

From: [Diane Preston](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#); [Sen. John Coghill](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Opposition to guns on campus
Date: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 10:41:23 PM

Hello Legislators,

Below you will find a copy of a letter I wrote to the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner in 2014, the last time the guns on campus issue came up. My prior concerns remain the same with the addition of new concerns. At this time of draconian cuts to the UA budget, I believe it is irresponsible to pass this legislation for two additional reasons. 1) The added security needed will cost the University big money as has been experienced in other states that choose to allow firearms on campuses. 2) Guns on campus will provide another significant reason, in addition to budget woes, for staff and faculty to leave for other opportunities rather than remain at a UA campus.

Please drop this legislation and focus on finding solutions to the budget crisis rather than making the UA situation even more tenuous. Vote no on SB174.

Thank you,

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(Letter to the Editor, Fairbanks Daily News Miner, March 14, 2014)

Suicidal students. Extremely angry students. Students with serious drug/alcohol problems. Immature students with little impulse control. Students with psychotic mental illness. Students losing their housing. All describe a significant few of the many students I saw during my 12 years as a UAF counselor and none of whom I would like to see carrying a handgun on campus.

Sometimes, I had to take action against the student's wishes. On occasion, I had to call family and/or hospitalize a suicidal student. Sometimes, by law, I had to report child abuse. During all those years, it never occurred to me that I might be in danger because of a handgun in a backpack. That will change for faculty, staff, and administrators if carrying handguns is allowed on campus.

Living at any college is an artificial situation in terms of adult life. Except in prison or the military, at no other time are people required to live so closely with others they have not chosen. Many still maturing young people have opportunities for drug, alcohol or sexual experiences. Conflicts are frequent. Depression is common. Easy access to firearms will increase the risk of harm from accidents, impulsive or drunken behavior, and suicidal ideation.

Brain research says that when humans are very angry or very scared, the thinking part of our brains is less active and we are more reactive. It takes about 20 minutes for our brains to calm down and think more clearly. That is why couples in arguments are advised to take a "time out." This also is why less accessibility to weapons keeps the campus safer. Currently,

students on campus can have firearms if they are locked up. Even the time it takes to go to a car, or find a key, may allow for more rational decision making.

In my opinion, this is not about second amendment rights. It is about common sense, adolescent and human development, brain research and the need for a sense of safety for students and the professors and staff who are trying to help them. I urge a no vote on Senate Bill 176. Thank you.