

EDUCATION

ETHICS

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

JUDICIARY

TRANSPORTATION

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR Löki Gale Tobin

Education Committee Chair

WHILE IN SESSION
STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 465-3704

•
WHILE IN ANCHORAGE
1500 W BENSON BLVD
ANCHORAGE, AK 99503
(907) 269-0169

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 229

Extreme Risk Protection Order

Gun violence in Alaska is a public health problem that requires public policy solutions.

Senate Bill 229 creates an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) 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.

SB 229 provides a policy response to Alaska's high rates of gun violence. Alaska ranks near the top of national rates of homicide and suicide by guns. Children die at a higher rate in Alaska through gun violence than through any other risk factor including automobile accidents.

Authorizing a system for an ERPO would give Alaskan families and law enforcement a tool to help stop gun violence that not only inflicts death or injury on the victim, but inflicts trauma on families, schools, communities, and places of worship, decreasing the mental wellness of those far beyond the epicenter of the violence.

Common-sense gun laws are proven to drive down gun violence. A recent study from Princeton University found that stricter gun laws passed by 40 states from 1991 to 2016 reduced gun deaths by 10 percent of the nationwide total. SB 229 would give families and law enforcement a way to save lives. Alaska's standing as one of the deadliest states for gun violence in the nation can and should be changed.

Responsible gun ownership is strongly protected by the U.S. Constitution, Alaska Constitution, and state law. SB 229 addresses a need to protect families from those who are in a mental health, substance abuse or other crisis and present an extreme risk to the life and safety of Alaskans.