35 PM
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: What I would have said on SB173 given the chance today

I regret that you only heard from the Sponsor and her supporters. I was in the room for almost two hours, as I came early to be the first one to sign up to testify. Here's what I wanted you to hear:

My name is Joyanne Bloom and I live in Juneau. I wasn't supposed to be here today. I was going to submit written testimony because I was supposed to be attending my grandson's Battle of the Books competition at his middle school. But it's another snow day, and I live in walking distance, so I'm here to tell you why SB173 is a bad idea.

You see, when I do go to my grandson's school for his competitions, his band performances or just pick him up, I feel safe. I know weapons are not allowed on the premises - including for teachers, staff and volunteers. SB173 is not necessary.

According to Save Our Schools advocacy resource, the odds of being involved in a school shooting are extremely low. Less than 0.2% of students will experience a shooting over 13 years of schooling.

Sergeant Boyd Branch at the Alaska Public Safety Training Academy in Sitka, shared with me that all our Alaska officers get 17 weeks of public safety training. In addition to almost daily instruction on the use of weapons, a whole week is spent training on handguns. Three days are devoted to rifle training, and an additional three days to shotgun training.

In contrast, the Faculty and Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response Program offered by the Buckeye Firearms Foundation referred to in this bill offers three day courses on preparedness to school staff and volunteers.

While I'm cheering on my grandson and my four other grandchildren in our schools, I will feel secure in knowing that there will be no unintended access to a firearm in the school. In the very remote possibility that my grandson is part of the 0.2% experiencing a school shooting, he will be protected by our well trained public safety officers.

I urge you to not advance this unwarranted, problematic SB173. Your time would be better spent on ways to protect our children - like making sure they are not the ones getting hold of weapons.

Thank you,
Joyanne Bloom

--

Joyanne Bloom
883 Basin Road
Juneau, Alaska 99801

(907) 723-3604

Konrad Jackson

From: jrdailey@acsalaska.net
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 8:53 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Senators,

Please move forward SB 173 – to allow school staff to be armed

Don't fail students, parents, staff and communities by preventing qualified individuals from lawfully carrying a handgun on school premises.

This is a good bill and will give opportunity to protect Alaska's children.

Thanks for your consideration,

JR Dailey
Longtime conservative supervoter

Konrad Jackson

From: jrdailey@acsalaska.net
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 8:27 PM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes; Senate Labor and Commerce; Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB 173

Senators:

Please support the passage of SB 173.

First I come from a long line of educators and administrators in public schools.

My Dad was an elementary principal, who one day with three other men from his building had to subdue an angry and troubled 7th grader who'd brought a butcher knife to school.

If the 7th grader had brought a firearm to school, the damage would potentially been much greater.

Second law enforcement's response time is too slow to stop an active shooter in process. School personnel who desire to carry a concealed handgun should be able to lawfully.

This is an issue of saving lives, not a right or left matter.

Thanks for your service and consideration,

JR Dailey
Sterling AK
Longtime conservative supervoter

Konrad Jackson

From: Katie Rose Parsons <krparsons24@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 11:57 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Comment Opposing Guns in Schools (SB 173)

Good afternoon, Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

My name is Katherine Parsons, and I live in Anchorage. I'm writing in opposition to the guns in schools bill for which a public hearing will be held on March 1st.

I strongly oppose SB 173.

I am deeply concerned about the safety of our schools, but guns in schools will only increase the danger to our children. There are countless examples in our community of children accessing guns and accidentally hurting themselves or others; having guns in the classroom increases the likelihood that a student will access a gun and that someone will be shot outside of an active shooter incident.

Additionally, armed teachers would be ineffective even in an active shooter incident. Law enforcement officers receive hundreds of hours of training but in states that have laws to arm school personnel, school staff receive much less training. Even some of the most highly trained law enforcement officers in the country see their ability to shoot accurately decrease significantly when engaged in gunfights with perpetrators. An armed teacher is more likely to accidentally shoot a student bystander, impede responding law enforcement, or be shot themselves than to stop an active shooter in a school.

Finally, arming teachers would introduce liability for teachers and schools. State immunity laws cannot exempt schools from all legal liability, particularly federal civil rights liability. It is also unlikely that insurance companies would indemnify schools from monetary claims in these cases.

My opinion is shared not only by my peers in Anchorage, but experts on this issue. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association are the nation's two largest teachers' organizations representing millions of educators and staff. They oppose arming teachers. The National Association of School Resource Officers strongly opposes proposals to arm teachers due to the risk it would pose to law enforcement, students and the school community, as well as the risks to the armed teachers themselves. The President and Executive Director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, which represents 75 police forces from large cities in the USA and Canada, both agree that arming teachers is *"not a good idea."*

School safety is important to me and many others, including yourselves I am sure. Please support HB 164 : Child Access Prevention and Secure Storage of Firearms Act, HB 162 and SB 229 : Extreme Risk Protective Order ("Red Flag) Law for Alaska to protect our schools instead of SB 173.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Katherine Parsons

From: Kim Craft <kim@newvibrationsmfr.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 03, 2024 2:08 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173
Attachments: S.gif

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

Kim Craft

SB 173 Information

Sponsor: Senator Shelley Hughes Staff: Stephen Knouse

Purpose To save lives during an active shooter incident on school grounds by providing an immediate response by an on-site, highly trained, stable, responsible individual as an augmentation to local law enforcement.

In Alaska, we have under 1300 law-enforcement officers and 40% of our state have no police presence. **In Alaska, we have unique factors that significantly impacts emergency response time, lack of road infrastructure, delays of travel due to weather, high number of rural areas and limited police presence. All factors impede law enforcement response to an active shooter in schools that are located in rural areas.** An active shooter event statistically by FBI, in 2022, shows an event is over within 2 to 5 minutes. This situation deeply concerns us as it leaves our children vulnerable.

We propose an Act requiring school districts to grant qualified persons an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds under certain conditions. This Act would not only provide immediate protection but also ensure that these individuals are well-trained and knowledgeable about firearm safety.

The proposed act covers standards, training, and continuing education in firearms training for those granted this duty. It ensures that only qualified individuals who have undergone rigorous training can carry concealed handguns on school premises.

Furthermore, this act **emphasizes communication between school districts with state and local law enforcement agencies. It mandates the development of comprehensive crisis response plans tailored for each school district's unique needs.**

According to a 2018 study by Northeastern University, shooting incidents involving students have been significantly increasing since 1999 [source: Northeastern University]. In rural areas like ours where police response time may be delayed due to distance or weather conditions, having trained personnel onsite could potentially save lives during emergencies.

Let's work together towards creating safer learning environments for our children while ensuring responsible gun handling practices are observed at all times. Please sign this petition if you believe that implementing such an act is crucial for the safety of our students across Alaska.

Thank you for your support in keeping our kids safe at school.

Konrad Jackson

From: Lei B <lxb312@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:34 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: OPPOSE SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

SB 173 "Safe Schools Act"

OPPOSE

Respected Senators,

As an Alaskan and a constituent, I oppose SB 173.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who practices at a hospital emergency room in Anchorage. I work with patients who have injured themselves by firearms so I am a witness to tragedy surrounding such situations.

I oppose this bill as it extends control over the public by forcing them to do something.

Current Alaska law covers the liberties by allowing firearms on campuses, as approved by administrative officers and no schools have denied staff concealed carry weapons.

This law, instead of preventing harm, would increase chances of harm to children by sheer proximity and access, as was evidenced by a case I saw earlier in the week in the hospital. Lucky for that 15 year old boy from Savoonga, he survived. Let's not play a game of luck with children's lives.

Please do not continue with this bill.

Thank you,
Lejla Berberovic, LCSW

Anchorage, AK 99515

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Lei B <lxb312@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:34 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: OPPOSE SB 173

SB 173 "Safe Schools Act"

OPPOSE

Respected Senators,

As an Alaskan and a constituent, I oppose SB 173.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who practices at a hospital emergency room in Anchorage. I work with patients who have injured themselves by firearms so I am a witness to tragedy surrounding such situations.

I oppose this bill as it extends control over the public by forcing them to do something.

Current Alaska law covers the liberties by allowing firearms on campuses, as approved by administrative officers and no schools have denied staff concealed carry weapons.

This law, instead of preventing harm, would increase chances of harm to children by sheer proximity and access, as was evidenced by a case I saw earlier in the week in the hospital. Lucky for that 15 year old boy from Savoonga, he survived. Let's not play a game of luck with children's lives.

Please do not continue with this bill.

Thank you,
Lejla Berberovic, LCSW

Anchorage, AK 99515

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Lin Davis <lingilbertdavis@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 12:18 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Oppose SB 173 Strongly

Dear Senate Labor and Commerce Committee:

I am a 30 year AK resident and retired from DOLWD and high school teaching and like most teachers, I strongly oppose arming teachers or staff or school volunteers.

Thank you trying to protect students....but SB173 brings too many risks and harms. Another school expense that many of our districts cannot afford.

The SB173 proposal does not have a safe national record. Let's focus on strategies that have a safety record like HB 164, the Secure Storage of Firearms Act. Alaska can gain increased school safety with HB 164.

Most law enforcement are strongly opposed to SB 173-they fear that too many lay people with weapons can be overcome in stressful situations. In other states children have ended up holding the guns. Lightly trained armed volunteers bring danger to schools.

Most parents strongly oppose arming teachers. Law enforcement people spend years learning to safely handle life-threatening situations. Police are selected for certain occupational skills, interests, innate abilities. Teachers and other school staff have vastly different innate skills.

Thank you for your wisdom in rejecting SB173. Please consider focusing on HB 164 for statewide school safety.

Lin Davis
30 year resident
Douglas Island

Feb 25, 2024

Dear Senate Labor and Commerce Committee:

Thank you for taking testimony re SB 173. Thank you for evaluating all the ways to protect students. **I am deeply opposed to this proposal.**

And thank you now for taking time to consider how dangerous it would be to arm teachers and school staff.

I'm a 30-year AK resident and just asked our 12-year-old neighbor, whose parents are both teachers, what he thought about arming his parents and other teachers. "No way," he said. "No extra safety from my teachers having guns." Said his friends are also very opposed.

I am retired from DOLWD and from 10 years of high school teaching down south. Did my student teaching at Berkeley High. During my first week, a student at the back of the room waved a revolver. My trainer, Mr. Longtime English Teacher, walked to the student, called him by name, calmly spoke to him, we all watched, as the young man handed over the gun. They left the classroom, I gulped and continued with my lesson, hands shaking. I watched soft skills disarm during a tense long ago Berkeley decade.

Fast forward to all our current war zones in America, "our treasured spaces", schools, churches, malls.

America is in the midst of this daily disgrace, our mass shootings. A public health emergency no other Western country faces. And now Point Hope. 2 weeks ago a Point Hope elder spoke in Juneau at UAS. He described everyone struggling daily with extreme village erosion. Now all villagers wounded by murders.and we Alaskans steel ourselves for the next even worse shooting. All of us are desperate for solutions.

Why do polls show that teachers and their organizations strongly oppose proposals like SB 173. Why do police and their organizations totally oppose bringing teacher guns into schools. Parents too express alarm and extra worry.

However, I am taking hope in 2024, and I think Alaska has extra uplift now, like the glacial uplift we experience here in Juneau, like the recent gargantuan bipartisan effort to increase the BSA. We Alaskans don't want to set ourselves up for failure. We don't want to desperately dump volunteer guns into our schools.

Studies about active-shooter situations, show many trained police perform poorly. Their hands shake, they can't calmly focus on their gun sight, some get tunnel vision, some freeze. Their excess adrenaline and cortisol undo parts of the brain needed to make effective police decisions.

Studies of Green Berets and Navy Seals show that only a small subset of people have nervous systems suited for high stress active shooter situations. Blood and saliva tests have shown that some people have higher rates of amino acids that moderate the adrenaline and allow some people to be effective “warriors” in shoot-outs. As Jamie Thompson reports in her March 2024 *Atlantic* article, ***To Stop a Shooter***, “...some of us are born German Shepherds and others are Retrievers...these inherent different kinds of nervous systems allow genetic advantages when it comes to working under very high stress and terror...”

Jamie quotes a study summary of police training, “If the public knew how poorly some police officers are trained, and more importantly, how poorly those undertrained officers perform – thank goodness crooks don’t know.”

Nationally, most police departments are vastly understaffed and active shooter trainings have to be compressed, and many officers don’t absorb tactical and marksmanship skills in compressed and infrequent workshops.

Since most school shootings end in 5 minutes, effective law enforcement performance depends on updated police radio systems, ability to quickly sort chaotic smoky terror situations, top physical conditioning, regular marksmanship practice, and nearby SWAT teams and equipment ready to go.

So....if people who have chosen law enforcement, who have received years of active shooter training have not performed effectively....how effective will teachers and school volunteers be?

And immunity to prosecution will be given to armed teachers who accidentally cause deaths or injuries. Will SB 173 bring a healthy learning environment to Alaskan students?

Let’s focus on 2 evidence-based solutions: HB 164 and HB 162/SB 229. Other states have attained lower gun deaths by passing similar proposals. Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense has been passing out packets about these 2 proposals. Sadly 164 and 162 sit in House Judiciary waiting for a hearing.

Let’s focus our Alaska uplift on Safe Gun Storage/HB 164 and the Extreme Risk Protection Order/HB 162.

Every 3 days an Alaskan commits suicide, and most suicides use guns.

A recent high school survey revealed most students can put their hands on a loaded gun within an hour.

Alaska always ranks in top 4 states with most gun deaths, most child deaths by firearms, most suicides, highest DV. Severe public health emergency. Let’s show the country that Alaska can try new strategies, Safe Storage and Extreme Risk Orders. Let’s show everyone that Alaska can bring life-saving skills to our public health crisis.

Thank you all for your student safety efforts.

Sincerely,

Lin Davis

Douglas Island resident 30 years

I am indebted to investigative journalist, Jamie Thompson, and her March 24, 2024 Atlantic article, **To Stop A Shooter**, for information in this testimony

Konrad Jackson

From: lrbaxter@alaskan.com
Sent: Friday, February 16, 2024 10:30 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: 'Loran Baxter'
Subject: SB 173, Safe Schools Act

Greetings,

I'm writing in support of SB 173, Safe Schools Act. It's time we implemented proactive measures to protect the children of Alaska. We know the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

Thanks.

Loran Baxter
(907) 887-6391
2 Chr 7:14

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Margie MacNeille <margie-mac@ak.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 1:54 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: *****SPAM***** Oppose SB 173

Dear Sen. Bjorkman:

SB 173 is a terrible idea, and I urge you to stifle it in committee. "Safe Schools" is an ironic name for the bill, as it makes schools more dangerous. Arming teaching staff adds guns to schools. Storing the guns in biometric lockers just puts a target on teachers' backs, should the shooter be seeking to eliminate threats. It says something about the state's priorities when lawmakers would rather spend school district money on lockers and arms training than on teaching children. This bill is just for show to the sponsors' pro-all-gun constituents. What might actually have an effect is increased school funding for mental health, specifically suicide prevention. Schools shooters are young suicidal males, in my understanding. And school personnel know which young men are suffering. Devote resources there. Thanks for your attention.

Margie MacNeille
8101 White Dr
Anchorage AK 99507

Konrad Jackson

From: Maria Eymann <treasureseeker17@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 05, 2024 9:19 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: I support SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern,
As an Alaskan I support SB 173. This act is a commonsense plan for Alaskan schools to be able to respond to a possible school shooting. The passing of SB 173 would also most likely be a deterrent to anyone wanting to commit such a heinous act in the future.
Please support SB 173.
Sincerely,
Maria Eymann

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Minch/Borthwick <rammpb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 1:06 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.org; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Senator.forrest.dunbar@akleg.org
Subject: SB 173

Senators, I am writing this letter in opposition to SB 173. I am a retired middle school teacher, and the thought that someone in the school could be required to carry a gun at school gives me chills. Since it is a public school it would be publicly known that someone in the school had a gun on their person. Middle school kids would want to know who it is, and eventually it would be known who it is. The person carrying the gun would be constantly asked if they have it "right now", what kind is it, could they see it, and more.

A few other students would worry about getting in the way when there is a problem, or if the person carrying the gun would use it to punish them when they broke a rule of some kind.

One assumes that the person already has a job to do, and this probably constant curiosity about it would make carrying out that job more difficult.

Please do not pass this bill.

Mary Borthwick

Konrad Jackson

From: Mary Schallert <m.schallert64@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 5:13 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: SB 173

I wonder with this bill, have you asked any teacher what they think of it? As a teacher myself, I don't think it matters how much practice you have at a gun range. Instead of getting updating credentials, it will not end well. guns need to be locked. spending money on guns and gun training for teachers or volunteers will not do anything for a mass shooter. I have been thinking about this longer well before someone actually decided to create a law about it. I was a teacher for 20 years in a school. So, theoretically I have my gun locked up, a shooter with an automatic gun walks in my classroom, what do I do? Ask him (It's always a him) if he would just wait a moment while I go get my one at a time shooting gun? sorry, but by that time we are all dead. SB 173 is just dumb. Don't pass it.

Please don't pass this insane bill. It is so obviously the NRA looking for a way to make money off taxpayers. Maybe passing HB 164 and SB 229 is something you all should be looking at.

Sincerely,
Mary Schallert
voter in alaska since 1977

Konrad Jackson

From: Maureen Knutsen <maureen.knutsen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:58 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Senate Bill 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

As a retired 31-year public school employee, I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 173. Teachers and other staff have enough duties in their everyday schedules and should not be burdened with additional responsibilities that should be assigned to a specially designated position with the training and expertise with firearms.

Thank you for considering my comment.

Maureen Knutsen
PO Box 134
Naknek, AK 99633
907-246-6675

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Maureen Longworth <maureenlongworthak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 12:33 PM
To: Maureen Longworth
Cc: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Oppose SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I am a retired licensed Alaskan physician, resident voter in Alaska over 30 years.

Physicians support measures that create health and safety and are opposed to adding guns into our schools.

The SB173 proposal does not have a safe national record. Let's focus on strategies that have a safety record like HB 164, the Secure Storage of Firearms Act. Alaska can gain increased school safety with HB 164.

Most law enforcement are strongly opposed to SB 173-they fear that too many lay people with weapons can be overcome in stressful situations. In other states children have ended up holding the guns. Lightly trained armed volunteers bring danger to schools.

Most parents strongly oppose arming teachers. Law enforcement people spend years learning to safely handle life-threatening situations. Police are selected for certain occupational skills, interests, innate abilities. Teachers and other school staff have vastly different innate skills.

Thank you for your wisdom in rejecting SB173. Please consider focusing on HB 164 for statewide school safety.

Maureen Longworth, MD
PO Box 21084
Juneau, AK 99802
907-209-2005
MaureenLongworthAK@gmail.com
Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Melody Hawkins <mel.a.hawkins@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 10:35 AM
To: Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Click Bishop; Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: OPPOSE SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello,

I am a constituent from Anchorage, and I oppose SB 173. I am a mother of a 12 year old, and have lived in Anchorage my whole life. I grew up hunting and fishing - a quintessential Alaskan childhood. I also have grown up with gun safety, and have taught my child how to be safe around firearms.

However, Senate Bill 173 is a dangerous "guns in schools" bill that would require all schools in Alaska to assign certain teachers, staff, or volunteers the duty of carrying a gun at school. It would also make it harder for victims and survivors to get justice if someone gets hurt or killed by these guns being forced into schools.

As we saw with the recent incident at the Chiefs parade, a "good" person with a gun doesn't always stop a "bad" person with a gun. It more often results in more innocent people getting hurt. We CANNOT risk more of our children being in danger.

I urge you all to oppose SB 173, for the safety of our children.

Thank you,
M. Hawkins

Konrad Jackson

From: Mo Sanders <mosanderszz@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 9:06 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Vote no

I was a public school educator for 45 years. I was also an adjunct faculty member of the University of Alaska for over 25 years.

I do believe we should take every measure to keep our students and the children of our country safe but I do not believe that this should ever include arming teachers.

While I am a strong advocate for teachers I can attest to the fact that I have known teachers over the course of 45 years with mental illness-both diagnosed and undiagnosed. I have also known many teachers that may well be able to gain weaponry competency or certification but who would not perform with sound judgment under pressure.

I also believe that a gun offers an open invitation to be used – either by a trained teacher or an unintentional user.

I urge you not to forward any bill that would ever include providing arms to teachers in classrooms.

Mo Sanders
Retired Educator
369 Ridgewood
Soldotna AK

Konrad Jackson

From: odetteedgar@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:14 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Opposition testimony to SB 173 - Safe Schools Act

My name is Odette Edgar. I reside in Juneau and have lived in Alaska for 54 years. I represent myself. My parents were teachers. I'm currently a volunteer in my local elementary schools, teaching dance.

I am testifying in opposition to SB 173.

Arming teachers, staff, and volunteers and expecting them to do the work of trained SWAT teams and military commandos won't work. The reasons are simple: people selected to do SWAT work are intensively trained in tactics and marksmanship. They are also heavily conditioned to overcome the body's natural defenses when confronting extreme danger. SWAT teams also depend on key leaders who can think strategically and coordinate efforts.

The armed people placed in Alaskan schools are unlikely to have this kind of training or strategic support, and they will also have to overcome their bodies' own reactions when facing death: extreme adrenalin rushes that cause tunnel vision, impaired hearing and speech, shaky arms and hands, and even physical paralysis.

I recommend an article in the March 24 edition of the Atlantic Monthly, "To Stop a Shooter; Why would an armed officer stand by as a school shooting unfolds?" I'd be happy to provide committee members with a copy.

I heartily agree with the sponsor's statement "If we want to prevent the deaths of school children in Alaska, we need to act." However, let's use methods proven to protect children in the place where they are most at risk...in the home. I encourage you to support secure gun storage laws (HB 164) and extreme risk/"red flag" laws (SB 229). These bills address the most common sources of child gun deaths in Alaska.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Konrad Jackson

From: Patty Bouton <blaze99712@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:23 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173

Senate Labor & Commerce Committee:

Support: SB 173 “An Act requiring school districts to grant qualified

persons an assigned duty to carry a concealed
handgun on school grounds...”

I support SB 173, for these reasons:

Qualified teachers and staff must be allowed to protect themselves, and our children, during school hours;

Criminal shooters know schools are vulnerable, because schools are designated as “a gun free zone”;

Schools have a duty, and responsibly, to protect our students and teachers;

In my opinion, every consenting adult in a school setting, or school sponsored activity, should be armed.

My daughter is a school teacher, and my grandchildren attend school in Anchorage. I fear for their safety while attending a government school, in not being able to protect themselves, because of bureaucratic red tape, and left-leaning policies.

The Second Amendment (Amendment II) to the United States Constitution protects the right to keep and bear arms. It does not say once in a while, or only in specific locations.

We have a right, duty and responsibly, to protect our families.

Patricia Bouton, testifying for myself.

D-7, Kenai, Alaska

February 29, 2024

Konrad Jackson

From: Paula L Davis <banksdavis@ak.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:51 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: *****SPAM***** Senate bill 173: guns at school

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Senators,

Thank you for working hard in Juneau.

I am ADAMANTLY OPPOSED to anyone carrying guns in schools!

I'm incredibly disappointed to hear that this is proposed at a time when education funding is inadequate and teachers are leaving Alaska for states where pensions are offered. Who would want to teach under this additional circumstance?

I have worked as a teacher for over 25 years, 16 in the Anchorage School District where I still volunteer. My former school, Denali Montessori Elementary, had a shooting incident between parents that traumatized the teachers, students, staff and families. It was the Administrative Assistant's quick action to go into lockdown that prevented the armed parent from getting into the school to do more damage.

An additional gun-carrying person inside the school would have had the potential for a shoot-out where children could have been hurt or killed.

As a kindergarten teacher, I welcomed and helped children adjust to a school setting, But in the first week of school, I was required to teach 5 year olds how to hide from a potential shooter in the hall or outside the windows. This necessary training was traumatizing to the students and gave me great sorrow to inflict. The possibility of a person walking through the school with a gun or kids not knowing who was carrying a gun would add to their stress. Those that had experienced gun incidents outside of school would be re-traumatized. Traumatized kids are impacted academically and struggle to learn while processing their fears and experiences.

As teachers, we work hard to teach children peaceful resolutions to difficult situations. This bill would give the opposite message: just carry a gun and shoot the other person.

If this bill passed and I was still teaching I would resign. It is hard enough to have decreasing funding, increased class sizes and no pension or Social Security benefits, not to mention the great number of students whose families are struggling to find money for rent and food even if they are working.

I'm speaking not just as a teacher but as the aunt of promising 16 yr old who was killed by a gun.

Please don't pursue this! Focus instead on adequately funding schools, preschools and Head Start throughout the state, not private schools. The future of Alaska depends on these citizens and future voters.

Thanks,

Paula Davis
banksdavis@ak.net

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Paula L Davis <banksdavis@ak.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:51 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: *****SPAM***** Senate bill 173: guns at school

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Please don't pursue this! Focus instead on adequately funding schools, preschools and Head Start throughout the state, not private schools. The future of Alaska depends on these citizens and future voters.

Thanks,

Paula Davis
banksdavis@ak.net

Konrad Jackson

From: Peggy Eymann <lilacstolupins@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 10, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support SB 173

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

**Thank you,
Peggy Eymann
7454 E Flint Dr
Wasilla AK 99654**

Konrad Jackson

From: Penny Goodstein <penny4books@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 2:08 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Fw: Guns in schools is a TERRIBLE idea

I hit "send" too soon!

I have written before. Requiring guns as protection for students and faculty is a TERRIBLE IDEA.

More guns will not make anyone safer.

In Uvalde over 70 trained, armed, protected law enforcement officers stood around while a young man murdered children and staff with an AR15. There were plenty of guns- but it did not help.

Education staff are NOT trained as law enforcement, and even a brief training is not going to provide the amount of training and practice response to a shooter would require.

The answer is BAN ASSAULT RIFLES, and ensure that anyone under 21 who has a weapon, even for hunting, has training and a permit.

Penny Goodstein

-

Konrad Jackson

From: Rochelle Parker <rochelle.m.parker@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 10:10 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Vote NO on SB 173 in Committee Hearing

To the Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee:

As a constituent from Anchorage and a parent of elementary school-aged children, I strongly oppose Senate Bill 173 and urge you to stop this bill from advancing. Guns don't belong in our schools. Like all of us, I have been horrified by the school shootings that have become too common in our country, and I am astounded that lawmakers have not acted to make schools safer by enacting common sense gun reforms.

During the last hearing, I was very discouraged to hear the bill sponsor present a very one-sided view of school shootings, describing them as if they are an unfortunate reality we must accept and absurdly suggesting that adding more guns to the equation is the solution. While we should take serious measures to fortify schools and prepare teachers, staff, and students for emergencies, arming teachers is not the answer to keeping children safe in schools.

If guns are introduced to classrooms, then students could potentially access them, harming themselves or others. Even if they are properly trained, how can we ask teachers to take on the role of law enforcement in a chaotic active shooter situation, especially if the shooter is a student or former student? More students could be hurt in the crossfire. We ask so much of our teachers, and I know they would do anything to protect their students, but more guns will not make schools more safe.

We should instead put our focus on measures that do work to prevent gun violence and gun suicide, like supporting HB 164 to promote secure firearm storage and SB 229/HB 162 to use due process to temporarily remove firearms from those who are an extreme risk to themselves or others. Secure gun storage matters, since the majority of school shooters acquired their firearm from the home of a parent or close relative.

Please vote against this bill.

Thank you,
Rochelle Parker
5536 Big Bend Loop
Anchorage AK 99502

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Sally Rue <sarjesrue@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 12:52 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Click Bishop; Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Please oppose SB 173!

Please see this corrected testimony:

Dear Senator Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

I regret that I am unable to testify in person today in opposition to SB 173, "An act requiring school districts to grant qualified persons an assignment to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds..."

I can't imagine a better way to make schools less safe, and using a "short title" of the "Safe Schools Act" counters common sense and a substantial body of evidence.

I am a parent, grandparent, and have been active in education in Alaska as a classroom volunteer, as an elected school board member, as a member of the State Board of Education, and for over 10 years in working with schools and communities to create safe and welcoming schools where students feel safe, connected, have trusting relationships with adults, and where families and community members are engaged in their success.

Requiring schools to grant school staff or volunteers (!!) an assigned duty to carry guns is not only misguided, but carries huge risks, and has many fundamental flaws:

1. It flies in the face of local control to require school districts to arm school staff or volunteers (who may be entirely unsuited to a school environment).
2. It is not an effective way to increase school safety.
3. It puts students and staff in danger when there are guns in schools.
4. It puts the armed staff or volunteers in danger of being mistaken for a shooter by responding law enforcement.
5. It puts a burden on school boards and districts to spend time, attention and funding on writing policies, monitoring training and continuing education, paying for training and time, and diverts them from their primary mission of educating students and creating safe, caring schools where students feel connected to adults.

In closing, I cannot help but noting that the U.S. will mark a devastating milestone next week: by early February, more people are killed by guns in the U.S. than during an entire year in any other high-income country.

Arming school staff and volunteers in schools is NOT the answer. Please oppose SB 173.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Rue
Juneau

Konrad Jackson

From: Sammy Crawford <scrawfordak68@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:29 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: Sb 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Senator Bjorkman & committee,
I strongly oppose SB 173. I was a teacher for 30 years & risks to students are unexpectedly high. The more guns in schools the more possibilities are of accidents happening. Because elementary schools are our biggest population I think the risks to children & their teachers are unacceptable. I can't imagine a teacher having a loaded gun & keeping it locked up and trying to unlock it in the event of an emergency.
Sammy Crawford
scrawfordak68@gmail.com
Sent from my iPhone

From: sarahdunn@reagan.com
Sent: Monday, February 05, 2024 1:01 PM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes; Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173 SUPPORT The Safe Schools Act

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

Please PASS this Bill to protect Alaska's children.

Sarah Dunn, Wasilla, AK

SB 173 Information

Sponsor: Senator Shelley Hughes Staff: Stephen Knouse

Purpose To save lives during an active shooter incident on school grounds by providing an immediate response by an on-site, highly trained, stable, responsible individual as an augmentation to local law enforcement.

In Alaska, we have under 1300 law-enforcement officers and 40% of our state have no police presence. **In Alaska, we have unique factors that significantly impacts emergency response time, lack of road infrastructure, delays of travel due to weather, high number of rural areas and limited police presence. All factors impede law enforcement response to an active shooter in schools that are located in rural areas.** An active shooter event statistically by FBI, in 2022, shows an event is over within 2 to 5 minutes. This situation deeply concerns us as it leaves our children vulnerable.

We propose an Act requiring school districts to grant qualified persons an assigned duty to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds under certain conditions. This Act would not only provide immediate protection but also ensure that these individuals are well-trained and knowledgeable about firearm safety.

The proposed act covers standards, training, and continuing education in firearms training for those granted this duty. It ensures that only qualified individuals who have undergone rigorous training can carry concealed handguns on school premises.

Furthermore, this act **emphasizes communication between school districts with state and local law enforcement agencies. It mandates the development of comprehensive crisis response plans tailored for each school district's unique needs.**

According to a 2018 study by Northeastern University, shooting incidents involving students have been significantly increasing since 1999 [source: Northeastern University]. In rural areas like ours where police response time may be delayed due to distance or weather conditions, having trained personnel onsite could potentially save lives during emergencies.

Let's work together towards creating safer learning environments for our children while ensuring responsible gun handling practices are observed at all times. Please sign this petition if you believe that implementing such an act is crucial for the safety of our students across Alaska.

Please PASS this Bill to protect Alaska's children.

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Scott Coon <oscottcoon@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 1:49 PM
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Opposition to SB 173

All,

Please, exercise common sense. Please do not give in to those that believe that guns should be nearly everywhere in our society.

We do not need guns in our schools. They are a recipe for disaster.

If you want to work on gun issues, work to eliminate assault style weapons, require background checks, etc.

If you want to protect our children, work to keep guns out of our schools, off our streets and out of the hands of those that would do our children harm.

I strongly oppose SB 173.

Please, show real support for our children and the generations that follow by acting now to keep guns out of our schools.

Thank you for serving.

Cheers,
Scott Coon

Raymond Matiasowski

From: Sue Libenson <suelibenson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:11 PM
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: SB173 - Guns in Schools

Members - I am writing in opposition to SB 173 which would allow concealed weapons in schools by teachers and others.

Please do your jobs - fund the teachers, don't arm them.

Take measures to keep guns out of the schools in the first place. Enable safe storage of guns in homes and red flag laws to temporarily remove guns from unstable individuals to keep guns out of the wrong hands and out of our schools.

Thanks for your consideration.

--

Sue Libenson
suelibenson@gmail.com
907-303-0022

Raymond Matiasowski

From: sue sheard <sheard.sue@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 12:46 PM
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Oppose SB 173 Testimony

I opposed SB 173 and arming teachers, staff, or volunteers. More guns in schools are NOT the answer to less shootings in schools.

Instead, start focusing and passing reasonable gun safety laws. A large majority of americans prefer this avenue. The U.S. has by far the most school shootings. Let's look at what other countries are doing.

Our country needs good teachers. Choosing to arm them with weapons will only make teachers seek other employment careers. I know many great teachers educating our children and they don't want to risk their lives every day by having even more guns in schools.

Also, arming teacher will discourage prospective college students from choosing the path of an educator. We are doing future generations a dis-service by refusing to pass reasonable gun safety laws.

We are a smart and innovative country. Let's get this right. OPPOSE SB 173 and instead choose to make schools a healthy and safe place where kids can learn without the threat of being murdered. All other countries are doing a better job at it than the U.S..

Sue Sheard
Anchorage, Alaska

Konrad Jackson

From: Sylvia Stewart <gstew@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 8:46 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Greetings from Wasilla,

With all the crazy stuff going on in society, I totally support getting an educated armed individual or two in schools to protect students and teachers from anyone who might want to do harm to our precious next generation or their teachers.

Thank you so much for sponsoring this bill, Sylvia Stewart Wasilla, AK
907-355-4053

Konrad Jackson

From: Tanya <tanya_aho@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 02, 2024 11:50 PM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes; Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Subject: Support SB 173

I support SB 173. We want our kids safe in school against active shooters.

-Tanya Aho

Konrad Jackson

From: Tom Boutin <b0utin@alaska.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 10, 2024 4:36 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173

Good afternoon members of the Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

Please enter this emailed testimony into the committee record for Senate Bill 173. I very much support this bill being enacted this session and signed into law. I believe the legislation is well constructed, timely and needed. I look forward to being able to provide oral testimony in a committee hearing very soon.

Right now Alaska schools are gun-free zones. Across the nation, and more and more throughout the entire world, gun-free zones invite violence time after time. I am not entirely sure why that is the case, but I believe that SB 173 is a quick and effective response to that phenomenon.

The high school in FL, the grade school in TX, the grade school in CT, and the homosexual nightclub in FL are all well-known examples of inadequately protected victims being murdered even as law-enforcement people were somehow unable to mount a timely and adequate response. SB 173 is a reasonable remedy to that recurring problem.

Alaska is likely headed to some eventual and possibly severe economic dislocation. For the past few decades we have seen persistent declines in productive industries and output, and we now have large numbers of unfilled jobs in the service sector, including government, while burgeoning applications for food stamps outpaced government's ability to meet the demand throughout 2023. Bringing balance back to our state economy even as working-age people pick up and leave must happen but no one seems to know what character that rebalancing will take nor when it will begin. I am unqualified and unable to guess how wide any unlawful and dreadfully inappropriate responses in that period of adjustment might be; we can only hope those responses will be rare and small, but hope is a very weak response – particularly compared with the very thoughtful and comprehensive response inherent in SB 173. Seemingly we are seeing too many Alaskans choose opioid abuse and food stamps over employment and productivity; not a positive sign in any society.

For some Alaskans the tension might become too great, and if so there may even be an individual response in some town or village that includes unspeakable murder and mayhem of the sort seen in schools in just about every state during the past few decades. If something of that nature occurs in Alaska we would be very fortunate if SB 173 had become law so that our schools could have taken advantage of it to ready themselves.

I am grateful that the sponsors of SB 173 have anticipated the social problems of the future and also recognized the social problems we have in Alaska right now. Again, schools are gun-free zones and therefore are vulnerable. Thank you for your efforts to give this legislation needed attention.

Thank you for your time and thank you for all the hard work you do for Alaskans every day.

Tom Boutin
Juneau
(907) 988-3006

Raymond Matiashowski

From: Victoria OConnell Curran <victoria.oconnell@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2024 8:34 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Oppose SB173

Hello

I am a 40 year resident of Alaska, my two daughters were born and raised here and live here and my two granddaughters as well. Guns have no place in K-12 schools! None. I strongly oppose this bill as it will put guns in school under this misguided idea that this will keep students safer. It will not. Although currently teachers and staff may have guns in school with the permission of the superintendent NO permissions have been granted. This bill forces schools to identify teachers or staff that can carry guns. I worry daily about the risk of shooting in an Alaskan school - allowing guns in schools under this bill greatly increases the chances someone will be shot or killed in school. The statistics on this are convincing. Reject this dangerous bill and instead pass HB 164, the Alaska Child Access Prevention and Secure Storage of Firearms Act, which will actually help keep guns *out* of schools and prevent school shootings.

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Tory O'Connell Curran
Grateful to live on *Língít Aaní*