

March 17, 2014

Senate Judiciary Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Senator Coghill and committee members:

As a lifelong Alaskan and mother and grandmother, I am opposed to SB 176 as well as the Committee Substitute that would allow guns (concealed with permit or not) on University of Alaska college campus. I believe that this bill undermines the statutory authority of the University and under the guise of public safety – actually jeopardizes student safety.

I have a student at UAS who is a freshman. I expect that the University be a safe learning environment for my student as well as other young people who leave home to attend University, especially those living on campus. The presence of guns creates additional risks for students. Alaska already has the highest firearm death rate in the country and that rate is even higher for the traditional college age group. This is also true for suicide and the age of youth most at risk. Availability to firearms also makes suicide attempts more lethal. This age group is also vulnerable for binge drinking, dating violence, and other impulsive behavior..

I have had a chance to read and hear testimony – including that the only protection from a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun. I have concerns about untrained armed citizens trying to protect students and the potential for innocent lives caught in the cross fire. Even a law abiding person can break the law in the heat of the moment. I support highly trained law enforcement professionals being allowed to do their job.

Upon entering the Capitol the other day, I noted the very visible signage that **no firearms or weapons were allowed in the building** - I would expect the same protection for our children and students.

Sincerely,

Patty Owen
Juneau, AK

cc: Senator Egan
Senator Fairclough
Senator Gardner