

Alaska Chapter

Incorporated in Alaska

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

March 10, 2025,

President

Anna Ogena, MD, FAAP

House State Affairs Committee,

Vice President

Jody Butto, MD, FAAP

We are writing today from the Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to ask that you support the passage of HB89. As the largest pediatric society in Alaska, we are committed to advocating for things that will support healthy children and families.

Secretary-Treasurer

Wesley Gifford, MA, FAAP

Past President

Lily J. Lou, MD, FAAP

The Extreme Risk Protection Order, HB 89, has the potential to save the lives of children and adults in Alaska. In many cases of gun violence, there were clear warning signs that the shooter posed a serious threat to others prior to their crimes. Laws such as HB 89 would allow loved ones and law enforcement to step in before a tragedy takes place by allowing an intervention that temporarily takes weapons away from someone in crisis. This law would allow the removal of weapons while still protecting that individual's rights to due process. Individuals would have the right to speak at hearings and show they do not pose a threat to themselves or others. Final orders could last for up to 6 months which allows time for individuals to seek help or for those in fear to get to a safer situation. Additionally, this law would allow families, partners or other loved ones to file a petition with the court without involving law enforcement if they feel that would be a barrier.

Executive Director

Dale Knutsen
PO Box 110573
Anchorage, AK 99511
(907) 317-1397
aapalaskachapter@gmail.com

Alaska has the third-highest rate of suicide in the country with an average of 70 hours between gun related suicide deaths. Alaska also has the fifth-highest rate of overall gun deaths. Firearms are one of the top two leading causes of death for Alaskan children and teens with 55% being gun suicides. In 2019, the rate of men murdering women in Alaska ranked first in the nation. In 44% of these cases, guns were the weapon used.

We need to prevent gun violence in our state and protect our children from gun crimes and suicide. Passing an Extreme Risk Protection Order law allows us to protect potential victims and get help for the perpetrator. This powerful tool allows action before tragedy strikes.

We urge you to vote for HB 89 and follow the lead of 21 other states in passing an ERPO law. The safety of our communities and our children is paramount.

Sincerely,

Anna Ogena, MD, FAAP

Jody Butto, MD, FAAP

Benjamin Westley, MD, FAAP, FACP, FIDSA

Wesley Gifford, MD, FAAP

Jennifer Austin, APRN

Website

www.aapalaska.com