

Alaska State Legislature

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Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 174

“An Act relating to the regulation of firearms and knives by the University of Alaska”

Senate Bill 174 affirms Alaskans’ constitutional right to bear arms is not surrendered when they step on the campuses of our public universities. The bill resolves the conflict between the University Of Alaska Board Of Regent's weapons ban and the Alaska Constitution, ensuring that law-abiding Alaskans may carry firearms while pursuing postsecondary education.

Art. 1, Sec. 19 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska guarantees the individual right to keep and bear arms; a right that cannot be infringed by the State or a political subdivision of the State. AS 29.35.145 further acknowledges the power to regulate firearms and knives is reserved to the state. Under state law, there is no prohibition for law-abiding citizens to exercise their individual right to bear arms at University of Alaska campuses.

Since 1995, the Board of Regents' policy has prohibited the carrying of firearms in buildings or parts of buildings owned or controlled by the university, on developed adjacent university land, or at university sponsored events under threat of administrative sanctions.

Senate Bill 174 acknowledges that the power to place any limitations on that right rests only with Alaskans’ democratically elected and accountable members of their state legislature, and those limitation shall be narrowly tailored to meet a compelling governmental interest by the least restrictive means possible.

The attacks at Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University, and other past mass shootings bring a reasonable person to the unassailable conclusion that "gun-free zones" have failed to afford their occupants any protection from violence and, furthermore, denied law-abiding citizens the option of providing their own constitutionally guaranteed self-defense with a firearm.

SB 174 would end the disarmament of law-abiding citizens on university campuses in Alaska and I urge your support.