



## 2018 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Please return by Friday, August 31 to:

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For more information, call 907-263-2015

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**1. What elements of Alaska's criminal justice reforms passed from 2016 to present do you support?**

Response: I am not enough of an expert in all aspects of SB91 to answer this question in detail at this time. However, in general, I do not believe SB91 is a root cause of our current crime problems, nor would I support a full repeal of that measure.

SB91 was a well intentioned piece of legislation that attempted to address the rising crime rate which has been trending upward since 2011, and the 65% recidivism rate of our prison population. It's not a perfect piece of legislation, and the legislature made some progress in addressing the flaws last spring. I would encourage all parties to continue with thoughtful, objective reviews of the outcomes and make adjustments as warranted. Likewise, it was stated from the outset that it will take a few years before the full benefits of this reform will be realized. So let's continue to monitor and tweak needed.

I'm of the opinion that the greatest weakness of SB91 was not the language itself, but it was the failure of the legislature to fully fund the implementation plan. We cannot afford to simply lock up every petty criminal who is driven by chemical dependency, mental illness, homelessness, or poverty. And we cannot isolate criminal behaviors from the socio-economic factors listed above. If we want to solve the crime problem, we need a

comprehensive solution that includes funding and support for law enforcement, criminal justice, and rehabilitation programs, as well as health care, mental health, affordable housing, and education at all levels.

**2. What elements of Alaska's criminal justice reforms passed from 2016 to present do you believe should be amended further?**

Response: (See response #1)

**3. Would you vote to keep the following elements of Alaska's justice reforms?**

- **Tougher penalties on violent crimes like 1st and 2nd degree murder**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. Violent criminals who pose a clear and present danger to society should be isolated.
- **Improved services for victims of violent crimes**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. Victim support programs need to be a part of any comprehensive criminal justice reform program.
- **Strengthened community supervision of those on probation and parole**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes.
- **Expanded crime-reduction programs like violence prevention and substance abuse treatment**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. One of the largest obstacles our justice system faces is a 65% rate of recidivism. We need to break that cycle through prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs.
- **Expanded eligibility for parole to those with a record of good behavior who present minimal risk to the community**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. The primary purpose of imprisonment should be rehabilitation, not punishment.
- **Establishment of an oversight committee and mandatory data collection and reporting requirements to ensure the law is working as intended**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. If we don't measure it, we can't really tell if it's working. (But I'm not sure what types of "data collection" you are referring to.)
- **Limited jail time for people convicted of misdemeanors**  
Yes or No? Explain: Yes. (But I'm not quite sure what you mean by "limited".)
- **Making drug possession a misdemeanor offense, while maintaining felony penalties for drug dealing and distribution**

Yes or No? Explain: Yes, Longer prison sentences are not an effective way to treat chemical dependency.

- **Placing non-violent, low-risk defendants awaiting trial under community supervision instead of prison**

Yes or No? Explain: Yes. In fact, California just eliminated their cash bail system as it was deemed to be grossly. (Cash bail systems are effectively “buy your way out of jail systems”, Pre-trial release decisions should be based on risk, not ability to pay.

4. **Under Alaska state law, inmates are required to be returned to the place of arrest, but this is rarely communicated to them and those from rural are often released from prison in urban areas without the means to return to their communities. This contributes to homelessness in urban areas as well as statewide recidivism. Do you support funding to ensure that parolees are returned to their place of arrest at the time of their release?**

Response: If that's the law, then we have an obligation to uphold it.

5. **In 2015, President Obama removed the box requiring disclosure of prior criminal conviction from federal job employment applications. Do you support or oppose similar measures on the state level to increase employment opportunities for citizens who have paid their debt to society and want to lead productive lives?**

Response: Support