

March 4, 2016

University of Alaska community,

A number of people have expressed concern regarding the fact that the University is seeking changes to SB 174 – Concealed Carry on Campus – rather than just opposing the bill.

Debates about firearms often reduce to peoples' feelings and values, which are heartfelt on both sides and thus very difficult to change. Just opposing this legislation does not provide a path forward to solving the very real problems the university would face under SB 174.

The University cannot control the outcome in the Legislature – despite opposition, SB 174 also has strong support. Because changes to the bill would allow the University to manage responsibly, after much consideration, we believe the best course is to try to improve the bill rather than simply oppose it.

To date Senator Kelly has supported and Senate Education has accepted four of the six amendments proposed by the University. These amendments are essential to allow the university to manage high conflict/high risk situations common on our campuses.

However, I have to emphasize that those amendments can be undone, and we continue to seek additional changes.

The University has asked for amendments allowing it to restrict firearms in six areas:

- When behavior indicates a risk of harm to themselves or others;
- In student dormitories or other shared student living quarters;
- In K-12 programs;
- In Health & Counseling, Discrimination, Harassment and Title IX offices;
- During adjudication of staff or student disputes or disciplinary issues; and,
- Requiring a concealed carry permit to carry concealed weapons on campus. This 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, and exclude individuals with certain criminal convictions from carrying concealed on campus.

I encourage those who feel strongly about enhancing the University's ability to manage under SB 174 to communicate directly with the legislature and add your voice to support changes to this bill.

For more information see www.alaska.edu/files/state/2016-Guns---Final-Review.pdf

Thank you,
Jim Johnsen