

February 27, 2014

Senator Coghill
Alaska State Legislature
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Senate Bill 176

Dear Senator Coghill:

The right to defend oneself and others is a fundamental right that must be upheld, and secured for law-abiding citizens pursuing a higher education in Alaska. With recent physical assaults at UAA upon female students, the Legislature should support SB 176 as a way to ensure such violent crime is deterred.

Since 1995 law-abiding Alaskans have been denied their constitutional right to keep and bear arms on University of Alaska campuses. This has occurred because the University of Alaska Board of Regents has enforced regulatory policy prohibiting the, otherwise lawful, concealed carry of firearms.

By complying with the University's policy, lawful citizens have lost the ability, legally, to defend themselves, and others, as they normally would throughout the rest of Alaska. The Alaska Constitution guarantees (art. 1, sec. 19) the individual right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed by the state or a political subdivision of the state. Being constitutionally created, appointed by the Governor, subject to a vote by the legislature, and bound to follow state law, it is evident that the University of Alaska and board of regents are political subdivisions of the State of Alaska.

Senate Bill 176 would resolve this conflict, by requiring the board of regents to comply with the Constitution of the State of Alaska and current state law. SB 176 would allow law-abiding citizens to exercise their 2nd Amendment rights by carrying concealed firearms on and in the property of UA campuses.

Public universities in Utah, Colorado State University (Fort Collins, CO), and Blue Ridge Community College (Weyers Cave, VA) allow for the concealed carry of firearms on their campuses. After more than 100 combined semesters, these schools have experienced no incidents of gun violence, gun threats, or any on-campus altercations with firearms. Furthermore, the forty 'right-to-carry' states have not seen increases in gun violence since legalizing concealed carry, even though law-abiding citizens in these states carry concealed in locations like shopping malls, movie theaters, grocery stores, restaurants, and office buildings.

To summarize, the crux of this issue is that the University of Alaska board of regents does not have the constitutional or statutory authority to prohibit and negate a fundamental individual right.

For these reasons, I support SB 176. Thank you for defending the liberties of Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Ross
6959 Creekview Loop
Anchorage, AK 99507