

Guns and Campus Safety

University position on campus weapons management

SB 174

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



SB 174 significantly impacts UA's ability to manage firearm risk proactively.

SB 174 OVERVIEW

Senate Bill 174 would preclude the Board of Regents and university administration from effectively managing student and employee conflicts and campus safety issues where concealed weapons are involved. The University of Alaska opposes this legislation in its current form.

SB 174 LIMITS UA'S ABILITY TO MANAGE KNOWN HIGH-RISK SITUATIONS

The university is seeking amendments to SB 174 that would allow UA to manage known high risk situations, including:

- When the behavior of students or employees demonstrates a risk of harm to themselves or others.
- In shared student housing where they otherwise would be accessible to underage roommates and guests, where alcohol is readily available, and where UA serves as the responsible adult. This would be consistent with state law age limits on concealed carry, alcohol restrictions on possession of weapons, as well as requirements that the “adult resident” (in this case, UA) consent to concealed carry in their residence.
- In dedicated programs for K-12 students consistent with state law that generally criminalizes adult possession of weapons on K-12 grounds, buildings and events.
- During adjudication of staff or student disputes, disciplinary or academic actions commonly involving combative and highly stressed students or employees, consistent with state law criminalizing possession in similar situations such as court.
- In university health and counseling centers and Title IX compliance offices where allegations of sexual assault, sexual harassment and domestic violence are investigated and assistance provided to alleged victims and alleged perpetrators. This would avoid situations where disgruntled and seriously stressed parties could bring concealed weapons to investigative or other meetings and would be consistent with state law criminalizing possession of a firearm on the grounds of a domestic violence shelter.

Permitting regulation in these circumstances allows UA to take potentially preventative action when aware of a violation that poses a threat of harm.

REQUIRE A CONCEALED CARRY PERMIT TO CARRY CONCEALED WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

A concealed handgun permit issued pursuant to Alaska law should be required for campus concealed carry. A permit by itself would not allow university intervention when specific high conflict/high risk situations arise or exist, however, a permit requirement would require a student or employee carrying concealed in the close quarters of university common areas, classrooms, labs, libraries, and other communal space to have some training and knowledge about gun safety and applicable law. The permit requirement also would exclude individuals with certain criminal convictions from carrying concealed on campus. While a permit is not generally required to carry concealed handguns in Alaska, university buildings and common areas are not like the vast public and private areas comprising the state and its municipalities. The university is a limited, communal environment that the administration must proactively manage and for which it is responsible.

CURRENT UA POLICY IS BALANCED

University firearms regulations do not extend into the community at large, applying only to conduct in university buildings and on UA's developed property.

UA policies apply only to situations and people for which the university is responsible. The constitutional right to bear arms is not implicated when restrictions apply only to sensitive places such as schools and government buildings.

UA POLICY DOES NOT BAN ALL WEAPONS

Under existing UA Policy and Regulations weapons are permitted:

- At supervised activities, such as rifle range usage;
- At events with permission, such as gun shows;
- In cars on campus streets and parking lots;
- By faculty or staff in residences;
- By students using secure storage;
- On undeveloped or uninhabited land;

Weapons are not permitted in UA buildings including student dorms, classrooms, labs or meeting space.

Alaska Gun Law Allows Restrictions on People and Places

- Concealed carry for people under 21
- Concealed carry in residences, without permission of an adult resident
- Loaded firearms in places where intoxicating liquor is served
- Possession in child care facilities
- Possession in court system facilities
- Possession in domestic violence/sexual assault shelters
- Possession in K-12 schools

UA campuses have many of the same sensitivities