

Good Morning Everyone

I would like to thank Andi Story for presenting this very important bill. I would also like to thank you all for being here and listening about this bill. I would like to encourage you to support it. It will save lives. My name is Laura Barnes. I am a friend and colleague of Anna Foltz. Anna was an amazing person. She had a vibrant personality that everyone enjoyed. She loved Alaska and enjoyed swimming in our cold water. She said it was invigorating and made her feel alive. Normally she would have someone with her but on October 17, 2021, she went by herself to a dock close to her home to watch the northern lights. She then decided to take a swim not realizing how cold the water was that time of year. Unfortunately she drowned. Because she couldn't get back on to the dock. The investigating officer told us that if there had been an egress safety ladder on the dock Anna would be alive. Anna was 38 in good health and strong swimmer. The officer said they found evidence that Anna had tried to get back onto the dock but couldn't. Again, had there been an egress safety ladder she would be alive.

If you search the internet you will find many articles about this terrible problem and see that Alaska has the highest drownings in the nation. With your help we can solve it.

I would like to take a moment to read a letter from Anna's mom Ellen.

Hello, my name is Ellen Foltz. I had the privilege of seeing beautiful Alaska in June of 2021 when my daughter, Anna, convinced me to embark on a jet ski adventure up the Inside Passage with Dangerous Water Adventures. I was very reluctant to do it but it turned out to be one of the best things I have ever done in my life. Going on an exciting adventure with my only daughter. Little did I know that June, when I hugged her good bye, it would be the last time I saw her. Anna drowned 3 months later, in Indian Cove, the night of Oct 17. The forensics verified that she had tried to climb up the barnacled piling of the dock, trying to get out of the frigid water. That image of my child struggling in the cold water will haunt me to the end of my days.

Today, March 14, oddly enough is her birthday. Anna would have been 41.

I strongly urge that Bill 345 supporting the installation of safety ladders through harbor grants be passed to help reduce tragic, accidental drownings such as Anna's.

Thank you,
Ellen T. Foltz

In closing, I would like to leave you with a thought. Have you ever been to a pool that didn't have an egress ladder in every corner? Of course not. A pool is shallow, has warm water, people present and generally a lifeguard. Its because in most cases it is legally mandated by federal, state and even city

law that a pool have an egress ladder in ever corner. So why is it that Alaska's largest pools, our harbors don't have safety ladders?

These are tragic deaths that can be easily prevented. So, I strongly urge you to support Bill 345 and help save lives, because the next life lost could be someone you care about.

Thank you

Sincerely,

Laura Barnes
