



2018 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Please return by Friday, August 31 to:

Sorr@ACLUAk.org

For more information, call 907-263-2015

Candidate Name: Jesse Kiehl
Employer: City & Borough of Juneau
Office Sought: Senate District Q
E-Mail Address: KiehlforSenate@gmail.com
Party Affiliation: Alaska Democratic Party
Phone: 907-209-7910
Occupation: Assemblymember
Mailing Address: 535 Harris St., Juneau, AK 99801

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

Response: I support the notion that it's more effective to keep people who are involved in the justice system in their jobs and apartments than to send them to prison for long periods awaiting trial. I support the notion that judges' decisions about whom to release and whom to hold must be informed by solid data that reduces the impact of bias—whether conscious or unconscious. I support rigorous pre-trial monitoring to help make sure defendants get to work and make their court dates. I support the idea—as yet unfunded—of significantly increased addiction treatment and reentry services to reduce recidivism.

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

Response: It's past time to expand the suite of treatment and reentry services needed to reduce recidivism.

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:
 - **Improved services for victims of violent crimes**
Yes or No? Explain:
 - **Strengthened community supervision of those on probation and parole**
Yes or No? Explain: As a legislative aide I worked to help the Department of Corrections site its Juneau pre-trial services office.
 - **Expanded crime-reduction programs like violence prevention and substance abuse treatment**
Yes or No? Explain: It's not enough to 'keep' this notion, we have to fund it as well. To date we have not expanded these programs materially. Alaska's smart justice efforts will not succeed without this critical reinvestment.
 - **Expanded eligibility for parole to those with a record of good behavior who present minimal risk to the community**
Yes or No? Explain:
 - **Establishment of an oversight committee and mandatory data collection and reporting requirements to ensure the law is working as intended**
Yes or No? Explain:
 - **Limited jail time for people convicted of misdemeanors**
Yes or No? Explain: While we know sending misdemeanants to 'criminal college' is often counterproductive, without significantly more and better re-entry services, shorter sentences are unlikely to do anything but provoke further public outrage.
 - **Making drug possession a misdemeanor offense, while maintaining felony penalties for drug dealing and distribution**
Yes or No? Explain: I am concerned that simple quantity-based definitions of dealing and distribution provide an easy workaround for pushers to avoid serious penalties. They have a significant number of associates carry misdemeanor quantities. We may need to look at other factors in addition to weight or volume.
 - **Placing non-violent, low-risk defendants awaiting trial under community supervision instead of prison**
Yes or No? Explain:
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: I agree with the concept. While Alaska's budget deficit is still large, this is an area I would consider increased funding.

- 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: I strongly support the underlying concept. Like everyone else, former inmates are more successful when they can find jobs. Early research suggests "banning the box" increased discrimination against minority applicants, regardless of whether those applicants actually had records. While that sort of racial discrimination is already illegal, it suggests we should pair banning the box with more enforcement of equal rights laws and other ideas to provide employability information about applicants. Together, these steps can improve job prospects for those with criminal records and avoid the unintended harm to others.