

Stuart Relay

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Public Testimony Opposing the Nomination of Timothy Collins to the Alaska Police Standards Council

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write today to formally oppose the appointment of Timothy Collins to the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC). After careful review of Mr. Collins' actions, positions, and the Council's recent decisions under his involvement, it is evident that he lacks the necessary judgment, legal insight, and public accountability required for a position tasked with upholding and advancing ethical policing standards across Alaska.

1. Poor Judgment in Policy Support

The Alaska Beacon reported on December 4, 2023, that the Council—while ultimately voting down a proposal—nearly supported lowering the hiring age for Alaska correctional officers from 21 to 18. While a few members raised concerns, most, including Mr. Collins, were reportedly inclined to accept the proposal had it been accompanied by a “training plan.” This position demonstrates deeply flawed judgment.

Hiring 18-year-olds into roles requiring physical enforcement, mental resilience, and often deadly force over hardened inmates is not only risky but reckless. This is not a retail job. It's a position of high stress, extreme vulnerability, and immense power. The suggestion that minimal training could override the maturity gap reveals a disregard for both staff and inmate safety. Mr. Collins' support for this idea reveals a willingness to compromise public safety standards to fill vacancies rather than address systemic recruitment and retention failures through safer and more sustainable strategies.

2. Legal and Constitutional Contradictions

More alarmingly, this proposal violates or at least collides with existing federal and state firearms laws—a fact that any member of the APSC should have clearly understood and raised.

Under federal law (18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(1)), individuals under the age of 21 are prohibited from purchasing a handgun from a licensed dealer, which includes most correctional-issued weapons. While Alaska allows 18-year-olds to open carry, it restricts concealed carry to those aged 21 and older. In practice, this means an 18-year-old corrections officer could not lawfully purchase or carry a duty handgun as required for secure inmate transport or emergency response situations.

By entertaining and not vocally opposing this proposal, Mr. Collins demonstrated an alarming gap in his understanding of the legal frameworks he is expected to uphold. This oversight exposes the state to legal liability, workplace risk, and potential constitutional violations, especially if underage officers were forced into roles where they are either armed illegally or unarmed in dangerous environments.

3. Failure to Represent Law Enforcement Consensus

Evidence from public commentary shows broad opposition among current corrections officers. David Knapp, a Palmer-based officer, publicly testified that “not one” officer he spoke with supported the idea. The lack of support among frontline professionals speaks volumes. Ignoring or dismissing such overwhelming disapproval suggests Mr. Collins is out of step with those he claims to represent.

4. Ethical and Public Trust Concerns

Public confidence in policing institutions is already strained. Promoting policies that exploit young people in high-risk environments under the pretense of professional opportunity—without legal protections or public support—invites distrust and further damages community relations. Mr. Collins has shown no leadership in resisting these regressive tendencies, nor has he displayed the transparency and independence required to serve Alaska’s diverse communities justly.

Conclusion

The Alaska Police Standards Council is not a place for individuals who make politically expedient or legally careless decisions. It demands rigorous legal awareness, ethical clarity, and a deep respect for public safety—not bureaucratic shortcuts that compromise both officers and the public. For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject the nomination of Timothy Collins.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Allmeroth
Two Rivers
Myself

Reference Page (APA Style)

Alaska Beacon. (2023, December 4). Alaska Police Standards Council turns down plan to lower hiring age of corrections officers — for now. <https://alaskabeacon.com/2023/12/04/alaska-police-standards-council-turns-down-plan-to-lower-hiring-age-of-corrections-officers-for-now/>

18 U.S. Code § 922 - Unlawful acts, Pub. L. 90–618, § 102, Oct. 22, 1968, 82 Stat. 1213.
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State of Alaska. (n.d.). Concealed Handgun Permit Program. Alaska Department of Public Safety.
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