

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

March 24, 2016

1:40 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Kelly called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair
Senator Peter Micciche, Vice-Chair
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Mike Dunleavy
Senator Donny Olson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Anna MacKinnon, Co-Chair
Senator Lyman Hoffman

ALSO PRESENT

Joe Byrnes, Staff, Senator Pete Kelly; John Sonin, Self, Juneau.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Jo Heckman, Chair, University of Alaska Board of Regents, Fairbanks; Michael Hostina, UA General Council, Fairbanks; Matt Cooper, UA Associate General Council, Fairbanks; Karen Spaleta, Self, Fairbanks; Dana Kinzy, Self, Fairbanks; Victoria Smith, Self, Fairbanks; Ginny Redmond, Self, Fairbanks; Joanna Young, Self, Fairbanks; Helena Buurman, Self, Fairbanks; Regine Hock, Self, Fairbanks; Chris Carr, Self, Fairbanks; Aurora Roth, Self, Fairbanks; Bob Bird, 2nd Amendment Task Force, Nikiski; Cheryl Tuttle, Self, Nikiski; Joe Kashi, Self, Sterling; Shauna Thorton, Self, Kenai; Bruce Shultz, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage; Greg Stoddard, Self, Anchorage; Butch Moore, Self, Big Lake; Mike Coons, Self, Palmer; Ed Martin, Self, Cooper Landing; Chelan Schreifels, Self, Anchorage; George Pierce, Self, Kasilof; Ross Mullins, Self, Cordova; Scott Jermone, Self, Fairbanks; Michael Raywalt, Self, Anchorage;

Jonathan Taylor, President, Union of Students, Student Government President, Anchorage; Rob Clift, AK Libertarian Party, Anchorage; Ceezar Martinson, Self, Anchorage; Dan Bellerive, Self, Anchorage; Genevieve Mina, Self, Anchorage; Mike Smith, Self, Anchorage; Zachary Cherry, Self, Wasilla; Leighan Gonzales, Self, Anchorage; Stacey Lucason, Self, Anchorage; Paul Swetzof, Self, Anchorage; Grayson Spiller, Self, Anchorage; Edward Burk, Self, Anchorage; Carl Kancir, Self, Anchorage; Cindy Moore, Self, Big Lake.

SUMMARY

SB 174 REG. OF FIREARMS/KNIVES BY UNIV. OF AK

SB 174 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#sb174

SENATE BILL NO. 174

"An Act relating to the regulation of firearms and knives by the University of Alaska."

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Co-Chair Kelly stated that there would be individuals on line and available for testimony and to answer questions about the bill.

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RECONVENED

Co-Chair Kelly explained that the committee would consider the bill and then hear public testimony.

Vice-Chair Micciche made a motion to adopt the Senate Education Committee version of the bill, which was the version of the bill that was before the committee [a motion was not needed to consider CSSB 174(EDC), Version N].

Vice-Chair Micciche asked to hear a review of the recent changes to the bill.

Senator Bishop asked for the version of the bill.

Co-Chair Kelly clarified that the bill being considered was version N.

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JOE BYRNES, STAFF, SENATOR PETE KELLY, discussed the changes between version H and version N, the Committee Substitute (CS) for SB 174 (EDC). He referred to page 2, lines 3 through 12 of the bill:

(b) The Board of Regents may not regulate the possession, ownership, use, carrying, registration, storage, or transportation of concealed handguns or knives, except

(1) in a manner identical to state law;

(2) when the behavior of a student or an employee demonstrates that the student or employee poses a risk of harm to self or others;

(3) in student dormitories or other shared living quarters;

(4) in university facilities where health services, counseling services, or other services related to sexual harassment or violence are provided;

(5) in university facilities during adjudication of staff or student disciplinary issues; or

(6) in restricted access areas as under (c)(3) of this section.

Mr. Byrnes noted that some exceptions to subsection (b) were incorporated after recommendations from the University of Alaska Board of Regents. He referred to subsection (d) on page 2, lines 24 through 26:

(d) The University of Alaska shall establish a process to allow a person who is prevented from carrying a concealed handgun or knife under (b)(2) of this section to regain the ability to carry a concealed handgun or knife on university property.

Mr. Byrnes continued to discuss the bill, noting that on page 3, transition language was removed that had given the Board of Regents 30 days following the effective date to implement conforming policies.

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JO HECKMAN, CHAIR, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA BOARD OF REGENTS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), thanked Co-Chair Kelly for the changes recently introduced to the bill. She thought that without the amendments, the bill would prevent the University from responding to common, specific, and serious problems on University property. She pointed out the distinction that University regulation did not extend into the community or private homes, but rather only applied to situations and people for which the University was responsible. She emphasized the difference between the University and municipalities and the state. She relayed that the University must intervene daily in conflicts and must manage how thousands of students and employees interacted. University policy and regulation was the only way to achieve such intervention. She summarized that the University had asked for amendments in six areas to address specific known problems:

1. When a student or employee demonstrated a risk to harm of self or others.
2. In student dormitories and other shared living quarters.
3. In University facilities housing health and counseling services, or other services related to sexual harassment or violence.
4. During adjudication of staff or student disputes, or disciplinary issues.

Ms. Heckman considered that while the latest version of the bill generally addressed the first four issues, it omitted the adjudications of disputes and therefore left two additional areas the University believed regulation was needed.

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Ms. Heckman continued to list the six areas of concern:

5. Parts of facilities used for dedicated programs for pre-school, elementary, junior high, and secondary students.
6. Concealed carry permits.

Ms. Heckman elaborated that the board believed that a student or employee carrying a concealed weapon in University common areas should have some training and knowledge of gun safety and applicable law, as well as be subject to a criminal background check.

Ms. Heckman summarized that the first five requested amendments involved situations in which concealed carry was criminalized under current law. She asked why the University should not be unable to regulate similar situations administratively. She thought that regulations had value, even if they were not always followed by students or employees. She pointed out that even criminal law did not prevent all crimes from occurring. Ms. Heckman stated that University policy allowed the University to take preventive action when it became aware of a violation, as well as formulate a prompt response to conduct that posed a threat of harm. She referenced a report to the National Rifle Association by the National School Shield Task Force.

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Ms. Heckman (for the Board of Regents) respectfully requested that the aforementioned amendments be included. She thought the amendments were essential to management of the known issues the board had identified, and to effectively govern the University consistent with the board's constitutional mandate. She referred to memos that had been sent to Co-Chair Kelly and Senator Maguire. She conveyed that she had numerous phone calls and emails from students, faculty and staff with concerns about the bill. She shared that she was married to a retired Alaska State Trooper, and as such had firearms as part of her life. She felt it was important to ask for consideration of the amendments if the bill was to move forward.

Senator Bishop referenced subsection (d) on page 2, starting on line 24:

(d) The University of Alaska shall establish a process to allow a person who is prevented from carrying a concealed handgun or knife under (b)(2) of this section to regain the ability to carry a concealed handgun or knife on university property.

Senator Bishop asked about the protocol for regaining the ability to carry a handgun or knife on university property.

MICHAEL HOSTINA, UA GENERAL COUNCIL, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), explained that generally if the amendments were to restrict the possession of firearms, it would be part of a disciplinary process (or a student care team process) with procedures that were already established. He furthered that any preliminary sanction or restriction that was imposed was already subject to review, and the University would simply incorporate review of any restriction involving weapons within the same process.

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RECONVENED

Mr. Byrnes reviewed the sectional analysis for the bill (copy on file):

Section 1

It is the findings and intent of the legislature that the right to bear arms is constitutionally protected under Art. 1, Sec. 19 of the Alaska Constitution, that the University Of Alaska Board Of Regents may not abridge that right, and the legislature reserves to the state the authority to regulate firearms.

Section 2

Amends AS 14.40 (The University of Alaska and the Community Colleges statutes) affirming the authority to regulate firearms and knives is reserved to the state, the Board of Regents may not regulate firearms and knives except

1. In a manner identical to state law
2. When the behavior of a student or an employee demonstrates that the student or employee poses a risk of harm to self or others
3. In student dormitories or other shared living quarters
4. In university facilities where health services, counseling services, or other services related to sexual harassment or violence are provided

5. In university facilities during adjudication of staff or student disciplinary issues

The Board of Regents may adopt and enforce policies regulating the open carry of firearms and knives, restricting the discharge, and prohibiting the possession in restricted access areas.

The University is prohibited from creating a database or registry of persons who possess firearms on campus.

The University must establish a process allowing a person, who is prevented from carrying a concealed handgun or knife (after being determined by the University to be a threat to themselves or others), to regain the ability to carry a concealed handgun or knife on university property.

The University is immune from civil liability for policies enforced under this section.

Senator Bishop asked about the last sentence of the sectional analysis, and wondered how stringent the provision was. He referred to court cases in which individuals were injured and seeking damages.

Mr. Byrnes clarified that the language had been requested by the University of Alaska General Counsel. He deferred the question about the utility of the provision in protecting the University from lawsuits.

Mr. Hostina concurred with Senator Bishop, and stated that one could not preclude litigation. He thought the language would go some way toward reducing damage awards in state court, but would perhaps not prohibit civil rights actions and potential damages in federal court. He thought there were potential ramifications that might stem from the failure to adopt regulations or prohibit firearms under certain circumstances if people were injured as a result.

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Mr. Byrnes clarified that the UA General Counsel had provided a memo dated February 23, 2016 (copy on file) that discussed the immunity provision in writing.

Senator Dunleavy asked if the University had to deal with the issue of liability if an individual slipped on University property in the wintertime.

Mr. Hostina answered in the affirmative.

Senator Dunleavy asked about other potential liability issues such as sharp objects and car accidents.

Mr. Hostina confirmed that the University was charged with responsibility for day to day interactions with people on campus in a way and to an extent that was not the case for other entities such as the state or municipalities.

Senator Dunleavy referred to lines 5 and 6 on page 2 of the bill:

(2) when the behavior of a student or an employee demonstrates that the student or employee poses a risk of harm to self or others;

Senator Dunleavy asked how the demonstration of risk was determined, and who would make the determination.

Mr. Hostina stated that whenever there was employee relation issues, student discipline issues, or student self-harm issues; there were human resources officials, student disciplinary officials, or student care and service team officials who evaluated the situations and made determinations as to a course of action. The same processes would be used to make the determinations in question, and the review of the processes would apply to any review of the interim measures.

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Senator Dunleavy addressed lines 13 through 15 on page 2:

(c) The Board of Regents may adopt and enforce policies

(1) regulating the possession, ownership, use, carrying, registration, storage, and transportation of openly carried firearms and knives;

Senator Dunleavy wondered if the bill passed and concealed carry of firearms was allowed, but a student accidentally allowed the gun or knife to be viewed; what would prevent

the University from stating that the student violated the open carry regulation.

Mr. Hostina stated that the scenario would constitute a violation, because the definition of concealed carry required that the weapon not be observable without being removed from its container. He continued that even under current policies, there were few conflicts with individuals bringing weapons on campus. The police department would approach individuals, inform them of the policy, and ask them to remove the weapon to another location that was permissible. He was unsure of how a University response would be different in the case Senator Dunleavy was describing, unless the disclosure was intentional or involved a threat.

Senator Dunleavy wanted to ensure that if an individual intended to follow the law but unintentionally showed the weapon, a teacher could not bar the student from returning to the classroom.

Mr. Hostina thought the scenario was theoretically possible, and suspected that common sense would prevail.

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Co-Chair Kelly stated that the problem he was trying to address was that the University had restricted an explicit constitutional right. He asserted that the University had to have legitimate authority to do so, and it was his opinion that it did not. He continued that the current restriction did not achieve its purpose. He asserted that some would argue that many provisions of the bill went too far in favor of the University's policies, and that the committee had tailored the bill to accommodate the uniqueness of the University. He discussed changing to bill to include positions requested by the University. He expressed that politics was the art of compromise.

Co-Chair Kelly discussed people being shot in areas where there were restrictions on handguns, and used an example of a recent shooting in San Bernardino, California. He mentioned a shooting at Umpqua State College in Oregon, and a related court case. He listed additional sites of mass shootings. He alleged that criminals targeted areas where concealed carry of firearms was prohibited. He questioned the efficacy of using signage to prohibit criminals from

carrying weapons. He wanted Alaskans to be able to defend themselves and exercise their constitutional right.

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Co-Chair Kelly stated that it was his intention to go through an amendment process or develop a new committee substitute. He wanted to address the subject of college dormitories and put an associated provision in the bill. He was concerned about potential removal of individuals who were a danger to themselves or others, and mentioned a Title 47 hold.

Vice-Chair Micciche discussed the fiscal note [FN 1], and read from the analysis section on page 2:

In Idaho, the institutions projected spending \$3.7 million in expenses to increase campus security following the passage of the law allowing concealed carry.

Vice-Chair Micciche questioned the accuracy of the comparison to Idaho and asked if the Idaho law had been executed.

MATT COOPER, UA ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNCIL, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), stated that the Idaho law had been enacted, but did not think the state had information related to any increased expenditures as a result of the law. He had looked at various campuses that allowed concealed carry, and reported expenses ranging from \$3.7 million to estimates of over \$50 million. He reiterated that the numbers were estimates, and thought the first step after the law was enacted would be to engage a consultant or create a study to develop policy and procedures.

Vice-Chair Micciche asked if Idaho was used as an example because it was more similar to Alaska than other states.

Mr. Cooper answered in the affirmative, and stated that Idaho was also on the lower end of the spectrum with regard to estimated costs of implementing concealed carry on a college campus.

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Vice-Chair Micciche asked about the University's insurer, and wondered if it had quantified the increase to insurance premiums in the event that the bill was passed. He found it interesting that the right to legally carry in a facility would incur a higher cost.

Mr. Cooper stated that the University had contacted its insurance company, and the company stated that the effect on insurance premiums was dependent upon the final composition of the bill, as well as what the University did in response to the bill. He discussed secure access points, which he thought might be an item of consideration for the insurance company. He was unsure of the calculations that were considered by the insurance company in determining rates.

Vice-Chair Micciche asked if there was potential for increased costs or a certainty of increased cost.

Mr. Cooper was unsure, but stated that the insurance company had indicated that the bill would likely have some effect on cost.

Co-Chair Kelly referred to controlled access areas, and asked how the areas were currently secured.

Mr. Cooper explained that there were differences according to the type of area. Some areas were sensitive areas on campus secured with card locks. He was not aware of specific security in place for student services areas other than controlled single access.

Co-Chair Kelly asked how the bill would change the method for dealing with the aforementioned areas, and wondered about the cost.

Mr. Hostina explained that after the bill was passed, even if the University became aware of an armed person in a domestic violence situation seeking to enter a counseling or medical center, it could not say the individual was violating policy. Rather, the University would have to allow the individual to enter those areas. Under current University policy (since it was posted) it was possible to prohibit individuals from bringing weapons into the areas. He concluded that to be able to restrict weapons from the areas after the passage of SB 174, the University would have to establish the restricted access areas.

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Co-Chair Kelly read subsection (c)(3) on page 2:

[The Board of Regents may adopt and enforce policies]

(3) prohibiting the possession of firearms or knives in the restricted access area of university buildings;

Mr. Cooper thought that the issue pertained to what areas were defined as restricted access, and the definition referred to areas where visitors were screened. He thought that the term "screened" would need to be further defined.

Co-Chair Kelly thought that the bill provided the flexibility to determine what kinds of screening to employ. He did not think it would cost a great deal of money.

Senator Dunleavy asked if there was limited possession of firearms allowed on campus.

Mr. Hostina shared that currently it was possible to possess firearms on campus if retained in vehicles, at authorized events, or in secure storage.

Senator Dunleavy asked if signage was currently effective for the limited scope of firearm possession on campus. He wondered at the multi-million dollar cost on the fiscal note.

Mr. Hostina thought the difference was signified by the lack of policy, and with the implementation of SB 174 there would be a need to establish restricted access areas. He discussed consequences of violating restricted access areas if the bill were to pass.

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Senator Dunleavy continued to discuss signage, policy change, and the potential cost of implementing restricted access areas on campus. He suggested that individuals brought weapons on campus already.

Mr. Hostina interpreted that the bill required that the University establish a restricted area. He discussed

compliance with the law in order to enforce prohibition of firearms in restricted access areas.

Senator Dunleavy asked if the campus could put up a sign similar in cost to the signs that were already in existence.

Mr. Hostina discussed the need establish a secure point beyond which visitors were screened, which was more than a sign.

Vice-Chair Micciche asked about the consequence for carrying a firearm into a campus building under current laws and regulations.

Mr. Hostina stated that generally a student was given an opportunity to place the firearm in secure storage or in a vehicle. If the action persisted, it would result in disciplinary sanctions (administrative sanctions) through the University.

Vice-Chair Micciche asked about the consequence for a non-student carrying a firearm in the University system.

Mr. Hostina stated that the initial response to such an action would be the same as for a student: the University police would respond, inform the individual of the policy, and give them an opportunity to place the weapon in a secure storage or vehicle. If the individual were to decline, the individual would face an administrative process, potentially barring them from campus.

Vice-Chair Micciche compared the scenario of a student carrying a firearm on campus versus a non-student carrying a firearm on campus, and pointed out that a student had more to lose from the situation than a non-student. He questioned the lack of disincentive for the non-student; whereas the student had real consequences to face. He was unsure that prohibition of firearms on campus made the environment safer.

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Senator Olson asked about ongoing costs of \$800,000 as listed on the fiscal note. He asked if other universities in the United States had similar laws that governed university campuses.

Mr. Byrnes related that over 150 different college campuses had elected to allow some form of concealed carry of firearms on campus. He listed the eight different states that mandated public universities allow for concealed carry on campus: Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Utah, Wisconsin, and Texas.

Senator Olson asked if the other universities had costs similar to what was listed on the fiscal note for SB 174.

Mr. Byrnes answered in the negative, and specified that the University of Idaho did not spend the amount of money that it had anticipated to spend. He did not have additional figures on spending by other universities.

Senator Olson asked about private universities that might have similar open carry policies.

Mr. Byrnes was not aware of specific private institutions that allowed for concealed carry of firearms. He continued that part of the aforementioned 150 college campuses were private institutions that had allowed for concealed carry on campus.

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Co-Chair Kelly reiterated that there were 150 university campuses that allowed for concealed carry of firearms, none of which had a resultant act of violence. He thought that alcohol on campus had caused more deaths than the topic being discussed, and thought it was possible that the bill could save lives in the future. He suggested that universities were reluctant to dispel the college culture of drinking.

Senator Bishop asked if it would be permitted for an individual to carry a stun gun if the bill were to become law.

Mr. Byrnes clarified that the definition of "firearms" in the bill did not include stun guns.

Senator Bishop asked if an individual could currently carry a stun gun on campus, or after the bill was passed.

Mr. Hostina clarified that current University policy did not prohibit carrying stun guns on campus, and he did not think the bill would change the policy.

Senator Dunleavy commented that a recent court decision in Massachusetts had struck down a law that banned stun guns, and thought it would set a precedent.

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KAREN SPALETA, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill in any form. She was a gun owner and employee of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). She thought the concept that law abiding citizens with guns could stop criminals with guns was a fallacy. She discussed statistics from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that indicated in 33,000 people died in firearm deaths in 2013, 502 of which were from mass shootings. She compared the CDC statistic to the 57,000 people in the United States that died of flu and pneumonia during the same time period. She thought that the bill concerned a policy choice rather than a constitutional right as alleged. She discussed the Second Amendment, and referenced an opinion by former United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

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DANA KINZY, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), opposed SB 174. She was an employee of UAF. She was concerned about individuals possessing firearms in moments of high emotion. She discussed her personal history of losing her father to gun violence. She wondered about possible amendments to the bill that might cover special circumstances and protect employees whose jobs involved volatile issues. She argued that universities were a place where stressors were abundant. She discussed the student population and the pressures they faced. She thought she would seek work elsewhere if the bill passed, where a firearm would not add volatility to the atmosphere.

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VICTORIA SMITH, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She stated she was a UAF alumna,

staff member, and current student. She recounted her personal experience with gun violence. She discussed the environment of certain areas of the university which engendered strong feelings, and thought the addition of firearms would endanger people. She mentioned the high rates of substance abuse, sexual assault, and suicide in the state.

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GINNY REDMOND, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She discussed her work as Director of Student Support Services at UAF, and relayed that she had received her undergraduate and graduate degrees there. She discussed high-stress situations which many students found themselves in, and was concerned about her safety and the safety of her employees if the bill were to pass. She recounted that there was no time in her years of employ at UAF that she wished a gun were present. She discussed her work environment. She mentioned the idea of a gun registry on campus. She commented on the budget shortfall at the university, and thought the bill would add an additional financial burden.

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JOANNA YOUNG, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a student and an employee at UAF. She discussed the significantly lower incidence of shootings in her home country of Canada. She opined that UAF would be a much less desirable place to attend if concealed carry of firearms were allowed.

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HELENA BUURMAN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a former student and present staff member at UAF. She recounted a mass shooting in Great Britain that was followed by firearm restrictions. She discussed the law enforcement officers on campus. She viewed any weapons in the workplace (beyond law enforcement) to be a liability. She discussed budgetary issues at the University.

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REGINE HOCK, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a teaching and research professor at UAF. She was concerned that free discussion of controversial issues could no longer take place if individuals did not feel safe. She recounted teaching large classes of young students who were often frustrated by grades and other pressures. She mentioned having students with obvious psychological challenges, and had also observed students who were intoxicated and on drugs. She was dismayed at the possibility of students with such issues coming to her class with weapons. She observed that none of the proposed amendments to the bill had effect on individuals teaching and supervising students. She alleged that the passage of the bill would cause her to reconsider her employment at UAF. She thought that most people did not support the bill.

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CHRIS CARR, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She relayed that she was a graduate student at UAF. She shared that she was a gun owner and gun enthusiast, but thought guns needed to be treated with respect. She discussed a school shooting in Columbine, Colorado. She thought the bill would increase accidental shootings and knee-jerk violent actions. She recounted her experiences with gun violence and suicide and thought that having guns readily available would increase harmful incidences.

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AURORA ROTH, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was born and raised in Fairbanks and her parents were professors at UAF. She attended graduate school at UAF, and thought it was a safe environment. She thought there were few violations of the existing gun policy at UAF. She mentioned the high rates of gun deaths and suicide in the state. She encouraged the committee to increase funding for mental health services and gun safety education in the state.

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BOB BIRD, 2ND AMENDMENT TASK FORCE, NIKISKI (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He was a long-time adjunct faculty at Kenai Peninsula College. He

thanked the legislature for trying to restore a constitutional right. He discussed recommended actions in the event of a campus intruder. He thought that it was not only guns that created violence. He referred to a faculty training regarding an intruder alert. He discussed a hypothetical situation in which he was required to defend himself. He discussed individuals bringing guns on campus despite the restrictions. He thought America was quickly becoming a police state. He thought police protection was an illusion, and thought progressives in the country had become fascists.

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CHERYL TUTTLE, SELF, NIKISKI (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a student and employee at the University, and was Student Union President at Kenai Peninsula College. She was concerned that many students were subject to powerful emotions on campus and that the presence of guns might escalate danger.

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JOE KASHI, SELF, STERLING (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. His child was a University student. He stated that he had no ideological agenda. He had represented many individuals in his law practice. He pointed out that weapons were prohibited in the legislative information office, and thought it was similarly appropriate to prohibit weapons on campus. He asserted that college students were less practical than others. He thought the university leadership was comprised of many retired career military officers who were experienced in the use of weapons, and thought they were strongly opposed to the bill. He referenced studies on reaction times in an active shooter scenario and extrapolated that armed ordinary citizens would not be of use. He discussed the risk of identifying the perpetrator in an active shooter situation where multiple individuals were carrying guns. He suggested looking at recommendations from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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JOHN SONIN, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition to the bill. He did not understand the motivation for the bill. He thought the bill was inane. He discussed the importance of

education, and thought that the state should be spending money by investing in the future through education. He discussed suicide and was concerned about knee-jerk reactions if guns were present.

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SHAUNA THORTON, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a university student. She thought concealed carry permits were easy to obtain in Alaska. She pointed out other locations such as banks and the legislative information offices that did not permit weapons on the premises. She expressed concern for identifying victims and perpetrators in an emergency if multiple individuals were carrying a gun. She expressed concern for staff, faculty, and students. She discussed trainings at the University.

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BRUCE SHULTZ, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. He was the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). He discussed his work, which included oversight of on-campus residential communities, physical and mental health services, student activities, and the student code of conduct. He recounted situations on campus that included verbal and physical assaults, harassment, suicide, and intoxication; and thought that such situations could have easily escalated in the presence of firearms. He referred to the current firearms policy on University campuses. He discussed the student suicide rate and thought the bill would have an adverse effect. He related his personal experience with gun violence. He recounted that he and his staff had responded to 19 student suicide attempts and 29 incidents of suicide ideation. He considered that the bill would affect retention rates as well as effective teaching and learning.

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GREG STODDARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He thought the committee should vote to uphold the constitutional right to bear arms. He did not see any fiscal problems associated with the passage of the bill. He discussed an active shooter training on campus. He thought the board of regents had overstepped its

bounds in prohibiting firearms on campus. He discussed previous changes to the firearms policy. He thought there should be no permit required for a firearm, but did not object to required training.

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BUTCH MOORE, SELF, BIG LAKE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. He recounted that his daughter had been murdered by her boyfriend. His daughter had been a student at UAA. He reported that in 2014 there had been 145 gun deaths in the state, and 79 of the deaths had been suicides. He continued that the majority of the suicides had been individuals aged 18 to 26. He wanted to find out how many gun deaths there were on college campuses. He thought suicide was a larger concern in the state than mass shootings. He did not think the legislature should put guns in the workplace of University staff when they did not allow guns in legislative offices. He discussed a hypothetical scenario regarding young people with guns in an emotional situation.

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MIKE COONS, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He referred to comments by the previous testifier and thought many of the aforementioned 145 gun deaths in the state were criminal in nature. He referred to Vice-Chair Micciche's comments on page 2 of the fiscal note, regarding expenditures in Ohio. He had called the Ohio State Legislature and found that the state had not funded increased security and the university had not requested additional funding. He discussed requests for increased security on the fiscal note and analyzed the current security components in the University system. He remarked that individuals opposing the bill feared their fellow man.

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ED MARTIN, SELF, COOPER LANDING (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He read an excerpt on fear of the unknown and irrational fear. He thought people that opposed the bill did not have self-esteem and confidence in their lives. He thought people might feel safe within academia. He discussed parenting and personality. He thought that if

students were showing up drunk in school, they should be removed from campus.

[3:24:41 PM](#)

CHELAN SCHREIFELS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a UAA School of Engineering alumni. Her daughter was a student at UAA, and had suffered a gunshot wound. She was a gun owner. She discussed university crime statistics, which were largely related to drugs and alcohol. She was concerned that volatility of student emotion in combination with firearms would be problematic. She discussed groups in opposition to the bill. She thought the bill jeopardized public safety, and took issue with the additional expenses that would be incurred if the bill passed.

[3:28:08 PM](#)

GEORGE PIERCE, SELF, KASILOF (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. He thought individuals carrying guns would intimidate students. He discussed alcohol use at colleges.

[3:29:32 PM](#)

ROSS MULLINS, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. He believed the bill was a manifestation of the NRA. He thought that such ideas were destroying society. He thought the bill would do nothing to ensure the safety or future intellectual development of students.

[3:30:49 PM](#)

SCOTT JERMONE, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. He was a UAF graduate student, and a hunter and gun owner. He thought the bill would inhibit the free flow of ideas by creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. He asserted that college students were untrained and could not react the way a police officer could react in an emergency. He thought the bill would jeopardize the recruitment of quality faculty, staff, and administrators.

[3:31:49 PM](#)

MICHAEL RAYWALT, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He referred to comments about firearms on campus by previous UA President Pat Gamble. He discussed mass shootings in schools. He thought university police forces were unable to be effective in an active shooter scenario. He referred to the settlement that the State of Virginia had offered to families of the victims of a shooting at a university. He discussed police response time statistics. He thought lives could be saved if more individuals were armed, and referred to mass murders that were prevented by armed citizens. He referred to statistics that crime rates had dropped in areas where more individuals had permits. He emphasized that the bill would allow concealed carry of weapons, thereby others would have no knowledge of the weapon, and the individual would be required to receive training. He thought gun-free zones were attractive to criminals.

[3:36:40 PM](#)

JONATHAN TAYLOR, PRESIDENT, UNION OF STUDENTS, STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. He thought the University had a compelling interest to heavily regulate firearms on campus. He alleged that university faculty in Texas and Kansas were being told to change curriculum content to avoid inflammatory topics that might incite violence. He discussed the likelihood of an armed student deterring an armed criminal, and mentioned a shooting at a college in Oregon. He thought the ubiquity of guns on campus contributed to a negative educational environment.

[3:39:37 PM](#)

ROB CLIFT, AK LIBERTARIAN PARTY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He relayed that the Alaska Libertarian Party examined all pieces of proposed legislation to determine if it would extend or curtail individual liberty, and he thought SB 174 did the former. He discussed the concealed carry of firearms outside the university setting. He claimed to be carrying a weapon at his present location in the legislative information office. He thought the issue was about rights, and that a ban on campus was anomalous. He referred to recent amendments to the bill as "barnacles."

[3:41:51 PM](#)

CEEZAR MARTINSON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He referred to the constitution and the right to bear arms. He thought that the University's current policy on firearms was illegal. He thought there were students and faculty on campus who were currently carrying concealed weapons despite the ban. He thought that the policy prohibiting guns on campus did not create safety. He mentioned other campuses and states that had legalized concealed carry, and noted there had been no measurable increase in gun-related violence. He thought there had been a decrease in certain crimes on college campuses that allowed for concealed carry of firearms. He thought that the arguments against the bill were based on fear. He questioned the fiscal note from the University. He thought that other states had demonstrated that there was not a significant cost to universities by allowing concealed carry of firearms.

[3:46:10 PM](#)

DAN BELLERIVE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He stated that he was a student at UAA, a veteran and a member of many clubs. He thought the bill was in aid of protecting constitutional rights and referred to Article 1, Section 19 of the Alaska Constitution, which pertained to the right to bear arms.

[3:47:08 PM](#)

GENEVIEVE MINA, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was student at UAA and intended on pursuing graduate education there. She was concerned about how the bill would affect her future years on campus. She discussed the State of Texas, and the possibility of instructors at the University of Houston having to change their curriculum in order not to discuss controversial topics that may lead to strong emotions. She thought that the bill could stifle intellectual freedom and put students at risk outside the classroom. She mentioned alcohol and drug abuse. She discussed the fiscal note and anticipated costs to the University.

[3:49:53 PM](#)

MIKE SMITH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He was a military veteran and

employee of UAA. He discussed his work with students and training that staff had received for active shooter situations. He discussed the constitutional right to keep and bear arms. He referenced arguments against the bill. He thought that his comments would not be well received by his colleagues.

[3:51:58 PM](#)

ZACHARY CHERRY, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He was a student at UAA and a military veteran. He thought that the University had infringed upon his rights. He did not agree that there was a major safety concern associated with the bill.

[3:53:31 PM](#)

LEIGHAN GONZALES, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was concerned about her safety as a student. She discussed her personal struggles. She related that the potential for guns being allowed on campus made her want to attend school elsewhere. She asked the committee to consider the fiscal impact of the bill. She discussed another institution that had passed a similar law that resulted in increased insurance premiums, and thought the cost would be passed on to students.

[3:57:15 PM](#)

STACEY LUCASON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the bill. She was a student member of the board of regents, but was not testifying as a representative of the board. She thought it was important to discuss the role of the board in managing the University, and urged the committee to consider the question of how to balance the role of the board with the rights of Alaskans.

[3:59:06 PM](#)

PAUL SWETZOF, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He referred to a mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut; and thought there may have been a different outcome if there had been firearms carried by staff at the school. He referred to testimony of a previous speaker and discussed the right to bear arms. He read an

excerpt from the Alaska Constitution pertaining to the individual right to keep and bear arms. He pointed out that the University was a political subdivision of the state, and thought it was in conflict with the constitution by prohibiting firearms. He referred to previous dialogue with an attorney for the University. He stated that he would bring a firearm on campus if he so desired, and thought the University had no right to prohibit it.

[4:02:52 PM](#)

GRAYSON SPILLER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He was a student and felt that he was being denied his constitutional right to keep and bear arms. He discussed the eventuality of a terror threat on campus. He discussed emergency response time. He discussed student support for the bill.

Co-Chair Kelly handed the gavel to Vice-Chair Micciche.

[4:04:21 PM](#)

EDWARD BURK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He discussed personal protection and relayed that he was a veteran. He discussed arguments against concealed carry in general. He thought there was a lack of statistics to demonstrate that law-abiding citizens had been led to commit gun crimes in an atmosphere with more firearms. He questioned the board of regents' right to implement policies that were inconsistent with state law. He asked the committee to pass the legislation and give his children (students at UAA) the freedom to protect themselves.

[4:07:23 PM](#)

CARL KANCIR, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of the bill. He wondered if the bill would allow all people to carry a concealed weapon on campus. He thought the bill allowed people to carry a concealed weapon without fear of being penalized.

Vice-Chair Micciche clarified that his role was to hear testimony rather than to interpret the law, but he stated that he had the same understanding.

Mr. Kancir gave an example that his current firearm he could shoot nine people within three seconds. He recounted a personal story of carrying guns in his vehicle. He discussed the ability of campus police to distinguish between a student with a firearm and a perpetrator in an active shooter scenario.

[4:10:15 PM](#)

CINDY MOORE, SELF, BIG LAKE (via teleconference), testified in opposition to the bill. She relayed that her daughter was a UAA student and had been killed by gun violence. She did not believe that youth always had the knowledge and good judgement required to responsibly carry concealed weapons. She discussed high-risk behaviors on campuses that she considered to be predictive of violence. She thought that normal conflicts could be exacerbated to include greater violence if more firearms were present. She discussed the rate of gun deaths in the year that her daughter was killed. She suggested it was a fallacy to infer that guns were needed to protect students from mass shootings. She discussed the efficacy of armed students in a gunfight.

[4:14:23 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Micciche CLOSED public testimony.

Vice-Chair Micciche discussed the schedule for the following day and noted that the meeting was cancelled.

SB 174 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[4:14:41 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.