

Konrad Jackson

From: Cohen Kathryn <phoenix@alaskan.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:43 AM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Cc: Sen. Click Bishop; Senator.Elvi.Grav-Jackson@akleg.gov; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

Please **OPPOSE** this bill. It will make schools more dangerous not less. More guns at schools is not a solution to violence. Supporting red flag laws, secure gun storage laws would go much further. This is a step in the wrong direction. My grandchildren attend these schools and they will be more at risk if their teachers are armed. It terrifies me to think of armed instructors around my grandkids. Perhaps in some instances school may need to hire security guards but in any case, these should be the decision of the schools themselves and their administrators. The state has no business requiring teachers to carry guns. Please do not pass this bill.

Thank you for your attention.

Kathryn Cohen
52 year resident of Alaska.

Konrad Jackson

From: Kimberly Triplett <kimberlytriplett@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 7:19 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I vehemently oppose SB 173 as a registered Alaskan voter of 23 years, a mother, and a current public-school teacher in the state of Alaska, certificated for a total of 27 years.

Thank you for serving as a voice for your constituents.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Spillane

907-942-3694

Konrad Jackson

From: Luann McVey <luannmcvey@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 10:07 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

Chair Bjorkman, Vice-Chair Bishop, and members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

I'm a retired Alaskan teacher and I am strongly opposed to SB 173. I spent three years teaching science to seventh graders; seven years teaching all subjects to students in grades 1, 4, and 5; and twenty years supporting students in grades K - 5 who needed an extra boost in reading. Throughout my career, I enjoyed my relationships with students, fellow teachers, support staff, and administrators, all of whom enriched my life.

I participated in active shooter drills twice, in my first grade and fifth grade classrooms. These were extremely stressful and disturbing events for the children and for me. However, at no time did it occur to me that an adult or child in my school might be carrying a gun and I find it appalling that leaders of our state are proposing to bring this practice into statute.

The idea of arming teachers, whose primary responsibility is for the safety, well-being, and learning of their students, is alarming. Children are curious by nature and they explore their environments as they learn. If a teacher has a firearm in his or her classroom, s/he will not be able to conceal it from students, no matter how carefully s/he tries. Guns do not belong in the classroom - they can too easily fall into the wrong hands, resulting in unintentional injury or death.

Studies of gun violence in schools indicate that between 58% and 91% of school shooters were connected with the schools in which they committed their acts of violence. A teacher's possession of a firearm increases the possibility of student access, which can lead to harm.

Thomas Manger, President and Executive Director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, which represents 75 police forces from large cities in the USA and Canada, stated, "the more guns,... the more volatility and the more risk there is of somebody getting hurt." He and the Executive Director of the Major Cities Chief Association agree that arming teachers is "*not a good idea.*"

Rather than arming teachers, I urge you to invest your energies into implementing bills to improve school safety and reduce gun violence, such as a secure storage bill and an extreme risk protective order.

Schools in my experience have been places of harmony and cooperation where teachers model and expect appropriate behavior. It is unacceptable for teachers, no matter how well trained in marksmanship they may be, to risk the lives and well-being of themselves and others in their environment, at the behest of legislators. I urge you to prevent SB 173 from moving out of your committee.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Luann McVey
Retired Alaskan Teacher
Douglas, Alaska. 99824
(907) 957-2124

Konrad Jackson

From: maria crawford <mariacraw4d@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:20 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Please Reject SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Greetings to the members of the Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

My husband and I live in Anchorage, in the wonderful neighborhood of Fairview, which makes us constituents of Senator Tobin.

We strongly urge you to oppose SB 173, the "Safe Schools Act." The concept of requiring or even allowing the introduction of more guns in schools is the furthest thing from increasing the safety and security for students and staff.

Having graduated from the Anchorage School District ourselves, working or volunteering in schools over the years, as well as being the daughter and son-in-law of a veteran teacher, we know that it can be a busy, energetic, rewarding, and even sometimes charged environment. My mother loved what she did for 47 years, and I know she experienced way more good days than bad. Everyday she would give her all to her students, but some of those days were really, really difficult. Putting out fire after fire, breaking up fights, assisting kids in crisis, and still needing to smile and welcome students to class after break is a lot to ask. Teachers and support staff work so hard to create an environment for learning and exploration, why would we want to add another complication to their lives by exposing the school community to another element of risk?

And adding guns to the school equation is a huge risk, despite any amount of training selected staff may receive. The fact is that the mere presence of a gun increases the risk of conflict, suicide with a gun, or even unintentional shootings. There have been documented instances where guns carried into schools were misplaced or students gained access due to being "left behind," or falling out of a pocket.

We can all agree that school safety is really important and we want to do all we can to protect children and their teachers. But there are better ways to do that than SB 173, which would just put them at greater risk. We urge you to support school safety protocols that are proven to keep kids safe like HB 164, the Alaska Child Access Prevention and Secure Storage of Firearms Act. This legislation would actually help prevent school shootings.

Thank you for your consideration,

Maria Crawford
(she & her)
907.250.6224

Konrad Jackson

From: Marian Clough <mcloughak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:52 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Fwd: Oppose SB 173

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Marian Clough <mcloughak@gmail.com>
Date: January 24, 2024 at 8:59:31 AM AKST
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go, Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov,
Senator.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov, Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov,
Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov, Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov
Subject: Oppose SB 173

Written Testimony for Wednesday, January 24, 2024 Alaska State Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Dear Chair Bjorkman and Honorable Members of the Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee:

I am Marian Clough of Auke Bay, Alaska and have resided in Alaska for the last 41 years. I'm a mom and grandma (with children and grandchildren in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau). I am asking you not to support passage of SB 173.

This needless bill "requires" a school district to hire someone to be armed in a school. This is a bad idea. Arming teachers or a hired volunteer will not make our schools safer. Is there any evidence that a hired armed person has made a difference in a school shooting?

There are other more effective ways to approach this, evidence-based interventions such as HB 164, secure storage of firearms and HB 162 extreme risk laws which I urge you to support.

Again, please do not pass HB 173 out of committee.

Thank you for taking the time to take my testimony and thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

Marian Clough

Konrad Jackson

From: Maureen Hall <maureenhall976@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 10:04 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to SB 173 - school nurse

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Maureen Hall** <maureenhall976@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jan 24, 2024 at 9:24 AM
Subject: Opposition to SB 173 - school nurse
To: <Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov>

Honorable Senators of the Labor and Commerce Committee,

I'm writing to voice my strong opposition to this misguided bill (SB 173). As a retired school nurse, I can't imagine a more wrong headed approach to the problem of gun violence in our communities and schools.

The example in Uvalde, Texas alone should inform you that even trained law enforcement officers have a difficult time reacting in these extreme situations. The notion that a classroom teacher, school janitor or a wanna be police officer volunteer is going to react calmly and take out the shooter is beyond absurd. 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.

Furthermore, this bill places no limits on how many of these "peace officers" can carry a gun so potentially, you could have several armed individuals which will only increase the likelihood that a child is going to gain access to a firearm while in school. This bill increases the danger to children, just the opposite of what you want to accomplish. The notion that having a "biometric safe" to store the firearm in is equally absurd if your aim is to have someone armed and ready to respond in a flash, but wait they first have to run to the safe and get the gun.

The funding of this bill could also be extreme. Are you going to fly these "qualified persons" to a training center from every corner of our state? What if they want the state to supply their handgun which is not an unreasonable request given they are taking on this additional duty. Will they be legally protected if they accidentally shoot a bystander? Will a bystander that has been shot by staff or a volunteer acting in this capacity be able to seek justice? Will the district's insurance policy cover these situations?

If the sponsors of this bill truly care about reducing firearm related injuries and death, they should instead consider sponsoring secure storage and extreme risk laws. They should also fund schools appropriately so staff are available to respond to students who are experiencing mental health challenges (counselors and nurses).

Sincerely,

Maureen Hall

1081 Arctic Circle
Juneau, Alaska 99801
maureenhall976@gmail.com

Konrad Jackson

From: MICHAEL COONS <mcoons@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 7:58 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Shelley Hughes
Subject: Support SB 173

My name is Mike Coons from Palmer and speaking for myself. I fully support SB 173.

Over the years for many reasons that I don't have the time to get into, our schools are increasingly unsafe from students bringing illegal weapons into our schools, be that brass knuckles, knives and firearms and then using those weapons to harm the staff and students. Let me be clear, this is not a gun issue, period! This is not even a mental health issue that is being used as an excuse. This is about individuals that for whatever reason are bent on doing harm! No amount of laws, State and Federal have stopped this, mainly because a total lack of desire to enforce those laws! Instead, the knee jerk answer is calling for more gun control, blaming it all on mental health and "easy access" to guns.

We now have the ability of School Superintendents and School Boards to encourage, allow and means to have responsible teachers, staff and community volunteers (retired Police Officer and Military Veterans) to be armed, trained and able to stop any and all attacks within seconds of an attack! Yet that has not happened, thus the need for SB 173! The excuses are wide and varied one that stands out to me is insurance costs. Utah is a prime example of debunking that "concern"! The other is, opponents with the belief that only the police have the needed training. Yet nationally, in the average police shooting, the police have wrongful shoots 12% of the time, while the citizen has held at 2-5%. This data is from decades of FBI and DOJ reporting. People I know that carry, have gone through a lot of training, far surpassing the original CCW training required to get a permit when that was required. That training was more legal, the additional training we do is tactical and situational, to ensure the shooter is stopped in the most effective manner possible with the least amount of injury to others by the shooter. I am an USSCA member and their training is top of the line!

What this bill does, it is letting teacher, staff and community members the ability, to in essence apply for an additional duty of armed security that is a not seen by any potential bad actor. With RSO's the potential bad actor, knows where they are and can time and plan to inflict the maximum damage before the RSO can arrive and even to be able to ambush. Those whom will be armed will have the assurance that if needed they will have immediate ability to act and thus save the lives of the kids they love so much! Also, as this is written, the additional assurance that they will be backed up by the school, school superintendent, School Board and the State of Alaska. This was an issue with the Florida law.

As a long time firearms instructor and one whom has been through a lot of training I would be glad to answer any and all questions you may have today or after this hearing.

Konrad Jackson

From: Odin B <obrudie@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 1:12 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: SB 173

Honorable Senator Bjorkman,

Please do not allow guns in our schools. The only exception should be police, if they are carrying them for a reason.

It is bad precedent to normalize guns in school. It puts students ill at ease. It sends the message to students: It's OK to carry guns in school.

Thank you for voting AGAINST SB 173, a bill requiring that a (designated?) staff member carry a gun in school. The bill takes student safety completely out of the hands of school officials and the local police.

Sincerely,
Odín Brudie
512 6th St.
Juneau, AK 99801

Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Paige McLaughlin <princesspaige60@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 6:51 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: SB 173

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I have lived in Alaska for over 50 years and attended 7th through 12th grades here. I raised my five children in Fairbanks where they attended both neighborhood and charter schools – the eldest enrolling in kindergarten in 1985 and the youngest graduating from high school in 2018. One of my granddaughters will be entering kindergarten here in 2024.

I do not support SB 173 and I urge you to vote against it.

I believe that requiring designated teachers, staff, or volunteers to carry a gun in school will not keep our children safer but will increase the potential for harm. Such a requirement would increase the possibility of unintentional access to a weapon by a child or unauthorized adult. It would make it more difficult for responding law enforcement to distinguish between an attacker and armed school staff. Having armed teachers at school would disproportionately negatively impact children of color and children with disabilities who are the demographics most frequently referred to law enforcement and arrested at school.

We all want our children to feel safe and protected. We want them to trust their teachers and feel supported, so they are ready and open to learning. Arming teachers undermines a positive school environment, weakens children's trust in their teachers, and increases risks to our children's safety. That is not a safe or good climate for learning.

Please reject SB 173 and vote in favor of HB 164, the Alaska Child Access Prevention and Secure Storage of Firearms Act.

Thank you for considering my views,

Paige McLaughlin
916 4th Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 978-1987

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[Peace is healthy for children and other living things.](#)

Konrad Jackson

From: Patricia Turner Custard <ptc@blackplumebooks.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 11:48 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

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I oppose SB 173 because it makes schools and communities less safe, not more.

Respectfully,
Patricia Turner Custard
17670 Point Lena Loop Road
Juneau, AK 99801
997-209-4692

Konrad Jackson

From: Rachel Samuelson <samuelson.rachel@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 10:23 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: Opposing SB 173

Hello Senators,

I am writing in opposition of SB 173. The answer to gun violence is not more guns. I have one child in kindergarten at Kincaid Elementary in Anchorage and another one who will start kindergarten next year. I would be truly terrified for my children to have a teacher, staff member, or volunteer in the school with a gun. To have a lay person, not even a police person, with a gun in a school is unconscionable. This would only lead to the death or maiming of children or staff at the school. There is no research or evidence to show that arming a lay person will deter a school shooting. This is not even to mention the cost of such a program when the school district is already barely able to serve our children as is. Please do not consider this senate bill.

Sincerely,

Rachel Samuelson
7530 Labrador Cir
Anchorage, AK 99502

Konrad Jackson

From: Ross Baldwin <doctorbaldwin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 1:44 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173 opposition

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi I am a general and trauma surgeon from Kenai, Alaska and I now live and work in Anchorage. Please do not advance SB 173. As a trauma surgeon, I see a large number of self-inflicted and accidental gun-related injuries. While there are a lot of emotions around protecting children, the reality of putting guns in schools in the hands of inadequately-trained civilians would likely increase risk of harm to students more than it would help prevent violence. There are some proven ways to decrease gun violence that are not politically convenient and I would encourage this committee to at least consider discussing evidence-based ways to actually protect our children.

Charles Ross Baldwin, MD

Konrad Jackson

From: Sally Rue <sarjesrue@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:56 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Click Bishop
Subject: Re: Please oppose SB 173!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

My apologies, please delete the message I just sent by mistake...I will complete it and resend it.
Thank you,
Sally Rue

On Wed, Jan 24, 2024 at 8:53 AM Sally Rue <sarjesrue@gmail.com> wrote:

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 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. Re

The most effective solutions to

Konrad Jackson

From: mrbojangles@alaskan.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 10:03 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Cc: Patricia Chapman; my inbox isnt
Subject: Vote NO on SB 173

Dear Alaskan Legislators:

Since more guns do not equal more safety, I urge you all to vote NO on SB 173. Requiring schools to assign someone to carry a gun around on school grounds greatly increases the risk of unintentional shootings and is a recipe for disaster. Currently, Alaska law does not prevent superintendents and/or school boards from allowing concealed carry of guns on any K-12 campus, yet none have chosen to do so; they should not be forced to do so now. There are far better ways to improve safety in schools. I am glad to have school safety measures in place to protect our students, but we should be focusing on implementing school safety proposals that are proven to keep kids safe, not those that would put them at greater risk. Most parents, teachers, school staff and law enforcement officials are strongly opposed to arming teachers and school staff.

I urge you all to 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.

Thank you,
Sheri Whitethorn, R.N.
Anchorage

will make it harder for victims and survivors to get justice if someone gets hurt or killed by these guns being forced into schools. The bill also grants widespread immunity to people participating in the program, to schools and school districts, and to the local and state government, for harms resulting from these assigned firearms-carriers using, or failing to use, a firearm at school unless the person harmed can prove a heightened legal standard of "gross negligence."

Alaska law
does not prevent superintendents and school boards from setting policy to allow
concealed carry on campus, none have done so.

requirements for school districts, including that they must pay for trainings of the assigned firearm-carriers.

Guns have no place in K-12 schools. They expose school communities to risks, including increasing the risk of unintentional shootings. No amount of teacher, staff, or volunteer training can make up for the harms caused by introducing more guns in schools.

The desire to do something to protect children is natural. However, Alaska should be focusing on implementing school safety proposals that are proven to keep kids safe, not those that would put them at greater risk. It's no surprise that most parents, teachers, and law enforcement officials are strongly opposed to arming teachers. We urge Alaska legislators to 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.

Konrad Jackson

From: Sue Sherif <sue.sherif@alaska.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 7:44 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 173 - Armed Teachers/School Staff

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Below is my comment on SB 173 to arm a school staff member that I sent to Senator Click Bishop today in advance of your committee's public hearing for SB 173 on Wednesday, January 24, 2024.

Dear Senator Bishop--

As a husband of a teacher, I hope that you see the huge problems with SB 173, which would arm a teacher in schools in the name of protecting students and hold the designated teacher and school district relatively harmless in case of the use of the weapon.

I am trying to imagine the teacher who would agree to serve as an on-site law enforcement officer/protector without the extensive training that an actual law enforcement officer would have. In fact, I would feel a bit concerned about a school staff member who would volunteer for such duty as part of their regular duties as an educator.

Another concern is having an officially sanctioned gun in the school where students, who might be fascinated with a weapon in a teacher's possession, might try to find it and use it for "play" or serious mischief. If the weapon is not on the teacher at all times, will it be stored in a secure location? If so, is it reasonable to think that the weapon would be retrieved in a timely manner if a dangerous person burst into the school? Will the designated school weapon-bearer have a back-up in case that person is ill, attending professional development training, or on playground duty when someone enters the school building?

Further concerning is what sort of weapon will be authorized, and what will be its efficacy if someone trespasses in a school with an assault weapon.

We already have many examples where highly trained police officers have mistaken harmless objects for weapons in the heat of the moment, and they have training to not panic in moments of possible danger. How will a trained educator acquire that sort of training? Even someone with extensive military training may have been trained to act quickly in the face of an enemy, rather than assessing the threat of a community member that they may know or even be related to?

I write as someone who lost a 14 year old family member to a self-inflicted gun wound, when, despite gun safety training mandated by his Marine veteran father, and who, in spite of the safety measures attempted by his father -- locked gun case, separately stored and locked ammo-- was able to find the keys and access the stored weapon in a bout of "middle school show-off" to impress a friend. Rather than impressing the friend, my cousin's son managed in a second to traumatize both his teenage friend and his own family forever. He was not mentally ill, not depressed, not a budding social misfit--

just a goofy kid that played too many video games. My greatest fear is that a sanctioned weapon in the school that is not in the possession of a law enforcement officer might find its way to the hands of another goofy kid or maybe even one with suicidal thoughts.

No matter how many legislated assurances that the authorized teacher and the school district would not be held liable for damage in possible use of the weapon, whatever respect a community may have for its school would be totally destroyed.

The proposed SB 173 is very ill-considered. We should do the most we can to keep schools safe, but I don't think this is part of the solution.

Please vote no to report this bill out of committee on Wednesday.

Thank you,

Sue Sherif

PO Box 82668
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Konrad Jackson

From: Sydney Copley <sdnmcntsh55@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:14 AM
To: Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.go; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Opposing Senate Bill 173

Good Morning, Senate Labor and Commerce Committee Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 173. After considering the talking points shared with me by Moms Demand Action (below), I find myself in wholehearted agreement with their stance.

My journey with Moms Demand Action began in October 2017 when my son was just four months old. The catalyst for my involvement was a deeply personal experience – my father was shot while attending a concert in Las Vegas, NV. Fortunately, he survived, but the profound impact of that harrowing incident lingers within me.

Currently, my son is a first grader at Scenic Park Elementary School in Anchorage, where I take solace in the belief that he is in a safe and protected environment. It is with great concern that I contemplate the potential ramifications of Senate Bill 173 on the safety and well-being of students in his school.

The proposed changes outlined in the bill raise apprehensions about the security measures in place at Scenic Park Elementary School. As a parent deeply invested in my child's education and safety, I fear that these alterations may adversely affect the positive and secure learning environment that currently exists.

I urge you to consider the broader implications of Senate Bill 173 on our schools, particularly on the safety and well-being of the students. My hope is that, through thoughtful consideration, we can collectively work towards maintaining and enhancing the safety standards within our educational institutions.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sydney Copley

Guns have no place in K-12 schools. They expose school communities to risks, including increasing the risk of unintentional shootings. No amount of teacher, staff, or volunteer training can make up for the harms caused by introducing more guns in schools.

- o Put simply, no matter the amount of training, an armed teacher or volunteer cannot, in a moment of extreme duress and confusion, transform into a law

enforcement officer.

- Guns in schools will lead to students accessing teachers' guns. Nationwide there have been several incidents where guns carried into schools were misplaced or where children accessed them — guns left in bathrooms, locker rooms, even an incident where a gun fell out while a teacher did a backflip.
- The desire to do something to protect children is natural. However, Alaska should be focusing on implementing school safety proposals that are proven to keep kids safe, not those that would put them at greater risk. It's no surprise that most parents, teachers, and law enforcement officials are strongly opposed to arming teachers. We urge Alaska legislators to 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.

Konrad Jackson

From: Teri Inch - she, her, hers <inchteri@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 5:21 PM
Subject: SB 173 guns in schools -- NO WAY STOP THIS INSANITY

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Statistics after statistics say that homes that contain a gun are less safe than homes without a gun. If this is true in homes it will be true in schools. My children will be taken out of public school if this is allowed to be passed.

Guns kept in homes are more likely to be involved in a fatal or nonfatal accidental shooting, criminal assault, or suicide attempt than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense.

Yes, on rare occasions, a gun can avert a crime. However, researchers have found repeatedly that a gun in the house makes people more likely to be murdered, not less.

The world outside Alaska sees this as another example of how stupid Alaskans can be.

Please stop the progress of this bill. Do not even let it get to a vote realizing how wrong it is.

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To listen is to lean in, softly, with a willingness to be changed by what we hear. —Mark Nepo
Teri (Baxter Road; Anchorage, AK 99504)

Konrad Jackson

From: Therese Lewandowski <thereselew@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 21, 2024 2:32 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: SB 173

Hello Senators,

I grew up in Detroit (and the Lions just won against Tampa Bay!). In the dead of night we often heard gunshots going off. If more people had guns in the race riot years I guess our population would be much smaller.

I am adamantly against arming school personnel. Where does it end, everyone carries?

[Districtadministration.com](https://districtadministration.com) states that " ..evidence suggests that armed teachers are an unlikely solution to districts' school security woes, where is it technically allowed?" Giffords Law Center has a running list :
https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/guns-in-public/guns-in-schools/#footnote_203_5649

I would rather support **alternatives to arming** such as creating a healthier and safer school environment that requires well-monitored safety measures, adequate mental health resources, on-going/regular educating of students and school personnel on violence prevention.

"... maybe we are exactly the same savage primates we were a million years ago ... and we will always be pulling triggers in so many ways - pistols, rifles, cannons, drones, bombers, warheads, whatever brilliant murder tool we come up with next." author Brian Doyle from Eight Whopping Lies and other stories of bruised grace.

With respect,
Therese Lewandowski
Homer

Konrad Jackson

From: Thomas Paul <tompaulak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 12:07 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

I am writing to ask you to oppose SB173 because I think arming teachers and introducing more firearms into school communities is the absolutely wrong approach to making schools more safe for students and staff.

Teachers, in particular, have more than enough to do now in teaching and managing classrooms. The last thing they need is the added burden of training and the responsibility for dealing with active shooters.

I find absurd the idea that the answer to gun violence is to put more guns in more places and in the hands of more people.

I am a 51 year resident of Alaska, a gun owner, a hunter, a former employee of ADF&G, and former scoutmaster. My two children attended public school in Juneau from Kindergarten through High School.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Tom Paul
Juneau, Alaska

Odette Edgar Testimony on 1/24/24 Senate Labor & Commerce committee on SB 173

Good afternoon, Chair Bjorkman and members of the Labor and Commerce committee.

My name is Odette Edgar. I live in Juneau; I am a 53-year Alaska resident; and I represent myself.

I am testifying in opposition to SB 173.

Here are my reasons:

Guns do not belong in schools where students already have to endure active shooter drills. Each gun, despite a person's best intentions, can be used a weapon to harm children and staff.

This bill REQUIRES schools to arm teachers, staff or volunteers to deal with an active shooter crisis. And worse, it protects those involved if someone is harmed or killed by them. That is not safety.

I occasionally volunteer in Juneau's grade schools to teach folk dance. I intentionally avoid places where guns are present. This bill, if enacted, would not make me or anyone else safer.

Schools do critically important work. Both of my parents were teachers. Teachers' focus should be on educating their students, not on taking on the most stressful duties of law enforcement.

There are many other reasons this is a dangerous option for our schools. Rather, I encourage to you support [secure gun storage laws \(HB 164\)](#) and [extreme risk / "red flag" laws \(HB 162\)](#), which are a much safer and saner approach to keeping school personnel and children safe from harm.

Thank you for listening.