

From: Talis Colberg [mailto:talisappleorchard@hotmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, March 08, 2014 1:19 PM

To: Sen. John Coghill

Cc: Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; governor@gov.state.ak.us

Subject: Fwd: SB 176/HB 355

03/08/14

Dear Sen. Coghill,

I writing to express my opposition to SB 176 or HB 355.

Like yourself, I am a third generation Alaskan born in the Territory of Alaska.

Like yourself, I am a gun owner.

Like yourself, I believe the Second Amendment was intended to be an individual right to keep and bear arms.

In 2008 I was the Alaska Attorney General who joined thirty other sitting state Attorneys General as Amici Curiae in the landmark supreme court case of District of Columbia v. Dick Anthony Heller. In our pleading, the thirty-one Attorneys General argued for the individual right to keep and bear arms. It is important to note that our argument was not for an unmitigated right. In fact our pleading to the United States Supreme Court specifically stated:

Indeed, it bears emphasis that amici States likewise have a strong interest in maintaining the many state laws prohibiting felons in possession, restricting machine guns and sawed-off shotguns, and the like.

Furthermore we concluded our advocacy for recognition of an individual right with:

But all 31 amici States agree that striking down the District of Columbia's categorical ban on all operative firearms would pose no threat to these reasonable regulations. (emphasis added by me).

The United States Supreme Court went on render a decision in the Heller case which finally confirmed that the Second Amendment was intended to confer on individuals a right to keep and bear arms. It was a great victory. As you well know, that was the culmination of many decades of hard fought efforts to reach that formal confirmation of what so many of us always believed was the proper interpretation. The decision did not bar what we Attorney Generals had argued was appropriate, namely "reasonable regulations."

I am writing this letter because I am also now the Director of the Matanuska-Susitna College, a major campus in the University of Alaska system. I have had meetings with both faculty and staff and the overwhelming consensus of those in attendance is that guns on campus is a bad idea.

You should take into account another important feature of the discussion about this legislation. Virtually all of the staff and faculty that have expressed anxiety, concern and opposition to this legislation, including myself, are gun owners. This is important, because one of the apparently unintended consequences of this bill is that it has divided people who embrace the Second Amendment.

I support the position of the University Board of Regents and President Gamble. The university policies regulating firearms on campus are reasonable and sensible. I believe this legislation is a bad idea. I am also concerned that pursuing this type of legislation will ultimately undermine my personal right to keep and bear arms by creating a completely unnecessary opportunity for courts to revisit the Heller decision.

Very Truly Yours,

Talis Colberg

Director, Matanuska-Susitna College/University of Alaska Anchorage

Former Attorney General, State of Alaska