

Mina Ryan

From: Westley Cheryl R [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 3:51 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs
Subject: HB61

To: House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

I am opposed to HB61 - Limitations on Firearms Restrictions.

I do not understand WHY the legislature is taking time to deal with this issue, as there already is a law that applies to this situation. Having lived through the 2018 earthquake, I remember the high emotions that surrounded our neighborhood. There could have been very bad consequences if someone who was armed decided who could do what during that unstable time and tried to enforce it themselves. People need to listen and follow public health and safety actions made by public safety authorities and not be afraid of others who might be armed. I see this law as making us less safe overall. Please vote NO on HB61!

From Cheryl Westley

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK 99504

House District 21

Mina Ryan

From: Rochelle Parker [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 6:35 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Donna Mears
Subject: Opposition to House Bill 61 (Limitations on Firearms Restrictions)

Good evening Members of the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee,

My name is Rochelle Parker and I am a constituent of Rep. Tom McKay. I strongly oppose House Bill 61 (Limitations on Firearms Restrictions). This bill seems to be a response to people who were upset that gun stores and shooting ranges were not considered "essential" and were therefore temporarily closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. While in hindsight states and municipalities might have made different choices about certain closures early on in the pandemic, at that moment we were dealing with an unknown, untested disease and it made sense to stay put as much as we could.

This bill would prohibit the Governor, a state agency, or a municipality from taking actions during a declared disaster emergency that would restrict the possession, use or sale of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition or other weapon – including not allowing the temporary closure of gun stores or gun ranges during a declared disaster. To me, it does not make any sense to restrict a government's ability to make decisions in the interest of public safety in a disaster situation when there are so many unknowns to consider. If a significant earthquake were to happen, for example, and people were being housed in mass shelters that were run by the military, the Red Cross, or the government, it would not make any sense to prohibit state or municipal leadership from regulating firearms within those shelters. In disaster situations, people can behave irrationally, and certain measures might be necessary to prevent theft or violence. Leaders should be able to make well-informed decisions in the interest of public safety.

In addition, this bill is an unnecessary broadening of Alaska's preemption law that already prevents local authorities from overriding state policy on firearms.

As a mother of young children, I wish the State Legislature would quit wasting time on this bill and focus instead on more pressing issues, like how to better fund our public schools and prevent gun violence and gun suicide in our communities.

Thank you for your time.

Rochelle Parker
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99502

Mina Ryan

From: Patricia Owen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 7:46 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs
Cc: Rep. CJ McCormick
Subject: Oppose HB 61

Chair McCormick and Members of the Committee

I am a lifelong Alaskan and mother and grandmother and writing in strong opposition of HB 61.

I do not believe protecting gun interests by limiting state and local governments' authority to maintain law and order and safety during an emergency will protect the public's safety nor provide the services needed during an emergency.

I would rather our legislators do more to save lives and protect the health and safety of Alaskans by supporting common sense gun safety laws and other health and safety services.

Sincerely,

Patty Owen
Juneau, AK

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Mina Ryan

From: Debbie Lowenthal [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 9:28 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs
Cc: Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Donna Mears
Subject: Oppose HB61

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Debbie Lowenthal and I live in Juneau with my husband and we raised our kids here who are now in college. We are a hunting family. We have firearms and keep them safely secured in a locked gun cabinet.

I oppose HB61, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions.

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

We give leaders special powers in disaster situations because they must be able to take important steps to protect public health and safety quickly. This bill seems to prevent law enforcement from taking these common sense steps to provide for public safety. It makes no sense and is unnecessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Debbie Lowenthal

Mina Ryan

From: Jody Oyen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 10:01 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs
Subject: Vote NO on HB 61: Message for gun safety from Jody Oyen in 99502

Dear House Community and Regional Affairs Committee ,

I'm urging you to vote NO on HB 61. This bill would disallow the governor, a state agency, or a municipality from taking any action during a declared disaster emergency that would restrict the possession, use or sale of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition or other weapon.

Our state is no stranger to natural disasters—typhoons, floods, earthquakes—and these are times when life and business do not proceed as usual. It's dangerous to tie the hands of elected leaders and threaten them with costly litigation during the times we most need them to take decisive action to protect public health and safety.

For example, it could be important for law enforcement to safeguard unsecured firearms in damaged areas to prevent them from being stolen, or to not allow personally-owned firearms to be brought into shelters managed by the military, a government agency or the Red Cross.

Even more egregious, the bill allows any person or special interest group to sue Alaska's government agencies if they feel they are adversely affected by such an action during a disaster emergency and win triple punitive damages.

Limiting these powers during a disaster is a threat to public safety. Please vote NO on HB 61.

Sincerely,

JODY OYEN
ANCHORAGE, AK 99502

Mina Ryan

From: maria crawford [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 10:01 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs
Cc: Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Donna Mears
Subject: Opposition to HB 61

Hello Members of the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee,

My name is Maria Crawford and my husband and I live in Representative Fields district. We strongly oppose HB 61, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions.

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

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

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

Being flexible, preparing as much as possible, and working together are skills that we all develop as Alaskans to meet the challenges that we face living in the most beautiful state. During a state of emergency, the focus should be on actions that protect public safety, not limiting state and local government's power to maintain order and safety.

I urge you to please oppose HB 61.

Thank you,

Maria Crawford
(she & her)



Mina Ryan

From: Lei B [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2023 7:59 AM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Donna Mears
Subject: OPPOSE HB 61

I oppose HB61 because local authorities are already not allowed to override state policy in firearms.
Also - I don't understand how taking away authority from local enforcement to restrict temporarily firearm possession.
Thank you,
Lejla Berberovic
[REDACTED]
Anchorage ak 99515

Mina Ryan

From: Rep. CJ McCormick
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2023 11:20 AM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs
Subject: FW: Vote NO on HB 61: Message for gun safety from Jody Oyen in 99502

Mina Ryan, Legislative Aide

Rep. CJ McCormick – District 38
Room 416
Capitol: 907-465-5141

From: Jody Oyen <bounce@list.everytown.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 10:01 PM
To: Rep. CJ McCormick <Rep.CJ.McCormick@akleg.gov>
Subject: Vote NO on HB 61: Message for gun safety from Jody Oyen in 99502

Dear Representative CJ McCormick,

I'm urging you to vote NO on HB 61. This bill would disallow the governor, a state agency, or a municipality from taking any action during a declared disaster emergency that would restrict the possession, use or sale of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition or other weapon.

Our state is no stranger to natural disasters—typhoons, floods, earthquakes—and these are times when life and business do not proceed as usual. It's dangerous to tie the hands of elected leaders and threaten them with costly litigation during the times we most need them to take decisive action to protect public health and safety.

For example, it could be important for law enforcement to safeguard unsecured firearms in damaged areas to prevent them from being stolen, or to not allow personally-owned firearms to be brought into shelters managed by the military, a government agency or the Red Cross.

Even more egregious, the bill allows any person or special interest group to sue Alaska's government agencies if they feel they are adversely affected by such an action during a disaster emergency and win triple punitive damages.

Limiting these powers during a disaster is a threat to public safety. Please vote NO on HB 61.

Sincerely,

JODY OYEN
ANCHORAGE, AK 99502

Mina Ryan

From: Janice Caulfield [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2023 1:07 PM
To: House Community and Regional Affairs; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Donna Mears
Subject: OPPOSE HB 61, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions

To: House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

I am 44 year resident of Juneau AK, my family owns a gun used for hunting, and I oppose HB 61. After listening to the HCRA Committee meeting on March 16, I am submitting more focused comments regarding the bill.

I understand the proponents' interest in equity in commerce. If HB 61 was amended to address just this interest — that gun/ammo stores and gun ranges would remain open under a disaster declaration if other commercial businesses were allowed to remain open — then I would not oppose that version of the bill.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I encourage you to fully understand ALL sections of this bill. Purportedly, the main interest is to keep gun stores open in a disaster. But, this bill goes far beyond ensuring "equity in commerce". I urge you to address that interest only, and delete the bill sections that limit the authority of state and municipal responders in times of emergency and that invoke enforcement by civil suit.

Thank you for your attention to my comments,

Jan Caulfield
Juneau, AK