

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

HB 75 – Extreme Risk Protection Order - Sponsor Statement - 2.19.18

House Bill 75 creates an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) – a tool to empower families and law enforcement to remove guns from individuals experiencing an elevated risk of endangering themselves or others. With high suicide rates and high rates of domestic violence and sexual assault, Alaska needs this kind of common-sense measure that is temporary in nature and limited in scope to help people suffering from a mental health crisis.

The bloody Valentine's Day shooting in Parkland Florida was the 18th school shooting of 2018. The violence erupted at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, when a 19-year-old gunman returned to the high school where he had once been expelled for disciplinary problems. He wore a gas mask as he stalked into the school carrying a rifle, ammunition cartridges and smoke grenades, then pulled a fire alarm, prompting students and staff to pour from their classrooms into hallways. He killed 17 people and injured more than a dozen others. Lives lost include:

Alyssa Alhadeff, 14
Scott Beigel, 35
Martin Duque Anguiano, 14
Nicholas Dworet, 17
Aaron Feis, 37
Jaime Guttenberg, 14
Chris Hixon, 49
Luke Hoyer, 15
Cara Loughran, 14

Gina Montalto, 14
Joaquin Oliver, 17
Alaina Petty, 14
Meadow Pollack, 18
Helena Ramsay, 17
Alex Schachter, 14
Carmen Schentrup, 16
Peter Wang, 15

Closer to home, Esteban Santiago, 26, an Iraq war veteran who lived in Anchorage, is accused of killing five people and injuring six others in a mass shooting at a Florida airport on January 6, 2017. He recognized his own illness, went to the FBI in Anchorage to ask for help, received treatment and was hospitalized, but he was never adjudicated mentally ill. If he had, under federal law, he would not have been allowed to have a firearm. Instead, Alaska police eventually returned his gun because they had no legal authority to withhold it.

This legislation doesn't infringe on the Second Amendment. The individual can retrieve his/her firearms when the high-risk behavior is no longer a threat. California, Indiana, Connecticut, Oregon, and Washington have established these orders, and 18 other states are considering similar measures. It's time to pass common-sense public safety legislation in Alaska.