

From: Karen Jensen [mailto:sugismama@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, March 07, 2014 4:16 PM

To: Sen. John Coghill

Subject: SB176

Dear Senator Coghill:

I'm writing to you on my own as a citizen, not as a representative of my employer, or in any official capacity. I want to express my great concern about and state my opposition to Senate Bill 176, allowing guns on campus.

I have worked at the UAF library for 15 years, and have worked in public libraries for another 10 before that, and I have dealt with many patrons over the years, at the circulation and reference desks. I have witnessed many incidents in libraries, both here and elsewhere; the UAF Campus Police almost certainly have my name listed throughout their records for calling for assistance on multiple occasions. I'm happy to say that all those incidents ended peacefully, with the very professional and rapid response provided by our police force. The police arrive within 2 minutes of our calls, and either escort out problem patrons, or arrest the individuals without resistance. Our campus police do a great job, and we should continue to let them do so, without pretending ordinary citizens could do better if armed.

Because libraries are public spaces, anyone can enter. Most patrons are wonderful, and use the facility, services and collections responsibly, and treat staff courteously. But some don't. I have been shouted at, had things thrown at me, been cursed at, and called many names, and have seen other employees encounter the same. Young students can at times be emotionally unstable, dealing with living independently of their parents for the first time, learning how to negotiate the minefield of alcohol and drugs, and struggling with the pressures of academics. Encouraging these young people to carry firearms is a foolish mistake, in my view; although they are technically adults, they are not mature enough to cope with this great responsibility. Sometimes the incidents aren't caused by students, but by faculty (rare but sadly true), or by members of the general public. Again, most visitors to our library are peaceful and responsible.

We don't need to add guns to the mix of behaviors we see exhibited in the library, or anywhere else on campus. I'm sure some do carry, and that's disturbing, but we should not endorse such action. More guns does not equal more safety; it equals more danger to those of us who come here every day of our working lives. If you want to make us safer, do more to support our police with training, equipment, or personnel.

Thank you,

Karen Jensen

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