

From: Jenny Jones [mailto:jbjones@alaska.edu]

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To: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Pete Kelly; Rep. Pete Higgins; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Steve Thompson; Rep. Tammie Wilson

Subject: Please, no guns on UA campuses

Dear Members of the Interior Delegation;

I am writing to you as a constituent, a UAF professor, and a Department Chair with supervisory responsibility for the safety of students, staff and faculty in our Department. I know that you have now heard from multiple sources both within and outside the University in opposition to these bills, and I have already contacted some of you individually, but I feel that this is such an important issue that further communication is warranted.

As a teacher and supervisor I cannot imagine anything more dangerous on a university campus than armed persons in classrooms and other facilities. Not only would I fear for the safety of students, faculty and staff but also for my own safety. How would I explain to the many young women (and men) who I come into contact with who have suffered domestic violence and assault in their home communities, and, in some cases, harassment by other students on campus, that they could no longer have even a reasonable expectation to be free of the threat of violence during their studies, in their dorm rooms or attending campus activities... and that as the "person in charge" I could no longer provide even basic protections? What would I say to staff and faculty when they reported threatening encounters with students during their daily work? There is a great big difference in how well someone is going to deal with an angry student (or parent, or co-worker etc.) and how well they are going to be able to handle the situation if they think that person has a gun.

As a grandparent and aunt of UA students I am stunned that a group of supposedly educated leaders would have even given this idea a second thought. What were you thinking? Where was the leadership? Where was the firm but sensible advice that should have been given to the misguided young people who got this started ... that they should keep their guns where they belong, at the rifle range or out in the field, and that as responsible young adults they should be recognizing that along with 2nd Amendment rights come responsibilities not to put others in danger? I don't want my nephews and nieces and grand-kids attending college in an environment of fear.

I have been a gun owner and hunter for over 40 years. I have taught hunters education and gun safety, as well as martial arts and women and children's self defense, and on occasion I have carried a gun for self protection. Those instances were during solo trips in the back country or extended stays alone in fishcamp, or during berry picking as the "gunner" for a group of women and kids in case an intruder threatened us. On long distance cross-country journeys to construction projects I armed myself because I was driving thousands of miles alone, having to use truck-stop rest areas and staying in very questionable lodgings. It has never occurred to me to carry a gun for protection in a crowded urban location because, (a) a gun is a very poor choice as a weapon of defense and (b) if I were ever to try to use it I am not (in spite of many long hours at the shooting range) a good enough shooter to pull a gun out of concealment in a tense situation and hit my target in a crowded area without hurting a bystander.

Only a tiny minority of gun owners have the skill needed to use a weapon safely (if there even is such a thing) in a campus environment and therefore there is no useful reason for the public to carry guns to school. And the majority of us would never consider doing so because we know that it would serve no good purpose. We know that if, God forbid, an Adam Lanza were to show

up on our campus, the fact that some of us had concealed carry weapons would be meaningless. The guy who draws first is the guy in charge; this is not the wild west and it is not the movies ... we know that it would be ineffective to arm ourselves against insanity. The dangers that young people carrying guns on campus on a daily basis pose far outweigh any possible benefits that might ever accrue from the idea that an armed student or staff member might perhaps someday be able to "defend" the rest of us from a crazy intruder. We have an excellent campus police force who are trained to deal with such situations, and do not need armed civilians getting in their way in a crisis situation.

I used to be a strong proponent of 2nd Amendment rights but that has changed with the advent of dangerous ideas like "concealed carry" and "stand your ground" which have nothing to do with a piece of law that dates from the days of muzzle-loading rifles and minimal military and law enforcement, and everything to do with the fear of a relatively small group of people and their desire to intimidate others, instill fear and increase their own sense of power. The safety of our campus should take absolute precedence over the desire of a very small minority to exercise "rights" which derive from an interpretation of a piece of law dating from 1791 which is long past due for some reform to reflect the realities of the civil society we live in today. Please use your respected positions of leadership to keep our campuses as safe and free of violence as possible and, by doing so, set an example to those who are concerned about 2nd Amendment rights that they may exercise them in the right places (hunting or target shooting), but that the general public also have a right to feel safe in our daily lives and that in modern times responsible gun owners need to respect the rights of others.

Thank you all very much for your time and consideration.

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