

Sen. Coghill,

I am writing to support SB 176, which makes clear to the political appointees of the UA Board of Regents that their limited delegated authority, as a subsidiary of state government, to establish policies for UA campuses cannot legally nor rationally be interpreted to include the power to utterly abrogate a fundamental right, the right to bear arms in self-defense, enshrined in both the Alaska and US Constitutions and preempted in regulation by Alaska statute.

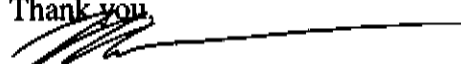
This policy, put in place in 1995 in knee-jerk response to the passage of Alaska's "Shall-Issue" carry law, prohibits adult Alaskans, students, faculty, staff and visitors, who carry legally, safely, and responsibly everywhere else they go off campus, from carrying in the same legal, safe, and responsible manner on UA campuses. The University was not included as a prohibited place at that time, nor was it added as a prohibited place as the law was improved several times thereafter. The intent of the Legislature, that carry be allowed on campus per state law, is therefore made clear.

There has been no evidence or rational argument presented by the Board to justify this policy, only unfounded claims of "possible problems." Those baseless conjectures are given the lie by the actual experience of numerous campuses in other states which have no restrictive policies on carry and have not demonstrated any such problems. The fears of sudden outbursts of violence or deliberate intimidation by lawful carriers simply have not happened either on outside campuses or off-campus here in Alaska. Off-campus the staff and students of the University already regularly interact with the same adults who would be carrying on-campus, with no apparent ill-effect. The claims that "visiting K-12" students might be negatively impacted are irrational for the same reason; any K-12 field trip that goes into any public space in Anchorage or any other Alaskan city has been "around carriers" with no ill-effects in the almost two decades of lawful carry in Alaska.

To sum up, the University has long-justified denying non-prohibited Alaskans and visitors the right to choose to exercise their fundamental civil and statutory right to be armed for their own defense on the basis of "what-ifs" already proven groundless in practice; which ill becomes an institution ostensibly devoted to truth and reason.

Philosophically, when fundamental individual rights are at issue the moral burden is on those who would restrict the peaceable exercise of those rights to justify their restrictions with facts and logic. The University's protests and claims fall far short of that goal. Their position essentially boils down to the assertion that adults, who already possess and carry firearms safely and responsibly under the laws of the State of Alaska, will somehow magically become less safe, less responsible, and less law-abiding simply by stepping foot onto a campus: which is patent nonsense.

Thank you,



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